



THE KEY





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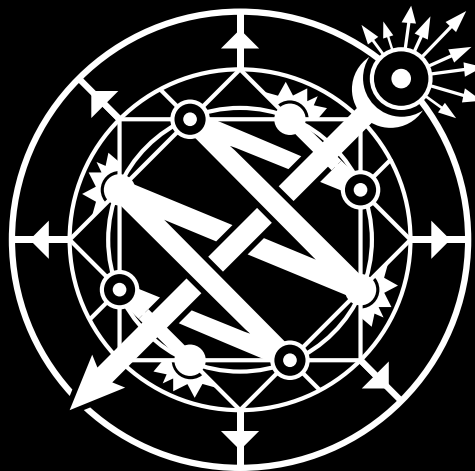
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THE KEY

A book for players and game masters.

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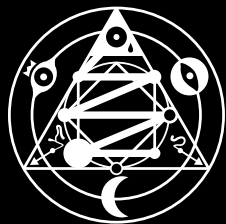


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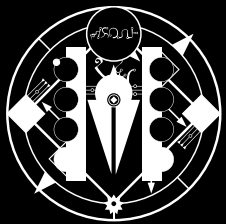
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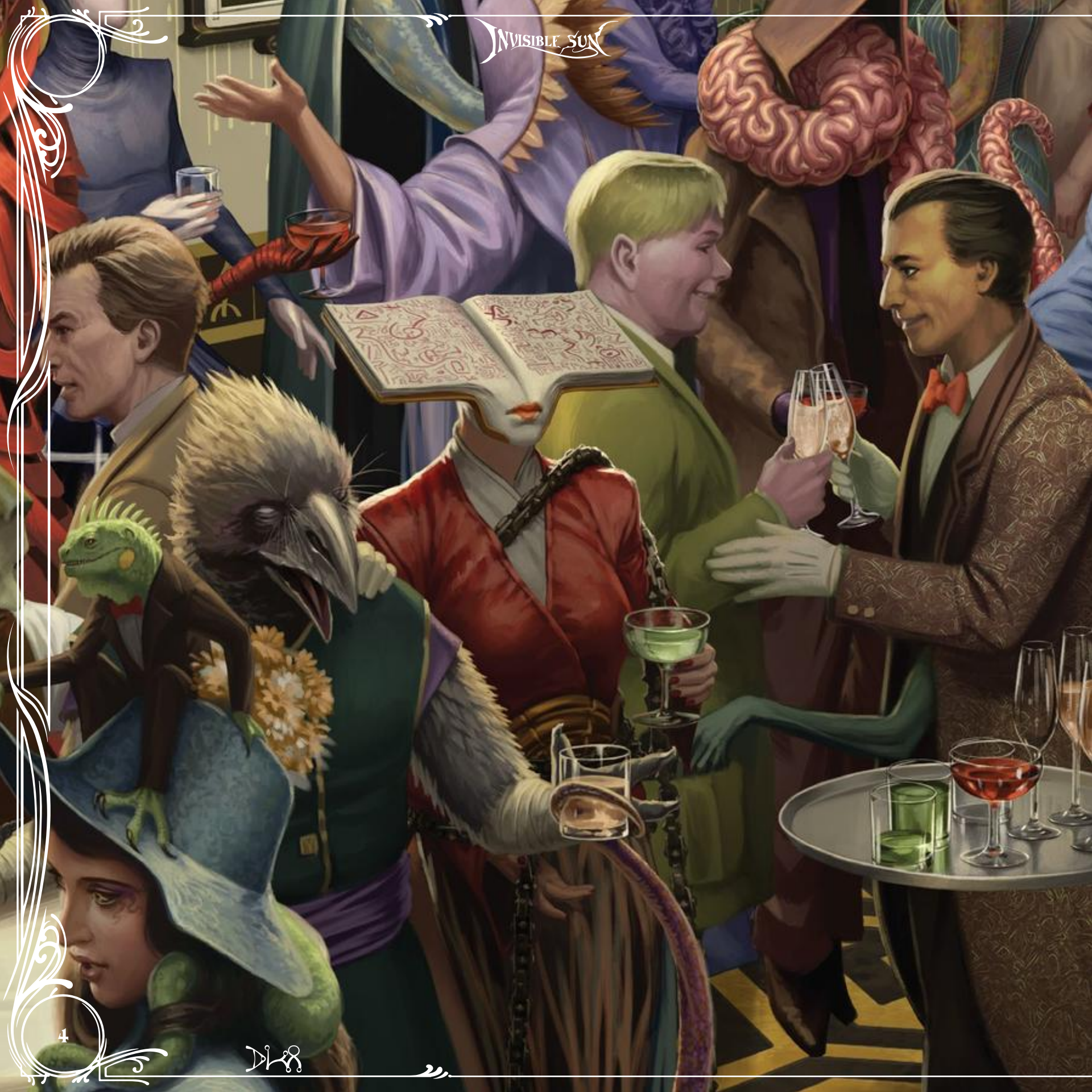
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THE ALCHEMY OF LIES AND TRUTH

In this chapter, you will find truth. And lies. Only through the synthesis of the two can you find reality.

FORCED FREEDOM

I first escaped Shadow three or four years ago. The Hendassa dragged me out, so I suppose it was less an escape and more like a rescue—or a harvest, depending on your opinion of the Hendassa and their grey reapers.

At first, it was bewildering. I would say that it was like waking up from a dream, but that's not really it. More like going to sleep and realizing that the dream is real and waking life was the dream. It took me quite a while to acclimate to Indigo. Or rather, re-acclimate. Just the whole . . . idea of it. Those were rough times. I really don't like to talk or even think about those days. Some of the things that happened to me. Some of the things I did to survive. And, perhaps more important, to understand.

Like millions of others, I had submerged into Shadow to escape the War. But part of Shadow, of course, is the forgetting. That's its nature. Officially, it's called the Grey, and it is a place of distraction and nonsense. Endless meaninglessness and trivialities, always churning and turning in on itself. Always moving, but never going anywhere. In Shadow, I lived in a house, had a family, had a degree under my belt, and a job to earn money that passed through my hands and into the hands of others like a grinding wheel, all of us believing that amassing it was the ultimate goal, never realizing that doing so was impossible. I watched television and half paid attention to sports, politics, and culture, never recognizing that none of it made any sense, never went anywhere, never accomplished anything.

Once I re-acclimated, I never missed Shadow. Once I understood the Actuality, I never looked back.

I understand that sometimes people get dragged back into Shadow. I don't know if what happens is more like a snare that grabs you or a siren's call that lures you back. Maybe you suddenly remember your Shadow family or your Shadow lover or your

Shadow car and it drags you back down into the Grey, seeping down and down like quicksand. Or maybe you just fall back into it all because you've always got a bit of Shadow's essence in you now, wherever you go, and whatever you do. It knows where to find you. Whatever the case, it's never happened to me. Not yet. I've spent the last few years entirely in Indigo.

Like most people, I found my place in the city of Satyrine. I've heard it called the City of Notions, the City of Forever, and the Glistening City. That last one is a stretch, but there are parts of the city—the Celestial Bazaar and the Marquis Quarter—that glisten, I suppose. Maybe the whole place did, before the War. Now more of the city is a ruin than not. Although people are working to reclaim it, now that the War is over. I have only general memories of what Satyrine was like before the War, and before I exiled myself to the Grey. Shadow does that to you.

I was one of the fortunate ones, though. My house was still more or less intact. I had to work to get it in order, but I managed to get the grigs cleared out and chased away most of the ghosts. It's still a little rough around the edges, but it's home. There's a familiarity to it—it's an anchor when this weird and wonderful place gets to be too much. A sanctuary.

Most of the people I knew from before are gone. To be brutally honest, I barely remember them anyway. The time before the War, before the Grey, that's like someone else's life. But in the last few years, I've gotten to know my way around the city as it's being rebuilt, and I've made some friends.

Take, for example, my neighbor. He tinkers with rhyming magic. He's also got a 1966 Lamborghini Miura parked in front of his house. Which might seem a little out of place here. It's very . . . showy. That's his memento from Shadow. Remember, I said many of us have ties back to Shadow. A bit of Shadow that sticks. Well, some of them use that connection to reach in and pull out a memento. I'm not going to tell you what mine is. That's personal.

Which reminds me, I've barely mentioned the biggest, probably most extraordinary part.

Magic.

Magic is real. Which, where I live now, is like saying, “gravity is real.” It’s a stupid thing to say. Although now that I think about it, I’m no longer certain about gravity. But I am certain about magic. There are energies that flow through the true worlds that can be harnessed to do all kinds of things. Although this can be expressed in many ways, most of those who work with magic in some fashion call ourselves vislae.

Those of us who exiled ourselves to Shadow are all vislae. That’s how we did it. We attuned ourselves to the Grey rather than to the rest of the Actuality. Shadow isn’t called that for nothing. In a real way, it is a shadow. It’s the shadow cast by the light of the Invisible Sun upon Indigo. Which is to say, it’s a twisted, distorted, and limited version of what is actually real. Just real enough to fool us. For years. In the Grey, I thought I was a nobody, but that was part of the illusion. I’m actually a vislae. I can practice magic. And I’m getting better.

So that’s what you need to know about me. I used to have a life in another place, but it wasn’t real. It was a life of illusion—a dull dream from which I finally escaped. The real world is a place we call the Actuality, and it’s wild and weird and filled with magic. At the heart of Indigo is the vast city of Satyrine, where ideas and emotions are more important than money or power (or rather, they *are* money and power).

I have a home in this city, which is recovering from an unimaginable war fought with hate given material form and weapons built like creatures of personified destruction.

I have a thousand opportunities before me.

And I am you.

ANGELS ON STREET CORNERS

I see an angel with words for wings.

He’s standing on the corner, blank faced, with a beggar’s bowl, seeking emotions from passersby. I give him what I can spare.

The words that make up his wings are mostly obscured, unspeakable, or in languages unknown to me, but I make out a few:

Lost.

Alone.

Left behind.

It’s just as the plaque above the doors to the Silent Church reads:

“She is gone. But Her Legacy remains.”

I make my way back home to Fartown, where all the dangerous spells live.

Uvaris, my elderbrin friend, stands in front of my crooked little house, waiting. He’s wearing a face today that reminds me of a stern eagle. His hair is white and slick. He’s taller than he was yesterday. He lets his new shape say all he needs to say. I don’t spoil his message with words. He follows me inside.

The filth inside suggests that the spirits that haunt my house haven’t kept up their end of our bargain. They were supposed to clean up this mess. I’ll take some time to cast a vengeance spell or two later. I can’t let them get away with this small transgression, or they’ll take control of the place again before I know it.

Uvaris and I share some dinner and while away the evening sharing stories of impaled gods and regretful demons.

The next morning, I’m on my way back to work, through one of the ruined sections of the city, where the wards failed in the War. Crouched on a street corner, I see an angel with wings for words. They flutter out, white feathers fluttering when she opens her mouth.

I think for a moment to chase after one, but, of course, I just keep walking.

ALL A DREAM

I live amid the ruins of a city that should be a dream, but is reality. I fled from reality a few years ago, discovering it to have been a dream.

I was an exile in the Grey. The War was consuming us all—consuming existence. We had grown so clever and so devious in our ability to craft weapons that we were surely going to destroy everything. So I and others slipped into the shadow of the real world cast in the light of the Invisible Sun. The Invisible Sun, the source of all truth, communicated through deception, is the heart that few recognize beating at the center of all things.

I am a vislae. I understand the truths of reality and plumb its secrets. Or at least I do now that I stand in the light of a true sun and can really see, for the first time in a very long time.

I wander the streets of Satyrine, much of it still devastated by the War, and walk among its people, not all of which are human. Although one of the first things I relearned was how easily appearances can be deceiving. I am content here, for now, but eventually I suspect my desire for knowledge will take me far beyond, to explore the lands lit by other suns, and the spaces in between as well.

Am I you?



RIVENHOME

MIRRORS

Mirrors are a virus.

We think they are simple tools, but the secret truth is far more sinister. They multiply when we're not looking—it's all about looking, you see. They're mirrors. Newly born mirrors seep into our homes, workplaces, and even temples and graveyards. Look away and there's suddenly a mirror in a room where there wasn't before, and we don't even notice. It's a virus. It spreads.

If every bit of the world is reflected in mirrors at once, everything inverts. The world on the other side of the mirror becomes real, and we become the reflection.

It's an invasion, I tell you. It is a secret, told to me by a very well-informed truespider. She heard it from a Maker who lived in a little house in the country next to a burbling, tick-tocking stream of clocks. Every hour upon the hour, the chimes from the river were so loud that someone standing upon the banks could not hear anything else. But she wasn't on the bank; she was in his house, spinning a web in the corner. She had promised him that she would not drink the fluid in his eyes while he slept, and so the Maker agreed to let her stay.

She once asked the Maker what his greatest creation was to date. "When I was a young man," he told her without hesitation, "I looked for God. And I found him." After a pause, he continued. "I took what I found, and I made him into a gun. Being both a Maker and a younger fellow at the time, it made sense. But that god-gun was soon stolen from me by a demonic bureaucrat called The Enemy of Sleep. Since that time, I have steered clear of weapons and war. Like begets like, as they say."

But more to the point, on another occasion the spider idly complimented the Maker on a beautiful mirror with a silver frame that hung on the wall. She had assumed that he, being a Maker, had fashioned it himself.

"What?" the old man said with a start and looked around. "I don't have any mirrors here."

But he most certainly did, and this clearly alarmed him. "I've not been vigilant," he said, cursing. And with that, he took a hammer from his kit and smashed every mirror in the house. He swept the pieces outside, into the river.

The spider asked the Maker why he had done that, and moreover why he had greeted each mirror he found in the house

that day with surprise and horror. He explained the dread secret to her.

Not long after, the man vanished. One minute he was there, working at his bench, and then, when the spider wasn't looking, he wasn't.

Because with mirrors, it's all about looking.
Never stop looking.



A MAGE AT ARMS

Even as you read this, you're doing so in Shadow. You believe it to be the real world, and the sights and sounds you see are normal. You believe the events around you have meaning and significance. But a part of you, deep down, knows that they do not. There's a part of you that knows that the real world is far bigger, far more mysterious and wondrous, than the grey shades around you.

The first true thing I saw was an elderbrin in the form of a thing with a head like something from the briny deeps and a body of pure fire, emitting rays of darkness from its eyes. This sight alone, I can tell you, was enough to yank me out of the Grey and into Indigo. We refer to these—the Grey and Indigo—as places, and that's not incorrect, but they are also just as accurately described as states of being. Each is defined by the sun that shines down upon them, both physically and metaphysically. This is true of the Pale, the Blue, the Green, the Red, and other suns as well. But I'm getting ahead of myself, and you're in Shadow, so all of this is new to you. Forgive me.

It must be clear by now that I am no teacher. My gifts do not lie in instruction, but in exploration. I am a seeker. And since you are in Shadow, I should note too that one of the strange misconceptions that some have about practitioners of magic is that they are a physically weak and frail lot, bookish and even cowardly. That is often how they are presented in fiction.

Nonsense. I can tell you that I am a vislae, and the master of many spells. But I am also an explorer and a warrior. I have walked the path of the 17 towers and spoken to the lords and ladies that I found there. I have defeated the guardians of the Cygline Gate and survived the incantation of Amatory Bloodfire.

And you can be me.

APOSTATE

Anestra had given up on the orders of magic altogether and thus was labeled Apostate. She embraced the term and made it her own. Thanks to a few glamours she discovered, the word "Apostate" now floated above her head in glowing letters. It followed wherever she went. Exactly as she wanted it.

Anestra wore a sinsuit made of wrath and a bit of envy. A candle of numina burned upon her shoulder. Long brown dreadlocks cascaded around her face and down her back, but a minor charm kept them from the dangers of the candle flame.

When Anestra went to the library-temple of Rhol, most of the other vislae there avoided her. Apostates were unpalatable enough

for library priests, but one who embraced the outcast nature? One couldn't be seen with such a person.

Anestra spent her time in the library poring over some of the more obscure tomes of demonic lore. When she had read every book and scroll on the topic the god had to offer, she left to consult with the Forty Apodictic Faces of Wisdom in the Garden of Oflim.

Mages and sorcerers across Satyrine began to wonder, what does Anestra seek? What knowledge is she after?

She confided in no one. She inquired with no one who would share her secrets. And she continued her search.

Eventually, one day, after a keyfall, where keys of all shapes and sizes rain down from the heavens, she found a key. Not just a key, but a so-called wicked key that can open anything. They are not, as it turns out, as rare as some would have you believe.

Using this key, she unlocked the door of a library far more ancient than that of Rhol, the Left-Handed God. So ancient, in fact, that it no longer existed. And within this long-gone storehouse of knowledge, Anestra found what she was looking for: the secret name of a demon so obscure and so lost that no one living or dead remembered it.

So, with this knowledge, she conjured this demon—not to command it, or interrogate it, or for any such conventional sorcery. No, Anestra turned her back on such things. She summoned this ancient being out of the Dark to gaze into its eyes, for she knew its pupils shone with a color otherwise unknown, anywhere.

And with that, she took the next step down a path that would lead her, alone, to the Labyrinth. Exactly according to her plan.

REACQUAINTING YOURSELF WITH THE WORLD

From the Handassa's pamphlet "So You've Just Returned From Exile"

Once you've re-acclimated to the Actuality, you'll want to take certain steps.

1. Establish your home. (Almost) every vislae has a house, and being cut off from it for years is like having lost a limb you forgot you had. Sweep it out, chase off the spiders and the grigs, and make sure your books and other belongings are in order. Get to know the place again.

2. Make some friends. Some of these will be old friends you knew from before. Perhaps fellow members of your order. Or

simply your neighbors. Some might be people you met while in Shadow. Others will be new. The important thing is, the connections you have to others are going to serve as some of your more efficient tools for getting ahead in Satyrine. It's very, very difficult to succeed entirely alone.

3. Rid yourself of "Shadow thinking." Try to forget the things you think are important. Shadow has lied to you not just about who and where you were, but about how the very world works. Much of what you think you understand, from the laws of physics to the importance of automobiles and computers to the significance of dreams to an endless parade of other ideas and concepts, are all based on utter nonsense.

4. Similarly, alter your perspective on what "makes sense." Often, things just don't work like they do in Shadow, and vislae who have returned to Indigo just have to accept them and move on. Take, for example, the War. The victors of the conflict cast incredibly powerful spells to make the other side irrelevant. So no one really talks about them (occasionally referring to them as "the Enemy" and blaming them for any negative repercussions), nor do they discuss what the War was actually fought over. The magic involved makes this difficult to comprehend, and that might be the point.

In the Actuality, roads sometimes spiral. Houses are sometimes more clever than their owners. A ghost of an unfinished book might contain the chapters that would complete it. Thoughts might think themselves.

5. Don't utterly reject what happened to you in Shadow. Shadow is a lie, having muddled your senses and darkened your soul, but the experiences you had there still carry weight. Their significance lies not in the world without, but the one within. The experiences in your Shadow life are a part of you. They helped shape who you are. Recognize that you are not the person you were when you went into exile, and embrace it. It's possible that what you learned in Shadow (not about the world, but about yourself) will be invaluable.

6. Find something important to focus on. In Shadow, they say, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." In the Actuality, we know that devils have different tactics not so neatly summed up in a single statement, but the overall sentiment remains valid. You have great power and unique skills. Put them to use. Become a part of the real world again.



CHARACTERS

Invisible Sun is deeply character focused. Not only are the player characters the avatars of the players of the game, but the characters and their arcs drive play as well. Character creation is involved, with many choices, but the esoteric arts are involved and require a great deal of introspection, so the intricacy and depth are an excellent primer for what it means to be a vislae.

WHO ARE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS?

Player characters (PCs) are mages, sorcerers, adepts—people who practice magic. Collectively, you call yourselves vislae, which refers to the steward of the *Invisible Sun*, Visla. To most, “vislae” means “children of Visla,” and this name comes from the recognition that anyone who uses magic owes fealty to and knowingly or unknowingly relies upon Visla and the *Invisible Sun*. Vislae call non-vislae “nons.” It’s not meant to be insulting. Well, not much.

Vislae characters all have one commonality: all exiled themselves to *Shadow* long ago to avoid the War, and have now returned to their homes in the *Actuality*. As such, they are reacquainting themselves with the world and their place in it. When they left, the PCs had homes and roles in society. Upon their return, memories came back slowly, and only in very broad strokes. The world was changed by the War, but the characters are well on their way to reclaiming those abandoned lives.

This means that all the PCs walk a strange line of being both acquainted with the setting and distant from it. Because although each of them is a magic-wielding vislae, they were also—recently—

accountants, clerks, and programmers in *Shadow*. Part of the *Invisible Sun* narrative the PCs take part in will likely involve reconciling those two distinct natures.

Unlike mages found in other fantasy settings (particularly epic fantasy or swords and sorcery), vislae do not conform to a physical type. In other words, they’re not all bookish and slight, or old men with beards. On the contrary, a barrel-chested soldier, a graceful gymnast, an obese ex-athlete, a shadowy assassin, or a lanky professor could all be vislae. This point takes on even greater nuance when one considers that most vislae, as they grow

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Invisible Sun, page 62

Visla, page 62

Shadow, page 52

Actuality, page 5

Throughout these books, you’ll see page references to various items accompanied by the following symbols and colors. These are page references to other books within *The Black Cube*, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn’t necessary to look up referenced items in the books, but doing so will provide useful information for character creation and gameplay.



THE WAY



THE PATH



THE KEY



THE GATE

more powerful, visit Satyrine's **changeries** and have their bodies reshaped and—often—altered so that some aspect of them is no longer recognizably human or even organic. Powerful vislae with heads shaped like brass cubes, skin of sparkling diamonds, eyes of green fire, a serpentine lower body, legs like a spider, or stranger configurations are all possible and even relatively commonplace.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

In the broadest sense, you are reclaiming and rebuilding the life you abandoned long ago. In so doing, you aid a city that is likewise being reclaimed and rebuilt. More specifically, however, you wield magic to discover secrets, gather influence, and amass power.

There are many, many avenues to achieve such goals. And further, your character will have individual objectives unique to them that come from what are called character arcs. Your character might be looking to solve a particular mystery or get revenge for a wrong perpetrated against them in the past. In other words, "What do you do?" is a question answered fully by each player, not the game. You are in the driver's seat. You decide what your character does.

Particularly ambitious characters do what they do ultimately to walk the **Labyrinth** successfully. Those who succeed at this lofty goal gain incredible power and access to another sphere of existence altogether, where they can walk amid the most powerful beings in the universe and test their mettle against the greatest challenge in existence. That's heady stuff, though, and most characters are unlikely to look so far ahead from the start (but some might).

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO LIVE IN SATYRINE

Characters live in the city of **Satyrine**. Not everyone there is a vislae, but most vislae make their home in the city. It is an ancient place of multiple districts, each with its own unique nature. Some districts do not even exist in the same world as the others.

Orbs, page 181

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Elderbrin, page 30

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Lacuna, page 30

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Labyrinth, page 77

There is another kind of person, but most don't live in Satyrine. These are shadows, and they hail from the Grey. Never real people to begin with, they are part of the illusion of the Grey but are so elaborate—having existed alongside vislae trapped in Shadow—that they have taken on a true life of their own. More sophisticated than thoughtforms, shadows can have personalities, original thoughts, emotions, and will. It's possible to play a Shadow character. See The Gate, page 45.

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The Dead, page 112

Satyrine, page 65

The Pale, page 53

Satyrine's natives sometimes call it the City of Notions, because nothing is more important or valuable there than an idea, a concept, a feeling, or an emotion. These are commodities that can be bought and sold in Satyrine. Why, the very currency of the city—called **orbs**—represent ideas.

THE PEOPLE

Besides humans, there are many other peoples that live in the city. The most common (but still far less numerous than humans) are the **elderbrin**. These shapeshifting beings are—by human standards—a bit flighty and prone to strange fits of fancy. Another, even more rare people are the **lacuna**. Lacuna exist only as apertures to elsewhere. They look like person-shaped holes in the very fabric of reality. Lacuna are secretive and reticent, and frequently motivated by entirely nonhuman rationales. There are also very small numbers of other non-humans, hailing from far-off half-worlds, each with their own unique form and outlook.

As previously stated, even among humans, not everyone in Satyrine is a vislae. However, some of the nons aren't actually people. Instead, they are thoughtforms. These servitors are magical force shaped by sorcerous thought and given existence in the world to perform tasks. Messengers, guards, cleaners, and clerks might potentially be thoughtforms. Thoughtforms look like people, but some can see their true nature, and even a brief interaction can suggest to anyone that a thoughtform is not an actual person. Thoughtforms don't have much in the way of emotions, original thought, or wills of their own. Once, a vislae who had recently returned from Shadow suggested that they were like magical robots, and the comparison is not far off.

And of course, some of the people in Satyrine aren't alive. The **Dead** primarily live in a faraway place called the **Pale**, but some take up residence in Satyrine. While most of these take the form of ghosts and wraiths that haunt a great many locales, a few inhabit corporeal bodies and live—well, exist—and work alongside the living.

THE STRUCTURES

Satyrine is a sparsely populated city. Some of its streets remain quiet and empty much of the time. Others bustle with life. Almost all are twisting, strange affairs. Buildings stretch in impossible directions and streets wrap around themselves like Mobius strips. Structures move, and avenues repeat. Places trail off into seeming nothingness. Until you really know your way around, getting lost in Satyrine is practically a given.

This is not helped by the fact that much of the city is in ruins. Just a few years ago, the terrible War raged across the Actuality (and in particular Satyrine). Whole sections of the city were destroyed, with the weapons that wreaked the damage—called **Hate Cysts**—hidden in the Ruined Expanses, where they continue to inflict further woe. Many areas remain in their sad (and dangerous) state, providing difficult urban wildernesses to cross to get from one city district to another. Of course, (relatively) safe paths and bridges have been created to make getting around easier. If you know the way.

THE INSTITUTIONS

The rulers of Satyrine are as complicated as the city itself. Ostensibly, a group of three potentially godlike individuals called the **Deathless Triumvirate** rule the city. They are aloof and distant, however, which means that real power is far more local. **Gerents** manage districts and neighborhoods, and each employs their own personal law enforcement, emergency responders, and civil servants (a great many of these are thoughtforms).

When it comes to law enforcement, however, we would be remiss in not mentioning the **Thah**. This quasi-military organization is independent but nevertheless acts as one of the city's major law enforcement and peacekeeping agencies. Thah wear gold and red uniforms and their touch is their weapon. They wield fear rather than authority.

Meanwhile, the **Magisterium** oversee the thirteen **secret souls** of all the inhabitants of the city (and in fact, all those outside as well). Thirteen is the number of mortality, and all mortal souls have

Don't pretend it's not all very strange. As an Invisible Sun player, your character has just spent a great deal of time in Shadow—just like you. Yes, your character's back in the surreal world of the Actuality, where magic and wonder are a part of life, but their time in Shadow allows them to see the world with new eyes. Eyes very much like yours. Eyes unaccustomed to origami buildings and intelligent, floating jellyfish.

Find that place within yourself where you can marvel at the wonders but accept them as reality so you can move on. A vislae's unique perspective of having lived in both Shadow and the Actuality mirrors a player's perspective of being caught up in the wonder and yet wanting to escape—at least for a time—into the fiction.

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Hate Cysts, page 73

Deathless Triumvirate, page 65

Gerent, page 71

Thah, page 71

Magisterium, page 77

Secret soul, page 139

It's possible to start a new character just as they leave Shadow, or even have the first session start with the character(s) in Shadow and play out the first transition. This isn't recommended, at least the first time, because it has a tendency to set the character apart from or even against the setting. This isn't a story about characters in a strange land trying to get back to where they're from, or one about accepting the impossible truth of one's world. You can use **Invisible Sun** to tell those stories, but they're not a part of the core story here. Shadow is the past. It is a pale, uninteresting, and ephemeral shade of reality. Although the seductive call of one's past is an aspect of **Invisible Sun** (see *Falling Back Into Shadow, The Gate*, page 7), the core story is about the Actuality, the present, and the future.



a link to one of the thirteen secret souls. The Magisterium keep the secrets and maintain the power of each soul.

There are many schools and disciplines of magic, but only four are worth mentioning. The orders of magic are the **Order of the Vance**, the **Order of Makers**, the **Order of Weavers**, and the **Order of Goetica**. While all figure prominently in Satyrine, the leadership of the Orders of the Vance and Goetica meet in Satyrine in majestic cathedral-like fortresses. (Those who reject the four orders are labeled **Apostate**.)

Lastly, we should mention the **changeries**. These places use extensive and complex techniques to reshape the bodies of those who can afford their services. The changed are called the **Perfected**, and they are numerous in Satyrine, particularly among the upper class and the vislae. Money and time are the only limits on what the changeries can do or what forms they bestow.

BEYOND SATYRINE

Satyrine lies at the heart of a world called Indigo, so named because it is the realm illuminated by the Indigo Sun. But there are other suns, and their light defines other worlds that coexist with Indigo. There are eight such suns in total, plus the **Invisible Sun**: **Silver**, **Green**, **Blue**, **Indigo**, **Grey**, **Pale**, **Red**, and **Gold**.

Each sun embodies a concept, carried within the light it sheds upon the world below it. For example, not only is the Red Sun one of destruction and change, but the realm it creates through its illumination is likewise a demon-haunted world of violence and mayhem.

Beyond these realms lies the cold and dismal **Dark**, where no sun's light reaches. And scattered amid the whole thing are the so-called half-worlds, fragment planes, and isolated dimensional corners. The Actuality is vast and complex.

THE PATH OF SUNS

Order of the Vance, page 37

Order of Makers, page 42

Order of Weavers, page 48

Order of Goetica, page 52

Apostate, page 50

THE WAY
Changeries, page 117

THE PATH
Perfected, page 102

Indigo, page 46

Silver, page 38

Green, page 41

Blue, page 43

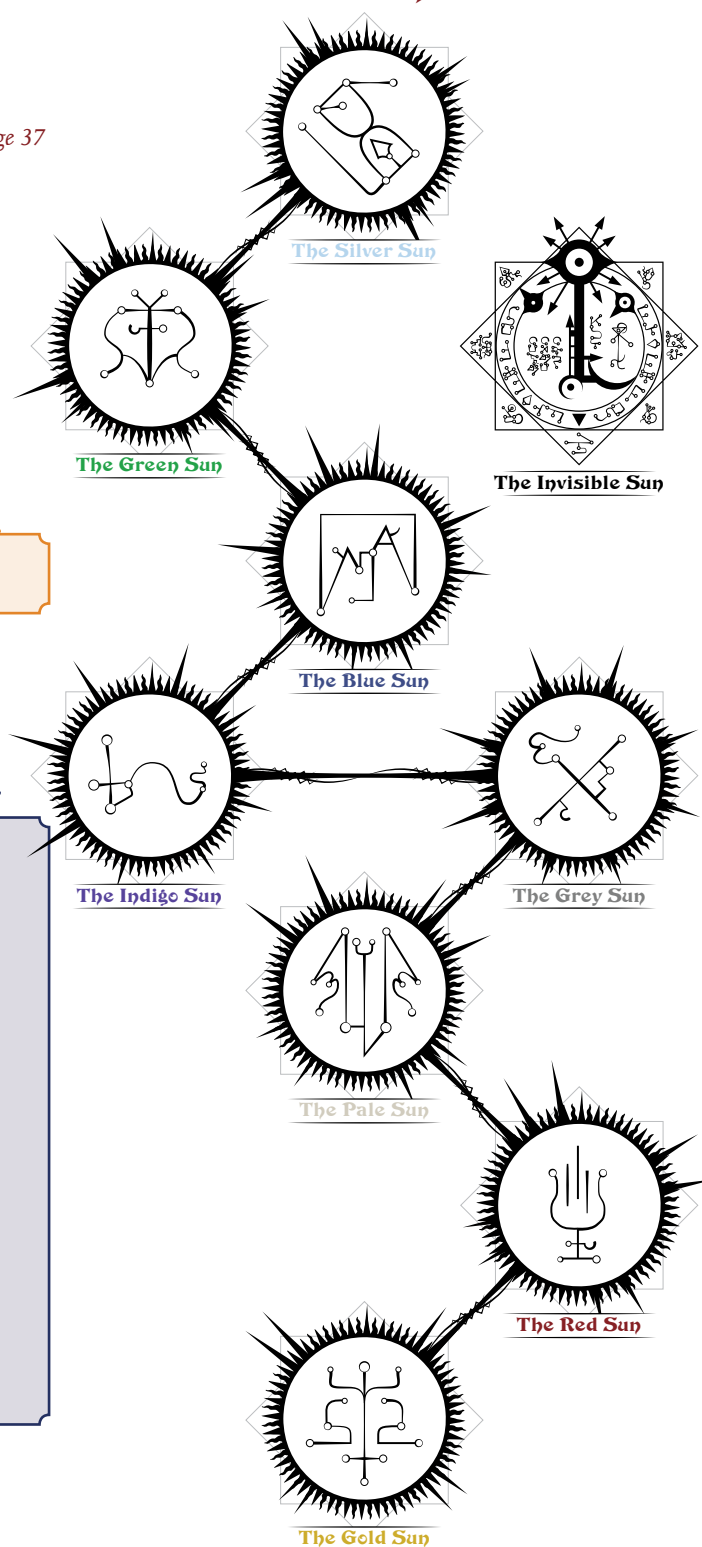
Grey, page 52

Pale, page 53

Red, page 56

Gold, page 59

Dark, page 62



A FEW OTHER THINGS YOU'LL WANT TO KNOW

A theory (one among many) holds that the Actuality is a spell in the midst of being cast. Originally cast at the center of time, it spreads both forward and backward, creating not only everything but every moment as well. The being who cast the spell is utterly unknown (and, by most accounts, unknowable), but they have left behind remnants and clues that people lump together and call the **Legacy**. The Legacy is often discussed as if it is the creator being, when it is actually a collection of relics, lore, and creatures. Beings referred to as angels are a part of the Legacy, for example. Those who wish to study the Legacy and plumb its mysteries are directed to the **Silent Church**.

The War. As previously mentioned, there was—not terribly long ago—a great and terrible War. So great were the spells used in this conflict that today most people are literally unable to speak of it. The War, then, remains shrouded in mystery. Its scars, however, continue to run deep, both physically and emotionally.

Satyrine has strange weather systems, but none hold a more significant place in the minds of its inhabitants than the storms that bring keyfalls, where keys rain from the sky. Most of these are conventional keys, but mixed amid them are special, so-called **wicked keys** that can be used to open or bypass anything: not just doors, but people, problems, or situations.

The **Noösphere** is a nonphysical realm created by intelligent thought. Its streets and plazas are made of memory, and its buildings are thoughts and emotions. Everyone with a mind is a part of and (often unknowingly) helps to create and sustain this mental network, but those who understand it can tap into it as a communication or information resource.

Shadow memento, page 154

THE PATH

Legacy, page 6

THE PATH

Silent Church, page 81

The War, page 65

Sometimes, late at night, one can find a veteran of the War, too drunk to be fully ensorcelled, who might tell war stories in whispers, but even these are disjointed, contradictory, and incomplete.

Wicked keys, page 207

THE WAY

Objects of Power, page 111

THE PATH

Noösphere, page 14

KEY POINTS

- + Vislae are those who study the ways of magic.
- + The terrible War is over.
- + Many vislae fled into Shadow (the Grey) during the War.
- + The vislae are slowly coming back, but their experience in Shadow has altered them.
- + Every former exile has a **Shadow memento**.
- + The Grey is the shadow of Indigo, the real world, cast by the light of the **Invisible Sun**.
- + The **Invisible Sun** is the source of magical power.
- + Satyrine is a huge city in Indigo, and much of it still lies in ruins from the War.
- + The weapons used in the War were fueled by pure hatred and destruction.
- + The ruins of Satyrine are dangerous but are slowly being reclaimed.
- + There are many forces at work within Satyrine, a city where thought and emotion are more important than material goods.
- + These forces include the Magisterium, the various Orders of the **Invisible Church**, the Deathless Triumvirate, and the Thah.
- + Keyfalls are magical storms in Satyrine that drop keys. Some are useful, but a few—called wicked keys—are extraordinarily potent and can change reality.
- + The Noösphere is network of conscious minds that stretches throughout the Actuality.
- + “The Legacy” is a term to describe **objects of power**, beings, forces, and places left behind by the entity that is believed to have created the Actuality.
- + Elderbrin are mystical beings that can alter their appearance and take a multitude of strange forms.
- + Lacuna are beings that are literally intelligent rifts in the universe, leading to elsewhere.
- + Death is a transition to another state, called the Pale, and it is possible to return from it.
- + Other suns include the Green, the Blue, the Red, the Silver, and the Gold. Each represents an entirely different plane of existence, but also the components of a mortal soul.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A VISLAE

Vislae aren't like other people. They're not just normal folks who happen to know a few spells (and for that matter, "knowing a spell" is much more than waving your hands the right way and saying some magic words). Strangeness follows them, even by the standards of a world that might be characterized as already being full of strangeness, or in a world where "strange" is normal. Some of this is good, and offers vislae advantages that others do not have. Some of this strangeness is an outright danger, the sort of thing that makes even people in Indigo sometimes avoid them or never attempt to learn the art of magic in the first place.

Some of the more significant bits of strangeness in a vislae's existence include the following.

- + Vislae know a secret language that only they can speak.
- + Vislae houses are usually haunted by spirits or infested by magical pests.
- + Vislae houses often end up with a secret room that even the vislae didn't know was there (at least at first).
- + Like all things, knowing a vislae's secret name gives you power over them. However, knowing it also gives them power over you.
- + Vislae can recognize the intentions and emotional state of another vislae by watching them cast spells.
- + Vislae possess objects that represent them and hold a portion of their own essence.
- + Vislae have their own types of currency of value only to them.
- + It is dangerous to awaken a vislae from a dream. There is a chance that the unfinished dream will come with him into the real world.
- + Vislae have different aspects—literally versions of themselves that coexist but operate independently on different levels of reality—so vislae are properly referred to as "they."
- + Objects in proximity to and of importance to a vislae sometimes gain magical properties (not always beneficial).

Some people would argue that those who never attempt it, by definition, do not have the talent. Only those who can become a vislae truly try, and those who have the potential are compelled to make the attempt. In other words, people who have the potential but do not become vislae are vanishingly rare, usually existing only in very special circumstances.

Vislae are often called mages and sometimes adepts, esoterics, ascended, illuminated, practitioners, enlightened, awakened, casters, canny ones, zelators, and initiates. Only those truly out of fashion or ignorant use the term "wizard." Sorcerer, warlock, magician, magister, and witch are terms embraced by a few and rejected by most to be on par with wizard. Magic user, spellcaster, and a few other even rarer terms exist, but are practically never used.

For players wanting more simplistic characters, the Shadow character is available.

THE GATE

Shadow character, page 45

- + As time goes on, the appearance of some vislae changes drastically. Powerful vislae don't necessarily look human—or in some cases organic—unless it suits their desire.
- + When a vislae dies, they often have the ability to return as a ghost, or restore themselves back to life.
- + When a vislae dies, their body often reflects some aspect of their nature. The body of a corrupt mage full of despair might be found swarming with beetles. The body of a more pure-hearted vislae might crumble into a series of sacred relics.

CREATING A VISLAE CHARACTER

Creating a character involves a number of steps, and at each step, you must make choices. This process isn't just to determine how hardy your character is and how many skills and spells they can use. It's also to develop a character with a background, a personality, and goals. A character with a life.

Everything in the *Invisible Sun* game revolves around the characters and their character arcs, so characters are intricate and complex, just like real people. Developing a character's background, home, connections, rivals, and so on—all of which are called a character's foundation—is such an important part of the game that the first session is always a group experience where all such information is created. In other words, a player creates their character, but the group helps create the context around that character in a formal (and fun) process that begins a narrative.

THE TESTAMENT (AND THE VERTULA KADA)

Vislae are tied to the *Invisible Sun* and its guardian, Visla. Hence the name. They draw their magical power from the *Invisible Sun*, and thus a fundamental part of their very nature is wrapped up in the connection with it that they take with them

everywhere they go. All vislae carry an object that represents this connection. This object is called the Testament of Suns and looks like a stylized hand with six fingers.



Because nothing can ever mean just one thing, however, the Testament also describes a vislae's unique individual nature. Each of the fingers represents a different aspect of the character. In the secret language of the vislae, those six aspects are tor, da, tu, ka, la, and ver. Translated, those mean order, heart, forte, soul, foundation, and arc.

Character creation involves determining each of these six aspects, in that sequence. So the

THE PATH

Invisible Sun, page 62

THE GATE

Sooth Deck, page 72

Apostates, page 60

Testament of Suns is a guide through character creation and an icon representing the finished character. (As it also represents the *Invisible Sun*, it figures prominently into the use of the *Sooth Deck*.)

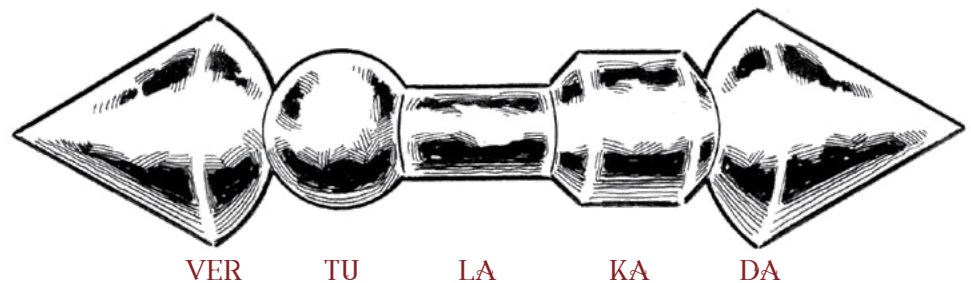
Apostates, of course, must be different from everyone else. Apostates are vislae who reject the orders of magic, and thus reject the Testament of Suns. They carry their own object, which they call the *vertula kada*. This name comes from all the aspects of a character other than order, because they eschew orders. A *vertula kada* is a more abstract, angular, multi-piece object of glass, crystal, or metal.

But since most vislae use the Testament of Suns, and since you don't know what order to choose before character creation begins, we will use the Testament as our guide through the character creation process.

Once character creation is complete, each vislae can be described in a sentence: "I am a *blank blank* of the Order of *blank* who *blanks*." Four of the character's aspects determine the parts of that sentence. So a character is a [FOUNDATION] [HEART] of the Order of [ORDER] who [FORTE]. The Black Cube provides blank versions of the four-page character tome a player uses to record all their information.

Alternatively, some players might choose to have the heart be an adjective rather than a noun in their sentence, making the name of their order the

VERTULA KADA



noun. (Each of the heart names are also, handily, an adjective.) This makes the sentence instead: “I am a [FOUNDATION], [HEART] [ORDER] who [FORTE].” So a character might be an *Itinerant Galant* of the *Order of the Vance* who *Revels in Beauty*, or they might be an Itinerant, Galant Vance who Revels in Beauty.

THE SIX FINGERS OF THE TESTAMENT OF SUNS

With the Testament in mind, you create a vislae in six steps, listed below. Some of the steps are simple, and others are involved. All exist so that you can develop a deep and dynamic character. Six is the number of death and is generally regarded as ill-favored, so we shall include a seventh step, which involves the bonds a character has with their closest friends. But seven is the number of change and transition, and eight is the number of rebirth and new beginnings (and in so many ways, vislae returning from Shadow are, in a very real sense, experiencing rebirth). So there are, in fact,

Itinerant, page 147

Galant, page 67

Order of the Vance, page 37

Revels in Beauty, page 112

Every order has its own character tome, designed to hold its specific information.

GMs should record each character's sentence in The Guiding Hand.

eight steps to character creation that we will number 0 through 7. (0 is numbered as such because it is optional and exists outside the aspects of a character, dealing more with the player.)

You can do steps 0 through 4 on your own, although doing them in conjunction with the game master (GM) is not a bad idea. Steps 5 through 7 should be done in conjunction with the other players, and will likely be handled when you get together for the first session of the game. Steps 1 through 7 all have their own dedicated chapters in this tome to help guide you through the choices involved.

Step 0: Choose a roleplaying style.

Step 1: Choose an order.

Step 2: Choose a heart.

Step 3: Choose a forte.

Step 4: Choose a soul.

Step 5: Build a foundation.

Step 6: Choose a character arc.

Step 7: Create bonds and an initial group desideratum.

STEP 0: CHOOSE A ROLEPLAYING STYLE

Why a “step 0?” Well, because it’s sort of optional. This choice doesn’t shape your character in any way. However, it accomplishes two things. First and foremost, it gets you thinking about how you want to proceed with the other steps. Second, it informs the GM of your desires and intentions, which is helpful and important for them to develop the game you’re all going to play. In fact, the GM sections of *The Gate* reference these styles many times in relation to events, goals, and experiences in *Invisible Sun*.

There are four roleplaying styles, all extremely broad: builder, explorer, attainer, and achiever. They don’t speak to the kinds of encounters you enjoy playing or how you approach different challenges. Instead, since the game encourages you to be very proactive, they cover what motivates your character.

BUILDER

A builder adds to the world. They look beyond themselves and see the bigger picture, and they want to be a part of it. They want to make their mark on the world by creating something new: a home, an organization, a book of lore, or anything else. This drive to create could be altruistic, or it might be selfish. Either way, builders are organized dreamers with big plans.

EXPLORER

Explorers look for new people, places, things, and experiences. They seek understanding. Knowledge. Nothing is more intriguing to the explorer than what lies behind a locked door, within the pages of a forbidden book, or in the mind of an intriguing nonplayer character (NPC). Anything else in the game is just a means to the end of answering every question, solving every mystery, and exploring every nook and cranny.

GMs should record each player’s style in The Guiding Hand.

Many players will find that more than one style applies to them. In this case, style is a character-specific choice. It’s less about you as a player in general and more about you as a player of this specific character.

Players determine their own advancement paths. As they become more experienced, they can move up in degree in their order (gaining new knowledge as well as new authority), or they can advance by choosing new skills, spells, forte abilities, and secrets, and never bother with degrees at all. Regardless, advancement is as much based on roleplaying actions and interactions as it is a strict function of game mechanics. This is a game for players who love to devote time and attention to getting their character just right.

ATTAINER

An attainer is inwardly focused. They amass power and seek self-improvement. They want more spells, more skills, more abilities, more cool gear, and more money. They might have plans for what they amass, or they might just be gathering it all for its own sake. Either way, they are focused on the tally sheet of what they have, what they know, and what they can do.

ACHIEVER

An achiever is story-focused. Goals are important, and success at achieving them is paramount. Achievers set specific goals for themselves, and then develop plans for how to reach them. Alternatively, achievers are the ones who grab hold tightest when a story hook is placed before them. They want to see a story completed. All the rest is just a part of the larger tale being told.

STEP 1: CHOOSE AN ORDER

Step 1 is choosing your order because it is likely the most fundamental choice you’ll make. Every character is broadly defined by creating a sentence about them. In the character sentence, the order is the noun. While it’s not the first part of the sentence, it’s probably the most important.

Understandably, then, while a player makes many choices, none is more important than their order. An order is an organization that they belong to and can advance within, and that determines the way they express their magical talents. There are four (no, five) orders: Vances, Makers, Weavers, and Goetics. There are also Apostates, who eschew the orders. The different orders approach the use of magic in entirely different ways—each has its own “system” of magic. The character tomes are individualized based on order, so there is a different version tailored to each.

When referring to their order, Vances say, “Order of the Vance.” Weavers and Makers just say, “Order of Weavers” and “Order of Makers.” Goetics sometimes say, “Order of Goetics” and other times use the more formal “Order of Goetica.” Apostates

just say, “an Apostate.” Collectively, all vislae are sometimes referred to as the **Invisible Church**, again showing their connection to the **Invisible Sun** and its patron/warden, Visla.

In brief, Vances are sorcerers who prepare and cast spells they learn from books, and they believe that spells are, in their own way, intelligent in and of themselves. Makers, as the name suggests, use magic to create powerful items. Weavers cast spells with a very fluid and improvisational sort of sorcery. Goetics use their magical skills to summon demons and other creatures to do their bidding. Apostates dwell outside these categories and find their own paths.

For more on orders, see **Order**.

STEP 2: CHOOSE A HEART

Your heart defines your essence. It is the most basic building block of your character. It is a broad personality type, but it is also an essential marker for a character that ties them into how they interact with the ebbs and flows of magic. There are four different hearts to choose from in **Heart**: intuitive, quick thinking Galants; contemplative, thoughtful Stoics; emotional, personable Empaths; and passionate, hair-trigger Ardents.

Heart is what determines the starting values of your stats, Certes and Qualia. Look to **Statistics and Skills** for information on stats.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A FORTE

Fortes play a huge part in determining what your character does. This is why all fortes have names that are verbs rather than nouns. **Fuses Nightmare to Fist**, for example, or **Breathes Runes**. While order determines many of your capabilities and skills, forte is the all-important facet that makes your character unique. A Goetic who **Dwells in Darkness** is going to use his order’s summoning skills and spells very differently than a Goetic who **Channels Strength and Skill**. The former is likely to deal with demons to help uncover secret, hidden lore, while the latter will focus on summoning entities to complement the knowledge and abilities he channels from others. Look to **Forte** for dozens of fortes to choose from.



THE GATE

Appurtenance, page 35

Magisterium, page 140

Soul Guardian, page 140

Order, page 34

Heart, page 65

Souls, page 139

*Statistics and Skills,
page 24*

*Fuses Nightmare to Fist,
page 100*

Breathes Runes, page 78

Dwells in Darkness, page 94

*Channels Strength and
Skill, page 86*

The First Session, page 194

Home, page 149

Neighborhood, page 152

Shadow skill, page 154

Shadow memento, page 154

Personal quirk, page 154

Connections, page 156

NPC bonds, page 157

Forte, page 70

Later, your forte might gain an **appurtenance** that modifies it even more, but starting characters don’t need to worry about that.

STEP 4: CHOOSE A SOUL

All characters have a secret. Well, they likely have many, but the deepest secret anyone possesses lies within their own soul. All vislae have an allegiance to one of thirteen secret souls. These secret souls are governed by a group of beings called the **Magisterium**. Each has a **Soul Guardian** that a vislae can call upon in a time of need (for a hefty price that has little to do with money).

This means every vislae has a portion of their soul that is connected to the larger world. How this portion aligns with that same portion of other vislae’s souls determines a bit of significant information about the vislae.

Soul allegiances can help determine outlook and personality, to a degree, but they affect magic more directly, particularly for advanced characters. They are to be kept secret, and as such are never mentioned as part of the sentence that describes the character. To put it another way, secret souls are the unspoken part of the describing sentence.

You’ll find more about souls in **Soul**.

STEP 5: BUILD A FOUNDATION

Your foundation is your life. Where do you live? What did you do before? What did you do while in Shadow? Who do you know?

This is the first step that you should do at least partially in conjunction with the other players. In fact, **The First Session** offers a system designed so that they can help you.

Foundation defines:

- + the vislae’s **home** (and **neighborhood**)
- + the vislae’s **Shadow skill**
- + the vislae’s **Shadow memento**
- + the vislae’s **personal quirk**
- + the vislae’s **connections** and **NPC bonds**

More information on developing a foundation can be found in **Foundation**.

STEP 6: CHOOSE A CHARACTER ARC

Character arcs offer the main way for characters to earn the points that they spend to advance (called *Acumen and Crux*). They are a way for a character to have a goal and take steps to advance that goal. You might start with a desire to find a mentor, learn a secret, or avenge the death of a friend, for example. The character arc tracks your progress as you attempt to accomplish one of those things.

You start with a single arc. You can undertake as many arcs as you wish as the game progresses—

Acumen and Crux, page 22

Character Arcs, page 162

THE GATE

*Development Mode,
page 6*



The First Session, page 194

many being suggested by the events of the narrative—but some character arcs have a cost to begin. However, the arc you choose at the beginning is always free.

More information on character arcs can be found in *Character Arcs*.

STEP 7: FORM BONDS

The very end of the character creation process requires the GM and other players. At this time, you develop the neighborhood around your house, choose the bonds you have with the other PCs, determine what ephemera you begin the game with, and devise the group's initial general goal, called the desideratum.

When you build a character's foundation, it becomes crystal clear that in *Invisible Sun*, PCs are individuals with their own agendas, their own homes, and their own lives. But roleplaying games are about groups of PCs working together, and (other than in *Development Mode*, which is a separate style of play) *Invisible Sun* is no exception. So why do the PCs work together?

Because they have bonds that tie them together, forming relationships. Bonds can define familial relationships, friendship, romantic interest, debt obligations, and more. What's more, characters might gain both special advantages and drawbacks based on the bonds they choose.

Not every character needs to be bonded to every other character, but each PC needs to have a bond to at least one other character. PCs can also have bonds to specific NPCs or connections to groups and organizations as well. These are handled as part of a character's foundation.

You will definitely want to work with the other players while creating PC bonds.

More information on devising bonds can be found in *The First Session*.

CHARACTER CREATION CONCEPTS

Although they are important to character creation, some of the rules concepts mentioned in this book aren't found here, but are discussed fully in other books. The main examples are briefly defined below. For more information on any aspect of the setting, see *The Path*.

ACUMEN AND CRUX

The way you measure character advancement is through Acumen and Crux. These are points you earn for performing tasks or having significant experiences. The things that earn you Acumen or Crux might not be the same things that earn them for other characters, as each character has a different path, different goals, and different arcs.

Crux are divided into Joy and Despair. Very generally speaking, you gain Joy when good things happen, and Despair when bad things happen. 1 Joy and 1 Despair, together, form 1 Crux, so you need some of both in your life.

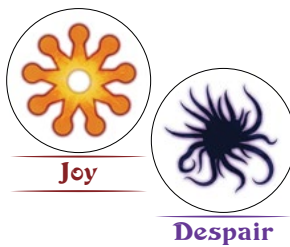
Generally, Crux allow you to gain greater abilities related to your order and your forte, while Acumen allow you to gain new ad-hoc abilities like spells, secrets, and skills.

VENTURE AND CHALLENGE

When you attempt to do something, the GM will assign it a **challenge**. If it's trivial (like walking across the room), the challenge is 0, which means there's no die roll involved. Most of the time, you don't even phrase it in terms of game mechanics. The GM just says, "Okay, then what do you do?"

If it's not trivial, the challenge is 1 or higher. Most of the time, challenges don't go above 10 unless there's something quite extraordinary involved. Meanwhile, the player puts forth a **venture**. Venture is the total amount by which you modify the action. You might add skill level, circumstance modifiers, or points you spend from your stats. All of this will be explained more fully later, but what you need to know now is that each time you add to your action (such as if a spell gives you +1 to persuasion

INVISIBLE SUN

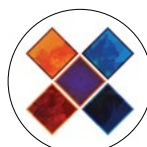


Joy

Despair

THE WAY

Spells, page 46



Acumen

Qualia, page 27

GM determines the challenge. Player adds together their venture.

Challenge minus venture is the number you need to roll.

Bonuses a character gets due to skills, circumstances, spells, tools, or weapons all add to the venture. Every single task in the game works like this.

THE WAY

Secrets, page 84

THE GATE

Challenge, page 18

Challenges above 10 are extraordinary. Of course, in this setting, the extraordinary isn't all that rare.

THE GATE

Venture, page 22

attempts), you're adding to your venture. When you have a total, you subtract the venture from the challenge. If the result is 0 or less, you don't need to roll. If the result is 1 or higher, that's the number you need to roll on your die to succeed.

SPELLS

Spells are magical workings performed by vislae to accomplish all manner of tasks. They can include rendering you **invisible**, protecting you from harm, or transporting you great distances.

Spells have levels, and the higher the level, the more powerful the spell. To cast a spell, you must pay a cost equal to its level from your Sorcery stat pool (Sorcery is a part of your **Qualia**, described in Statistics and Skills).

Spells, of course, are only one type of magical working (the most common). There are also minor magical practices called cantrips, charms, signs, and hexes. There are long-form workings called enchantments, rituals, and invocations.

Characters learn new spells (and other workings) by spending Acumen, typically 1 point per spell level.

SECRETS

Secrets are things you can learn to "shortcut" reality. They provide ways to do things that you shouldn't be able to do normally. For example, normally you can't put more power into a spell to increase its effectiveness. Normally, you can't know when someone speaks your name 1,000 miles (1,600 km) away. Normally, you can't steal an idea right out of someone's mind. But with secrets, you can do all of these things and more.

Like spells, secrets have levels. Unlike spells, it usually doesn't cost you anything to use an ability unlocked through a secret.

Characters learn new secrets by spending Acumen, typically 1 point per secret level.

DAMAGE

When you suffer damage, it comes in the form of Injuries. An attack that inflicts 2 damage gives you



THE PALE: CATAFALQUE

2 Injuries. When you have 3 Injuries, they become a Wound (if the attack was physical) or an Anguish (if the attack was to your mind). If you suffer 3 Wounds or Anguish, you die.

Certain things will absorb or negate incoming damage. Some particularly horrific (usually magical) attacks skip Injuries and inflict Wounds or Anguish directly.

EPHEMERA AND OBJECTS OF POWER

Ephemera objects and **objects of power** are items imbued with magic that a character will gain throughout the narrative. Ephemera are one-use items like a potion you drink or an amulet whose power you call upon and consume. Objects of power last longer—sometimes forever.

Characters are limited in how many ephemera they can have at one time. Rather than a physical ephemera object, a character can meditate to learn fleeting spell-like practices called **incantations**. Powerful vislae can choose which incantations they

have access to, but normally these are seemingly magical whims gifted by the universe, if the vislae is open to such things.

Like just about everything else, ephemera and objects of power have levels.

SOOTH DECK

When something significant happens in the game, the GM will turn over a card in the **Sooth Deck**.

Among other things, the card revealed will change the way magic works, making certain spells and effects more powerful, and others less so. These changes are frequent and usually fleeting, and they reflect the fact that the magical world is a complex, ever-shifting one. Since events that cause a card turn are usually magical, this shows that the more one uses magic, the more magic gets disrupted, like a still pond into which more and more pebbles are dropped, causing ripples that then interact with other ripples, and so on.

THE GATE

Sooth Deck, page 72

THE WAY

Ephemera objects, page 100

Objects of power, page 110

Incantations, page 106



STATISTICS AND SKILLS

“There are things knowable and unknowable, and both contain treasures.”

—Cladiu the Elder

The previous chapter outlined seven (no, eight) steps of character creation, most represented by the Testament of Suns. While we’re going to get back to that, there are some things you need to understand first, and among them, the most important are your character’s statistics and skills. Neither are steps in character creation on their own because they are determined by other steps (in the case of statistics, your heart and your foundation, and in case of skills, your order, your heart, and possibly your foundation). They arise from other steps.

STATISTICS

All characters are described by three statistics (“stats”). Two of these are opposite sides of the same coin: Certes and Qualia. Certes represents all things physical and mundane. Conversely, Qualia is everything mental, magical, and spiritual. The points of each of these are divided into refined pools—four pools for Certes, and four pools for Qualia.

The stats themselves can be thought to measure the base, untrained, inherent quality. In the case of Certes, this is physical stamina, health, strength, speed, and so on. With Qualia, it is the natural intelligence, charisma, discernment, and magical power possessed by a character.

The pools associated with each stat represent the trained, practiced, and focused physical or mental

Certes, page 26

Accuracy, page 26

Movement, page 26

Physicality, page 27

Perception, page 27

Qualia, page 27

Sorcery, page 27

Interaction, page 27

Intellect, page 27

Sortilege, page 27

Hidden Knowledge, page 30

Bene, page 28

Refreshing stat pools, page 29

Comparing the core stat scores of two characters gives a general sense of which is superior in that stat. For example, a character who has Certes 14 is stronger or tougher (in a basic sense) than a character who has a Certes of 12.

qualities of a character. In other words, you are born with your raw stat, but the refined pools indicate how you apply it. For **Certes**, the pools are **Accuracy**, **Movement**, **Physicality**, and **Perception**. For **Qualia**, the pools are **Sorcery**, **Interaction**, **Intellect**, and **Sortilege**.

The third stat is special and does not work like the other two. It is called **Hidden Knowledge** and abstractly represents the accumulation of bits of lore, rumor, hearsay, and truth in a vislae’s life.

STAT SCORES

Your heart determines your starting Certes and Qualia scores. A score of 8–10 is about average. The points in these scores are always divided into the pools for each stat. Points not put in a pool serve no purpose.

STAT POOLS

We measure the current value of a stat pool in **bene**. This number can go up and down, so we track it with tokens. The value in a given pool represents the number of bene tokens you have in that pool each time that pool is **refreshed**. This means that while players use the tokens to track bene, they must note each pool’s normal starting value.

Note that in the case of Sortilege, the value of the pool is not measured in bene, but in enhancements. These enhancements can be used with any action. It is possible—through the effects of magic—to gain enhancements in other pools as well as bene. In that case, those enhancements can be used only with the pool that they are in.

A bene token can be used with any action relevant to that pool. A bene adds +1 to an action. This

bonus applies to the action's venture, which is the total of all the modifiers the character has added to lower the challenge of an action. So, if a character has 1 level of skill in climbing and adds 1 bene, their venture is 2. That number is subtracted from the challenge of the climb to determine the number needed on the die roll to succeed at the action.

Bene can be used for reactive actions as well. If the GM calls for a Dodge defense action, for example, you can add a bene from Movement to help. If you have an object of power called a **Razor Halo**, you can add an Accuracy bene to the attack it makes when others attack you.

In a few cases, such as casting spells, bene can be used in other ways as well.

An enhancement also can be used with any action relevant to that pool. An enhancement adds +1 die to the action. If you have enough extra dice, you might just want to use them as the enhancements to easily remember how they are used. Using an enhancement on an action? Just pull the die from the pool and roll it, then set it aside when the action is resolved.

CERTES

Certes is an abstracted representation of everything about you that is real, measurable, physical, and mundane. It defines how strong and durable you are, as well as how fast and physically coordinated you are. The concepts of strength, endurance, constitution, hardiness, physical prowess, quickness, movement, dexterity, and reflexes are all folded into this one stat. Certes governs actions from forcing doors open to balancing on a tightrope. From walking for days without food to dodging attacks. From resisting disease to sneaking around quietly. It's also the primary means of determining how much damage you can sustain in a dangerous situation. Physical characters, whether that means strong and tough or fast and dexterous (or some combination thereof), will have good Certes scores.

The four Certes pools are Accuracy, Movement, Physicality, and Perception.

Players should use the stat pool sheets to record their stats and the total for each pool. Certes, Qualia, and Hidden Knowledge should also go in the character tomes.

Razor Halo, see Objects of Power Deck

Players can use the bene counters on the stat pool sheets (included in the Black Cube) to manage their pools and the bene they spend from them. Adding and subtracting bene in this way is very easy.

The Book Without Pages is a magical grimoire written on an ever-blooming bouquet of flowers, with words on every petal.

ACCURACY

Accuracy involves making physical attacks, regardless of the type of attack. Firing a gun, throwing a knife, or blasting a bolt of sorcerous fire thanks to a spell are all physical attacks. Each is an attempt at physically damaging someone or something. Attempting to control someone's mind with a psychic power or turn them into a newt are not physical attacks. Those aren't overt attempts at causing physical harm through physical means. Thus, some magical attacks are physical, and some are not. Spells that are like weapons and those that produce or project a physical object or energy are physical attacks.

Bene from Accuracy can be used to increase the accuracy of an attack, but they can also be used to add +2 to the damage of an attack, because more accurate attacks also inflict more damage.

MOVEMENT

Movement covers most physical actions that aren't combat. Running, jumping, balancing, swimming, and sneaking are all Movement actions. Likewise, subtle uses of your body, such as hiding, picking a lock, or doing craftwork are all Movement actions.

Movement also includes dodging attacks.

PHYSICALITY

Physicality represents things that require brute force or great stamina. Pushing open a latched door is a Physicality action. Physicality also includes withstanding the debilitating effects of things like poison or disease.

A bene in the Physicality pool can also be spent in place of taking 1 Wound, to represent the character's ability to absorb damage. This has to be spent as the Wound is suffered, and it faces the same limitations of spending bene (normally, you can spend only one at a time).

After the fact, at any time, you can use an action to spend a Physicality bene to negate an Injury, but not a Wound. Wounds suffered are recovered only through rest or magic.

Thus, Physicality is the most straightforward way of determining how much punishment you can

sustain before you die. While this might sound like a quality one never wants tested, vislae are often put in grueling, violent situations.

PERCEPTION

Perception represents seeing things, hearing things, and even sometimes touching or smelling things. Searching a bookshelf for an **invisible** book is a Perception action. Listening at a door to determine if the ghosts in the next room are restless is a Perception action. Your senses are an important part of your body and a clear expression of “Certes,” as the very word means what can be perceived.

QUALIA

Qualia determines how smart, knowledgeable, and likable your character is. It includes intelligence, wisdom, charisma, education, reasoning, wit, willpower, and charm. Qualia governs solving puzzles, remembering facts, and telling convincing lies. Characters interested in communicating effectively or being learned scholars should stress their Qualia stat.

Qualia also represents your magical power. When you cast a spell or use a magical power, you’ll be using your Qualia. Defensively, you’ll use it if a foe is attempting to attack you with magic. All vislae will very likely want to focus on their Qualia stat.

The four Qualia pools are Sorcery, Interaction, Intellect, and Sortilege.

SORCERY

Sorcery is spellcasting. It is performing rituals, using signs, and slinging hexes. It’s using the abilities granted to you by your forte. When Weavers weave, they use Sorcery. When Makers craft, they use Sorcery. Bene from Sorcery can help ensure a spell’s success, but they also power spells at a cost of 1 bene per spell level. When spending bene to power a spell or other ability, the only limit is the total number of bene in your Sorcery pool at the time. In fact, since bene spent to power a magical ability don’t count against the normal limit of 1 bene per action, you can still add 1 additional bene to increase the level of the spell (and thus add

It’s tempting for a GM to ask a player to roll for a Perception-based action to see if the player notices something hidden when the character’s not looking. This is a mistake. With the exception of defense actions, only players initiate actions. The GM should not tell a player to take a Perception action. So unless a player states that they’re looking for something, they don’t take that action. The GM should use another method (perhaps a GM shift—see The Gate, page 9) to determine if the PC notices something.

Most characters will have higher Qualia scores than Certes scores. It’s just a fact of life for vislae that mind is more important than body.

GMs might be tempted to call for a player to make an Intellect-based roll to see if they know a particular bit of information. As with Perception, this is the wrong tactic. This is a player-initiated mechanic. Players should say to the GM, “I want to know if I know anything about this topic,” and then make the roll.

Nearby, page 74

+1 to your venture). So, for example, if Fiona casts a level 3 spell, she can spend 4 Sorcery to gain an additional +1 to the venture (3 for the spell, and 1 extra). And vislae always add the level of the spell to the venture, so she has a venture of 4, plus any other modifiers she might have.

INTERACTION

Any time a character interacts with another being, whether they’re trying to persuade them, interrogate them, or deceive them, that’s Interaction. Interaction actions can also include speaking before a crowd or asking around town for rumors and gossip.

INTELLECT

Intellect is the power of your mind and your accumulated knowledge. It’s figuring out a logic puzzle, recalling a historical fact, or doing math. Intellect also includes resisting mental effects like mind control or madness.

A bene in the Intellect pool can be spent in place of taking 1 Anguish, representing the character’s ability to weather psychic damage. This has to be spent as the Anguish is suffered, and it faces the same limitations of spending bene (normally, you can spend only one at a time).

After the fact, at any time, you can use an action to spend an Intellect bene to negate an Injury, but not an Anguish. Anguishes suffered are recovered only through rest or magic.

SORTILEGE

A vislae is not limited only by their Physicality. A vislae is not limited by their training. A vislae is not even limited by their spells and secrets. A vislae can use their raw magical might to influence any action they undertake, or any action someone else takes, as long as they are **nearby** and within sight. This is called Sortilege. In such cases, you are literally using magic to manipulate reality on a very basic level. You use magic to impose your will on events.

When a vislae assigns Qualia points to their Sortilege pool, this does not add bene, but instead

SIPHON POWER RITE

adds enhancements. These enhancements allow the player to roll an additional die to determine success (or, in some cases, the number of successes).

Normally, you cannot use Sortilege on an action that already has an enhancement, such as additional dice from casting a spell or using an ability that provides them. Thus, most of the time, a vislae can't use Sortilege to aid in the casting of a spell or similar ability. Likewise, it means that you can't use more than 1 enhancement from Sortilege on one action. However, those who know the **Advanced Sortilege** secret get around the limitation of only 1 enhancement at a time.

USING BENE

When you really need to accomplish an action, you can use a bene. This represents a concentrated effort on the character's part. A bene adds +1 to the action.

You don't have to use a bene if you don't want to. If you choose to apply a bene to an action, it adds

Sometimes using Sortilege is called "a whammy," as in "putting a whammy on it." But this is street slang not used by most vislae.

THE WAY

*Advanced Sortilege,
page 85*

*Expansive Endeavor,
page 88*

*Magnificent Endeavor,
page 90*

to the venture of the action, along with modifiers based on skill, conditions, or other effects, and thus you must do it before you attempt the roll—you can't roll first and then decide to apply a bene if you rolled poorly.

Skills and other advantages also add to an action, and you can use them in conjunction with bene. Normally, however, a character can use only one bene per action. In addition, your character might have special abilities or equipment that allow you to use bene to accomplish a special effect, such as knocking down a foe with an attack or affecting multiple targets with a power that normally affects only one.

Usually, you cannot add more than one bene to an action. However, those who know the **Expansive Endeavor** and **Magnificent Endeavor** secrets get around this limitation.

VEXES AND SCOURGES

Through use of **kindled items** or weird magic, you might end up with vexes in your stat pools as well. Vexes are the opposite of bene. When you spend them, you subtract 1 from your venture. You can use a bene to cancel out a vex if you spend both.

The GM decides when you spend a vex. They will always make certain it happens on a significant action.

If you have a circumstance that gives you a vex, such as wearing a kindled item, and you end that circumstance (taking off the item) before you have spent the vex, the vex lingers. However, if you have ended the circumstance and you've still got the vex, refreshing that pool will eliminate the vex.

A scourge is like a vex but it stays in your pool and forces you to subtract 1 from your venture for every action related to that pool. You don't "spend" a scourge. You have to get rid of it somehow—usually through some magic or a specific action.

RESTING AND REFRESHING POOLS

Characters can reset one of their pools by resting; this can be done four times each day. For two of these rests, the characters take a quick breather that is only an action. For another, it takes a longer rest of ten minutes. For another, it takes one hour of rest. However, these can be used in any order.

For example, a vislae might get themselves into a heated debate and, in the middle of it, use an action to reset their Interaction pool, which has been drained in the discussion. Later that day, they must climb a tall slope and deal with the fact that some of the stones on the slope come alive and menace them. After that, the vislae stops for lunch and rests an hour, resetting their Movement pool. Before going on, however, they rest another ten minutes to reset their Sorcery pool because they've cast a lot of spells. Toward the end of the day, they get into an altercation with a pack of hungry demons and, in the middle of it, need to take a quick breather for a round and reset their Physicality pool because they've suffered serious damage.

Normally, at the end of the day, when characters sleep or rest for a long period of time (hours),



Scourge

Kindled items, page 183

The GM's ability to call for a pool reset is meant to help characters and to keep abilities that add to pools in check. In other words, characters can't just keep building up the bene in a pool because the GM can call for a reset, ending magical assistance from spells or whatnot.

In some places, such as the character tomes, you'll find references to SQ and SC. These stand for Scourge in all Qualia stat pools and Scourge in all Certes stat pools, respectively.

Perception, page 27

Use the vex and scourge counters right in the appropriate pools on the stat pool sheet, just like bene.



THE GATE

Unwanted Conditions, page 32

The character tomes are not forms to fill out. They're tools to help you record and keep track of various aspects of your character. You should feel free to customize them as you see fit.

all their pools reset to starting values, as do the number of rests available.

In fact, at any time, the GM can state that pools reset to their starting values. This usually occurs when the characters sleep for the night or a significant amount of time passes. But even the rare characters who do not sleep need to have their pools reset from time to time, so the GM has the authority to call for this to occur whenever it seems appropriate. At this point, the character gets all their rests back as well.

If a player wishes, they can use their ten-minute or one-hour rests to heal 1 Wound or Anguish rather than restore a pool.

Refreshing a pool always puts it back to its starting value. Typically, this is the value you assigned to it when you distributed points from your stats. Sometimes, however, circumstances increase your pools. For example, a spell gives you 3 **Perception** bene. Such an increase is temporary, and if you refresh your Perception pool and haven't yet used the additional bene, they are lost. In other cases, pool alterations might be ongoing. A kindled item, for example, might be a pair of fashionable glasses that adds a bene to Interaction. If you refresh the pool while wearing the glasses, you get the bonus bene after you refresh.

This is true of vex as well. If those same kindled glasses give you 1 vex in Accuracy, and you are wearing the glasses when you refresh, you gain the vex. However, if you are not wearing them, you do not have the vex after you refresh, even if you never spent it.

Another use of the four rests is to get rid of **unwanted conditions**, like facing the ongoing effects of poison or being frozen by an enemy's spell. A character using a rest in this way does not get to also restore a pool. If something affects a character that they do not want, the character takes the time to rid themselves of the effect. Some things, like poisons or diseases, will state that multiple rests are needed to get rid of the unwanted condition that they bestow. So if the description of a poison says it inflicts 2 points of damage every hour (2 rests), it means a character must use 2 rests to stop that

damage. If they only have a one-round and one-hour rest left, it will take that much time to put an end to the damage—which means they’re going to suffer at least 2 more points of damage.

If the number of rests needed isn’t specified, assume that effects with a level of 1–5 require 1 rest, those of 5–10 require 2 rests, those above level 10 require 3 rests. If a way of ending the condition is specified otherwise (waiting for the sun to rise, finding an antidote, and so on), then rests will *not* end the condition.

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Hidden Knowledge is a special statistic. Hidden Knowledge abstractly represents the mystical lore, the legends, the rumors and gossip, and the carefully researched secrets that the vislae knows. This stat is used to supplement any action the player and GM deem reasonable.

You spend points from your Hidden Knowledge score to show that you have lore that will help you in a given situation. Hidden Knowledge might be gossip, it might be arcane lore, or it might be something that came to you in a dream. Hidden Knowledge represents any kind of knowledge except for common knowledge.

Spending 1 point from your Hidden Knowledge grants you a bene on any action that you can justify being assisted by a sudden, small bit of obscure lore. Which is to say, virtually any action. To aid a climb action to scale a rocky stone incline, you might recall a secret you once read about the very type of stone you need to clamber over. To affect an attack action, you might blurt out a bit of embarrassing gossip you heard about your opponent to distract them. To improve your chances of sneaking past a group of demonic guards, you might recall a little-known fact about demon senses in the exact lighting conditions they currently stand in. And so on.

You can use only one bene from Hidden Knowledge at a time, but it can be combined with a bene from the stat pool that you would normally associate with the action.

Starting Hidden Knowledge comes from your *foundation*.

Whoever said that some knowledge should remain hidden was not a vislae.

THE PATH

Handasa, page 111

Because Hidden Knowledge is not used or gained nearly as often as the other stats, you don’t use counters in a pool to track it. Just note your total on the sheet in your character tome.

Certes, page 26

Qualia, page 27

Foundation, page 144

USING HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Often, using Hidden Knowledge requires a bit of narrative creation on the player’s part. In other words, you need to explain what hidden knowledge you’re drawing upon when you use it. You don’t necessarily need to elaborate on the specifics (in fact, it’s often better to leave the specifics out, because leaving them to the imagination lends power to the narrative), but you do want to consider the generalities. If you’re trying to convince the leader of the *Handasa* to help you and you can justify using a bit of Hidden Knowledge to recall something to blackmail her with, that might help (although the risks are obvious), but you don’t have to specify what that blackmail material might be. As another example, you might attempt to convince the GM that you once read a bit of trivia on the best way to pick locks so your Hidden Knowledge can help you in that challenge (once), but you don’t have to go into the specifics of lock construction to do so.

You can use Hidden Knowledge in any of these cases:

1. Anytime a connection would normally come into play.
2. In virtually any kind of Interaction action.
3. When casting a spell or using a magical ability.
4. When attempting a mundane action.
5. Any other time you can justify how using a secret might help you.

GAINING HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Unlike the bene in the *Certes* and *Qualia* pools, Hidden Knowledge is not restored through rest. Points spent are gone for good. However, new points can be earned through various means.

Hidden Knowledge is amassed through research, study, conversation, and eavesdropping or snooping. Types of Hidden Knowledge might be classified into the following categories.

Secret Lore: The most common and useful type of Hidden Knowledge, secret lore is gained through reading and research. The GM awards Hidden Knowledge based on character actions involving such research. As a general rule, three days spent

doing nothing but general research probably ought to earn a character 1 point of Hidden Knowledge, up to a maximum of 5 points in any given thirty-day period and a maximum of 20 points in a year. But the GM is free to limit it further unless the character attains a new source of information (new books, a different library, an instructor, and so on).

Gossip: Surreptitious characters who engage in gossip, eavesdrop on others, peek at mail, or do other such activities can earn Hidden Knowledge. Again, GMs should handle this case by case, but such actions probably earn 1 point of Hidden Knowledge, though probably not more than 1 a day, and no more than 3 per week. As with research, new sources of information are assumed—relying on the same busybody in the neighborhood to get all your gossip is not a good idea.

Trivia: Trivia is gained through living. Hearing rumors, catching bits of information here or there—it's random information that a smart vislae can put to use. Thanks to trivia, all characters gain 1 point of Hidden Knowledge each month.

Trueorbs: There is one unique method of gaining Hidden Knowledge as well. The currency

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE AS REWARD

Because sitting in a library or rifling through someone's mail should be only a small part of a vislae's life, a far more active way to award Hidden Knowledge is to tie it to things a character encounters in the story. Discovering an old book might be worth 1 or 2 points of Hidden Knowledge. Intercepting an important missive between NPCs might be worth 1 point, as might overhearing a conversation—perhaps by accident—in the course of doing something else. In such cases, rather than setting out to gain Hidden Knowledge, the character gains it more as an incidental reward for succeeding at (perhaps more interesting) tasks.

Obviously, getting information through eavesdropping, snooping, or outright theft poses real risks. Getting caught might result in violence, public shame, or criminal proceedings.

As detailed in the Gameplay chapter of The Gate, there are three modes of play: Action, Narrative, and Development, mirroring the three types of skills. While you might be called upon to use an action skill during Narrative Mode, or a narrative skill in Development Mode, the parallels are intentional. Action is for round-by-round, time-sensitive, usually dangerous tasks. Narrative is for longer group scenes that are less time sensitive but still vital. Development is for focusing on an individual character, their needs, their goals, and their background.

Venture, page 22



THE GATE
Venture, page 22

of Satyrine, known as orbs, is based on the concept of ideas and thoughts. Trueorbs are the literal representation of that—they are solidified ideas, thoughts, and secrets. A character can destroy a trueorb and gain 1 point of Hidden Knowledge.

SKILLS

Skills are specific actions your character is good at thanks to training and practice. Skills can be physical, like jumping, or they can be mental, like history.

There are three kinds of skills: action skills, narrative skills, and development skills. Action skills allow you to use a weapon, avoid being hurt, sneak, or move about with grace. Action skills are those related to actions with a potentially high price for failure (jumping is an action skill because if you fail, you fall and maybe get hurt).

Narrative skills involve longer-term actions like traveling, interacting with people, conducting research, and so on.

Development skills are those that won't often strongly affect success or failure in a tense situation but are important to who a character is, like baking, calligraphy, or building model ships.

USING SKILLS

Skills have levels, but only ever rise to 4. You can think of level 1 as being familiar with an action, level 2 as being practiced, level 3 as being trained, and level 4 as being specialized, but these terms exist only to give you a basic understanding. Each level adds +1 to your **venture** when you attempt that action. So a level 3 climbing skill grants +3 when you attempt to climb. Skills combine with anything else that adds to your venture, like the effects of a spell or the use of bene from your stats.

Very rarely, you might attempt an action in which two skills apply. For example, if a character is skilled in both jumping and music, and has to jump around on the keys of a gigantic piano to play a particular tune, both skills might apply. If it makes sense to the situation, you can use the benefit of both.

ACTION SKILLS

Action skills are used primarily in Action Mode in the game—that is to say, when the GM is keeping track of actions round by round. The key is that each action skill has the potential for serious failure, and a price to pay for that failure. Conversely, you get an immediate and tangible benefit when you succeed. So if you want to leap off the roof and grab hold of the fin of the flying shark as it courses by, you're using an action skill (jump) because if you fail, you fall and take damage, but if you succeed, you get where you're going. Sometimes, of course, jump might not have such important consequences, but it usually will have something along those lines.

Weapon Skills: If you want to be better at using a weapon, that's an action skill. Further, the skill is based on the weapon type, as well as whether it is a close combat weapon or a ranged weapon.

There are three weapon types: light, medium, and heavy, which are designations based primarily on size and heft. (Heavy weapons always require two hands.) Thus, there are six weapon skills: Light Close Combat, Light Ranged, Medium Close Combat, Medium Ranged, Heavy Close Combat, and Heavy Ranged. If you have 1 level in Heavy Close Combat, that means you get a +1 bonus to your venture if you use a greatsword, a greataxe, a staff, or any other such weapon.

Defense Skills: There are three defense skills, and they are all action skills. They are Resist, Dodge, and Withstand.

You use Resist when resisting a spell or effect that affects your mind (or your soul, or anything other than your body).

You use Dodge to avoid being struck by an attack or other danger like a cave-in.

You use Withstand to deal with poison, disease, or a magical attack that affects, harms, or transforms your body.

When marking skills down in your character tome, just the skill name and the level are probably all you need to write.

VISLAE WARNING SIGN



There are viruses that, instead of infecting you, infect the reality you live in.

Other Action Skills: The game has no definitive list of action skills (players are free to create their own skills to suit their character), but a basic list might include the following.

- + Acrobatics
- + Balance
- + Breaking objects
- + Climbing
- + Escaping bonds
- + Jumping
- + Running
- + Stealth
- + Swimming

NARRATIVE SKILLS

Narrative skills are used in Action Mode only rarely. They are used primarily in Narrative Mode, where time is more fluid. Most narrative skills require minutes rather than seconds to complete. They focus on interaction with other people and understanding and exploring the world.

The game has no definitive list of narrative skills (players are free to create their own skills to suit their character), but a basic list might include the following.

- + Animal training
- + Deception
- + Disguise
- + Driving
- + First aid
- + Intimidation
- + Lockpicking
- + Magical lore
- + Memorization
- + Moving objects
- + Oratory
- + Persuasion
- + Pickpocketing
- + Repairing
- + Riding
- + Sailing
- + Searching
- + Seeing through deception
- + Understanding motives

DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Development skills are those that are important to a character's identity, but only rarely used as a game mechanic. In other words, it might be an important and legitimate aspect of your character to be excellent at baking, but the number of times you'll be asked to roll for a baking action will be low.

The game has no definitive list of development skills (players are *particularly* free to create their own to suit their character), but a basic list might include the following.

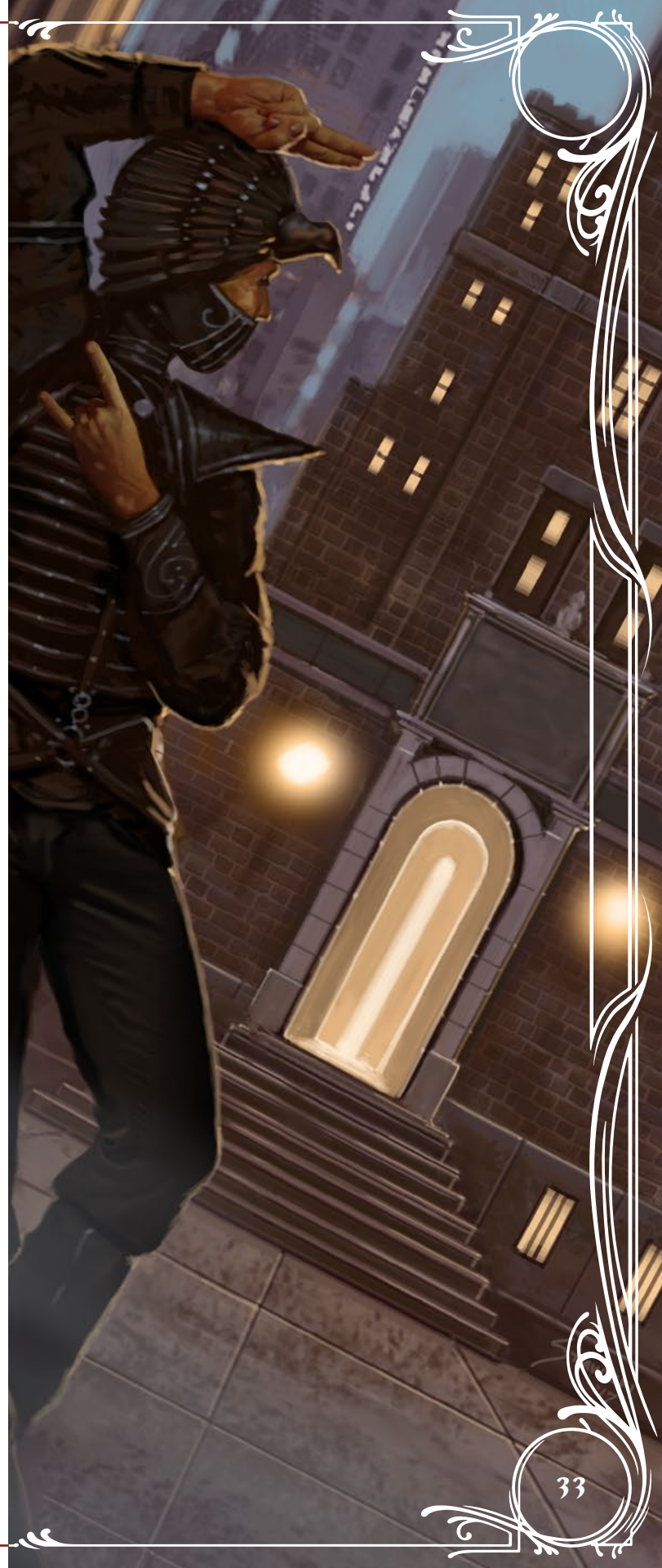
- + Accounting
- + Baking
- + Biology
- + Calligraphy
- + Cartography
- + Cooking
- + Crafting (usually subdivided into woodworking, metalworking, stoneworking, leatherworking, and so on)
- + Dance
- + Fiction writing
- + Gardening
- + Game design
- + Geography (usually specific to a locale)
- + Geology
- + History
- + Medicine
- + Metallurgy
- + Music
- + Painting
- + Performance
- + Poetry
- + Sewing
- + Sculpting
- + Typing

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Characters learn new skills by spending **Acumen**. Action skills cost 3 Acumen per level, narrative skills cost 2 Acumen per level, and development skills cost 1 Acumen per level.

The wandering ghosts of the lonely dead eventually fade altogether, but where do they go?

Acumen, page 22





ORDER (TOR)

“Your abilities are quite impressive, my dear girl, but what you can do is not as important to the Invisible Church as who you do it with.”
“Fuck that.”
“Ah, Apostate then.”

All vislae are members of the **Invisible** Church, a term with a great deal of gravity but not much actual meaning. The **Invisible** Church is not an actual church or organization. It’s not . . . anything, really, other than a way to refer to all vislae together. The term makes it sound like all vislae belong to a single society, which is incorrect. However, it is not wrong to say that vislae do organize themselves into groups. These groups are called orders, and they represent different schools of magical understanding and practice. They each see magic differently, and they use it in very different ways.

To begin character creation, as guided by the Testament of Suns, you should choose your order. The vislae word for order is “tor.” There are four orders of magic, called the Order of the Vance, the Order of Makers, the Order of Weavers, and the Order of Goetica. Outside of these exist those called the Apostates, who reject the very notion of orders. Order says a lot about an **Invisible** Sun character, for it encapsulates a general focus of magical talents and studies as well as a hierarchy and society to which the character belongs. To put it more plainly, order dictates some character abilities, but it also represents an in-game organization that the character belongs to. It is thus both mechanical and story-based.



The inclusion of Apostates in the umbrella of the Invisible Church varies depending on who is using the term. Often, they are thought to be outside it when one focuses on them specifically, but included when using the term “Invisible Church” generally (as in, a way to group all vislae together). It can be confusing.

The four orders are not the final word or the complete picture of sorcery. Not by a long shot. They are, however, the four most substantive and widespread schools of magical practice and—perhaps most important to the matter at hand—the groups that exiled most of their membership to Shadow during the War. Thus, those returning from Shadow now are almost all members of these orders, or they are Apostates rejecting those orders.

Despite the fact that members of all the orders seek to understand and wield magic, they have very different experiences, outlooks, and organization. For example, the Order of the Vance has a single hierarchy led by a governing body called the **Telemeric Court**. Conversely, there is not one but a multitude of Orders of Weavers, each unique and independent. Still, all members of a particular order have some amount of respect and camaraderie with other members of their order, even if they hail from different parts of creation. Two initiates of the Order of Makers, for example, know to greet each other with respect and grant each other the benefit of the doubt (unless given reason not to). Further, the initiate of the lower degree should show deference to the initiate of the higher degree.

DEGREES

The orders share one fundamental commonality. They all measure advancement in their ranks in degrees. Degrees are a hierarchy. While they show a progression in the understanding of an order's concepts and focus, they also show advancement in the social organization. A 1st-degree Goetic is of a lesser rank, station, and position of authority than a 2nd-degree Goetic.

Degree is not always a good measurement of power or aptitude. A Maker, for example, can advance in degree beyond their peers through service to the order, study of the order, and ingratiating themselves to higher-degree Makers, even though their peers might know more powerful spells or command greater abilities. It is some measurement of power, however, because our

While all PCs are members of one of the four orders, rare NPC vislae might belong to one of the smaller or more obscure schools of magic, such as the Sodality of Vryn or the Order of Honed Thought.

Telemeric Court, page 38

Record your degree and any abilities, benefits, or responsibilities from your order on the character tome appropriate to your order.

Kindled objects, page 183

NPCs, spells, objects, creatures—everything in Invisible Sun has a level. It will be tempting to think of degrees as levels for player characters. Resist this temptation. Degrees are as much or more about story than about game mechanics. It's possible to continue advancing a character without progressing to higher degrees through the use of Acumen and Crux to gain new spells, secrets, or other abilities. See Advancing Characters, page 202.

Crux, page 22

example Maker is almost certainly better at crafting objects of power than those of lower degree.

So degree is a little of both. It's a measurement of how well one is accepted in the hierarchy of the order, but it's also a measurement of one's skill and knowledge in the focus of that order. A higher-degree Vancian mage is better at preparing and casting specifically Vancian spells than a lower-degree individual. A 3rd-degree Maker can potentially craft greater creations than one of the 2nd degree.

JOURNEYMAN DEGREE

All members in the four orders began their careers at a special level called the Journeyman degree or, more rarely, the Apprentice degree. This is a years-long position of scholarship, training, and practice. Journeyman-degree individuals are the lowest-ranking members of an order. They are the novitiates, the postulants, and the underclassmen. The rank and file. Most members never truly advance beyond this degree, instead leaving the order for another occupation or pursuit with some education and training under their belts.

As they train, Journeyman-degree individuals do much of the core work of an order. Journeyman Makers, for example, create most of the basic magical objects found in the Actuality, as well as the **kindled objects**.

Player character vislae do not start at Journeyman degree. That stage is a part of their past. They have advanced to 1st degree.

ADVANCING TO A NEW DEGREE

Advancing to a new degree in your order involves achieving various goals. Some of these are related to straightforward game mechanics—typically in earning and spending **Crux**. Others involve story-based accomplishments as well as dealing with the politics of the order.

Advancing to a new degree requires Crux equal to the degree. Thus, advancing from 1st to 2nd degree requires 2 Crux. There are also story-based requirements specific to each order, such as

gaining sponsorship of a higher-degree member, performing certain rites, training lower-ranking members, and so on.

THE ORDERS

Order, or “tor” in the vislae secret tongue, is represented by the thumb of the Testament. In the case of an Apostate, it is not represented in the vertula kada—the object they carry in place of a Testament. Thus, order is the only aspect of a character that not all vislae have. But that distinction is primarily academic, as almost everyone other than Apostates consider “Apostate” to be a designation of their order.

The following is an overview of the four orders of the **Invisible** Church and Apostates, as well as the game mechanics involved for each. This includes their general philosophy, their relationships with the other orders, other names they might use, an indication of how members earn Joy, the actions needed to attain a new degree, and the abilities they can gain at the various degrees. Since all vislae are at least 1st degree in their order, every character of a particular order has access to the 1st-degree abilities. The higher degrees, however, must be earned.

Each order has a number of facets that define it.

Philosophy and Outlook: Each order, as an organization, has its own schools of thought, dogma, and ways of looking at magic (and the rest of the world).

Relationships: This is a brief overview of how the order interacts with the other orders.

Other Names: Some orders and their members have multiple names, either official or colloquial.

Path to Joy: A few suggestions for things that might earn the character Joy. This is not meant to be a limiting list, but rather thought-starters to give players and GMs ideas. Most of these suggestions can be used just one time each.

Path to Despair: A few things that might happen that would give the character Despair. This is not meant to be a limiting list, but rather suggestions

Maker's Matrix, page 43

Incantations, page 23

Players may wish to keep track of which incantations they have learned and used over time using a sheet from the Grimoire Pad, because eventually, when they gain access to conation incantations, they will be able to choose to use one of their prior incantations again.

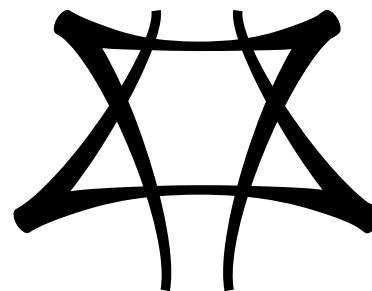
Joy, page 203

Despair, page 203

to give players and GMs ideas. Most of these suggestions can be used just one time each.

Further, each order's description details the abilities a member gets at each degree (Apostates, of course, work differently). These include the core expression of magic for each order. For Vances, it is spells. For Makers, it is creating items (relying on a special mechanic called the **Maker's Matrix**). For Weavers, it is weaving different magical aggregates like threads to create new effects. For Goetics, it is summoning. Each of these core expressions is more fully detailed in its own chapter in *The Way*.

In addition, some orders get skills and other idiosyncratic abilities at each degree. Degree also determines how many ephemera a vislae can bear at a time, and—at higher degrees—how many of these can be **incantations** you choose rather than incantations granted to you. The former are called conation incantations, while the latter are acquiescent incantations.



VANCE

We Vances are simply exemplary casters of spells. Vances know that spells are living things in their own right. They vibrate, squirm, and seethe. To learn a spell is to master it, like one masters a dangerous beast or—perhaps—like one makes an interesting friend. To study a spell is to ask it to inhabit you, like a spirit. Only a fool would put something dangerous into themselves, right? To cast a spell is to expel it from your mind and soul (unless you use your personal power to grasp

onto it so you can cast it again). We use complex formulae and intricate words and gestures to tame the inherently wild and dangerous natures of unmastered spells.

Perhaps the most mathematical and studious of the vislae, we Vances cast powerful, predictable, and reliable spells. Vancian spells have a mathematical and linguistic intricacy to them. This precision is displayed visually in the game with a special set of cards of varying sizes. These cards offer all the spell's details, and also indicate how much of a Vance's mental capacity is required to hold it. All the various spells fit together in a diagram like pieces of a puzzle, arranged as the Vance sees fit. Swapping out one spell for another is easy if they're the same "size," but if they are different, some monkeying with the arrangement might be in order. Of course, we can, over time, increase our capacity and hold more (or larger) spells in their arrangement.

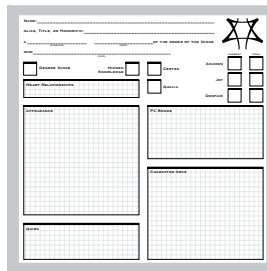
A spell held in a Vance's mind/soul can be cast with no cost to the Vance, or they can expend energy to retain the spell in their repertoire to keep casting it.

The Vancian Order is very traditional, with a strict hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy is the Telemeric Court, a council of nine Vances of the 6th degree. The Telemeric Court meets infrequently as needed, but always at a yearly gathering of the order called the [Conclave of Iov](#), held in Satyrine, with each year a different member of the court serving as the Supreme Magus of the order. Members can become more and more influential in the order if they gain the support and trust of their fellow Vances and master some or all of the key disciplines.

Sometimes, people refer to us as book mages. Others might use the term "wizard" (although in Satyrine that's a word long out of fashion). We are consummate spellcasters, spell smiths, and spell masters.

In a way that only we can truly understand, our spells vibrate, squirm, and seethe. They have their own sort of life to them—their own independent intelligence. Vancian spells *want* to be cast.

Players who enjoy a flexible but defined sort of character will enjoy playing a Vance. Of all the orders, it's the most like a traditional "wizard" or "mage," although such terms have long fallen out of favor in Satyrine. The element of arranging the spell cards on the diagram is appealing in both a visual and a tactile manner.



THE PATH
Conclave of Iov, page 107

Where do the feelings that have yet to be felt dwell?

Paradoxically, they are difficult to master and draw in, as if their own eagerness works against them. Once within the mind of the mage, however, they are simple to release. Sometimes we try to explain what it's like to have spells within us all but begging to be cast, continually. But most of the time we just keep it all to ourselves. No one else will truly understand anyway.

Philosophy and Outlook: Magic is a living thing. Spells are tools, yes, but they're more than that. They're manifestations of the intelligence inherent within magic itself. When we craft a spell, we are shaping an independent magical intelligence from the overmind, and when we absorb a spell and ready it for casting, we are communing with a sapience beyond our own, forming a symbiotic relationship. It is a mutually beneficial agreement based on harmony and understanding. (Some look at it as being more of a master-and-servant relationship, but they are the exceptions. They look at creating new spells as "hunting and capturing" spells. In other words, the spells already exist; they just need to be found and subdued.)

Relationships: We typically find Goetics to be kindred spirits, with Vancian spells being not entirely unlike demons themselves. Weavers, on the other hand, are a bit difficult to understand. They look at magic in a very different way than we do—very open-ended and undisciplined. They tell us that we're too rigid and formulaic.

Makers often make fine companions, but sometimes seem a little focused.

Other Names: Magician, wizard, mage, book mage.

Path to Joy: The following actions give us Joy.

- + Learn a spell of a level higher than any we've yet learned.
- + Attend the Conclave of Iov for the first time.
- + Create a new Vancian spell (and name it after yourself).
- + Learn a spell from the Vancian who created it (assuming they are higher ranking than you).
- + Spend one month instructing lower-ranking Vancians.



OMAR VANDERAL
AN ESTABLISHED STOIC OF THE
ORDER OF THE VANCE WHO WALKS
THE PATH OF SUNS

Path to Despair: The following actions give us Despair.

- Chastisement from a higher-ranking Vancian.
- A spell producing a different effect than expected (this does not mean failure, just a completely different effect than described).
- Complete separation from the order and any of its members for more than three months.

1ST-DEGREE VANCE: POSTULANT

Vance characters start at the 1st degree with the following abilities.

Connection: We have 1 level of connection with the Order of the Vance.

Ephemera Use: We can safely possess three ephemera at any given time.

Special Skill: We have 1 level of skill with anything having to do with understanding or identifying formalized and codified magical practices like spells, rituals, invocations, and so on.

Efficient Use of Power: Vances start with an additional bene in their Sorcery pool as a permanent bonus.

Vancian Spells: We have a grimoire with six Vancian spells. This has no cost to us, but the spells must be selected from those we can fit into our minds (alpha or beta class) at the 1st degree. We can add to this grimoire in a variety of ways, including advancing in degree, learning from others of our order, or **creating new spells**. Like other spells, each Vancian spell has a level, indicating the cost in Acumen required to add it to our repertoire.

When we want to use a spell, we read the complex formulae, lengthy linguistic keys, intricate images, and elaborate instructions and draw it all into ourselves, preparing it to be cast later. Although the uninitiated call this memorization, it's more an act of absorption or consumption. Sometimes we call it "clothing ourselves in our spells"—each one is like putting on an additional garment. Some of us, however, see it more as figuratively cramming the spells into our brains. Still others might refer to it more as joining with the spell and becoming one with it. The more powerful the Vance, the more spells—and the more powerful spells—the Vance can prepare at one

Vances should record their Vancian spells on a Grimoire sheet along with other non-Vancian magic.

Players may wish to keep track of which incantations they have learned and used over time, because eventually, when they gain access to conation incantations, they will be able to choose to use one of their prior incantations again.

THE WAY

Vance Spells, page 54

THE WAY

Creating new spells, page 16

Vances learn existing Vancian spells like any spell: by paying Acumen for them. See The Way, page 57.

time. This preparation process takes about an hour, regardless of how many spells are involved.

Each spell takes up virtual "space" within us. The total space we have is represented by a square that is 3 inches by 3 inches (8 by 8 cm). If we advance in degree, this space increases. Whatever spells we can fit into this space, that is how many spells we can prepare. So the larger (and likely higher level) the spell, the fewer we can prepare. The space a spell occupies in this square varies, but in general is signified by its class—alpha class (3 inches by 1.5 inches [8 by 4 cm]), beta class (3 inches by 3 inches [8 by 8 cm]), gamma class (3 inches by 6 inches [8 by 15 cm]), or omega class (6 inches by 6 inches [15 by 15 cm]). We cannot put the same spell into our minds twice (or more) at the same time.

The spell is eager to be cast, so casting it requires no energy or effort from us. Just an action. However, if we want to retain the ability to cast that spell again without going through the preparation phase, there is a Sorcery cost involved equal to the spell's level—basically, we're casting it, but metaphorically hanging on tight so we don't lose it when we do.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 1st-degree Vance has authority over journeyman Vances, giving them the power to request small services or casual favors, like running an errand, delivering a message, or filing papers. They are required to perform similar duties by those of higher degree.

2ND-DEGREE VANCE: VELATOR

A Vance can attain the 2nd degree only with personal sponsorship of a 3rd-degree (or higher-ranking) Vance. The Vance must maintain a good standing with the order and have exemplified themselves in some way. Initiation to the 2nd degree involves an interview with a representative of the Telemeric Court followed by a formal but private ceremony in which we are awarded a special medallion signifying our station. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Vancian Spells: The storage space we have for spells does not increase; however, we can reduce the

VANCIAN MAGIC

1. The Vance chooses a spell they have stored in their mind.
2. If the Vance does not want to keep the spell when they are done casting, there is no Sorcery cost. Otherwise, they pay a cost in Sorcery equal to the spell's level and retain the ability to cast it again later.
3. If a roll is required, they calculate the venture of the action, which includes:
 - + the level of the spell.
 - + additional bene spent (if any).
 - + any circumstantial modifiers, as determined by the GM.
4. The venture is subtracted from the challenge, and the result is what the Vance player needs to roll on a die. The spell will indicate if it adds enhancements of one or more dice. Typically, the player rolls two dice, hoping to roll the target number or higher on at least one of them.

occupying space of two of the spells we know to half their original size.

We also automatically learn one new Vancian spell that can fit into our mind at no cost.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 2nd-degree Vance has authority over those of lower degrees, giving them the power to request small services or casual favors, like running an errand, delivering a message, or filing papers. They are also more likely to be called upon by those of higher degree to undertake significant duties like helping with research.

3RD-DEGREE VANCE: MAGISTER

A Vance can attain the 3rd degree only after developing a new Vancian spell and having it accepted by the Telemeric Court at the Conclave of Iov. Initiation to the 3rd degree involves a formal ceremony open to the public, in which we are awarded a special medallion signifying our station.

*Conation incantation,
page 106*

*Vances have two special
sheets that show the space
they have in their mind
for spells. Vance spell cards
can be placed right on these
diagrams to display this.*



THE WAY
*Invocation of Knowledge,
page 36*

*More information on the
Order of the Vance can be
found in The Path, in both
the Fartown chapter, page
98, and the Organizations
chapter, page 106.*

As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Use: One of our ephemera can be a **conation incantation**.

Vancian Spells: The total space we have to store spells is now represented by a rectangle that is 3 inches by 6 inches (8 by 15 cm).

We also automatically learn one new Vancian spell that can fit into our mind at no cost.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 3rd-degree Vance has authority over those of lower degrees, giving them the power to request help with errands or research. They are expected, at this degree, to act as leaders and teachers for other Vances, and to help those of lower degree with problems from time to time.

4TH-DEGREE VANCE: CANTRAL

A Vance can attain the 4th degree only if they have performed the **Invocation of Knowledge** as a 3rd-degree Vance. This must be witnessed by a higher-degree Vance. Initiation to the 4th degree involves a great deal of paperwork and disclosing of personal information to the Telemeric Court. The induction ceremony, in which we are awarded a special medallion signifying our station, is conducted in secret and involves many clandestine gestures and rites revealed to us only at that time. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Ephemera Mastery: We can safely manage four ephemera at any given time.

Vancian Spells: The storage space we have for spells does not increase; however, we can reduce the occupying space of two of the spells we know to half their original size.

We also automatically learn one new Vancian spell that can fit into our mind at no cost.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 4th-degree Vance has authority over those of lower degrees, giving them the ability to request help with research or even accompany them on important missions. They are expected to act as leaders and teachers for other Vances and contribute in significant ways to the advancement of the order, including serving in administrative roles, fundraising, and troubleshooting.

5TH-DEGREE VANCE: MAGUS

A Vance can attain the 5th degree only if they have sponsored a lower-ranking Vance and that mage has studied under them for at least three months. We gain the medallion that signifies our station in a small, private ceremony followed by a public celebration. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Mastery: Two of our ephemera can be conation incantations.

Vancian Spells: The total space we have to store spells is now represented by a square that is 6 inches by 6 inches (15 by 15 cm).

We also automatically learn one new Vancian spell that can fit into our mind at no cost.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 5th-degree Vance has authority over those of lower degrees to the point at which they can expect those of much lower degree to work for them as assistants or guards over a long term. Vances of 5th degree are expected to take administrative roles, and put the concerns of the order over personal concerns.

6TH-DEGREE VANCE: GRAND MAGUS

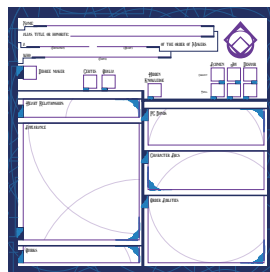
A Vance can attain the 6th degree only with the personal endorsement of the Supreme Magus of the Telemeric Court. Induction of 6th-degree Vances occurs at the Conclave of Iov, in a ceremony presided over by the Supreme Magus. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Greater Ephemera Mastery: We can safely manage five ephemera at any given time.

Vancian Spells: The storage space we have for spells does not increase; however, we can reduce the occupying space of two of the spells we know to half their original size.

We also automatically learn one new Vancian spell that can fit into our mind at no cost.

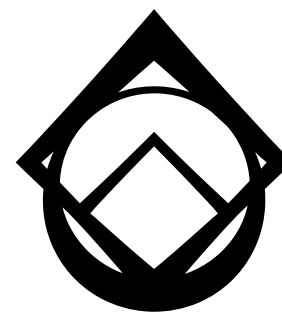
Authority and Responsibilities: A Grand Magus has complete authority over all Vances other than those of the same degree. They are expected either to become members of the Telemeric Court or to be available whenever the court might have need of them.



THE PATH

Makers' Truths and Lies,
page 108

Those who aren't interested in the traditional "spellcaster" type of character will find the Order of Makers appealing. A character interested in combat could craft their own weaponry. But there is so much more to the order than just weapons. A Maker could create a variety of simulacra to perform elaborate plays that they write. Or a vehicle that travels from raindrop to raindrop, following a storm. Or a fortress filled with mouths that speak the million sacred names. Or something that combines all of them.



MAKER

As our name suggests, Makers make. We might know a few spells, but first and foremost we focus our magic through objects that we craft. To put it another way, we turn our magic into objects that we can use. We can take other things—energy sources, spirits, demons, souls—and make them into objects of power as well. Physical objects and materials speak to us and tell us their truths. There is magic within all things, but Makers know that, most of the time, magic must be tuned and calibrated. Often, it must be given a source of reliable power or combined with other materials and ingredients to reach its true potential. All objects long to be objects of power.

Makers get to design their own creations and determine their exact capabilities, although sometimes one's own creation can contain a surprise or two. This involves a process called the Maker's Matrix. Creating objects requires a good deal of time, as well as often rare and expensive materials. Every object has a base material, at least one ingredient, and a power source. Items might also require catalysts or stabilizers, depending on what happens in the crafting process. Even partial failure in creation can lead to items with varying side effects, and a catastrophic failure might create a mishap, which can be very dangerous. More than one Maker has lost their life to the process.

"I found God. And I made him into a gun."

—an Emperor

We are often more physical than other vislae, using the tools and weapons we craft to overcome challenges. As the saying goes, “Spot a vislae with their head out of a book, and you’re probably looking at a Maker.” However, Makers can still learn spells and charms like any of our fellows to supplement our abilities.

The Order of Makers is a loose-knit collection of individuals. We meet only rarely, and usually only to showcase our latest creations or trade the occasional crafting secret. There is no governing body that oversees the entire order.

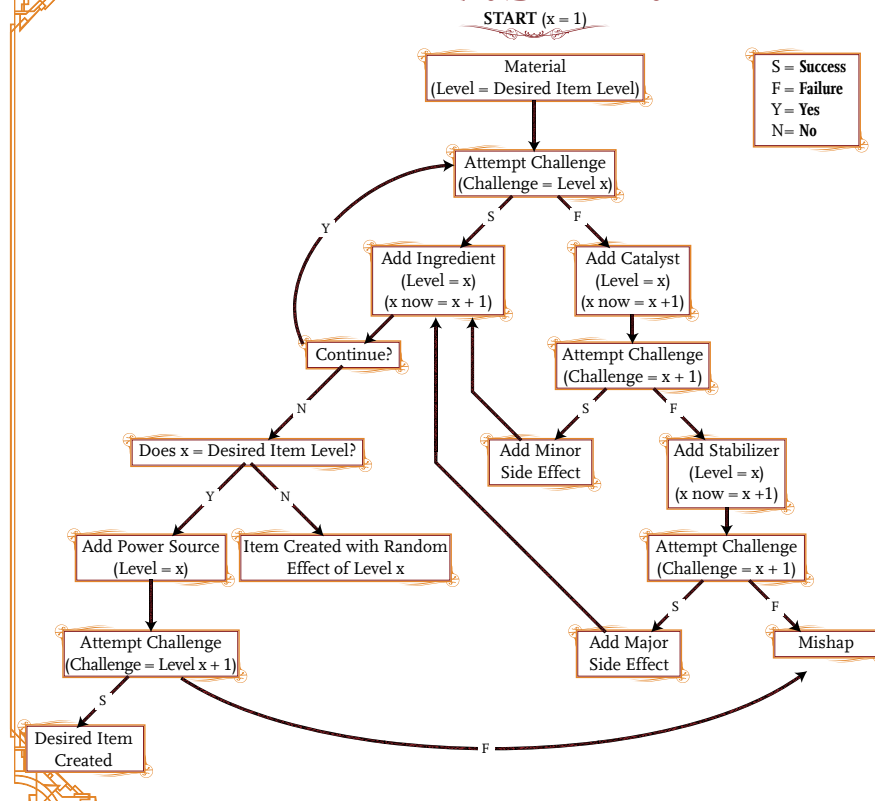
Of course, that, and the other facts I tell you, might be a lie. We Makers enjoy spreading disinformation about our order. Non-Makers will never fully understand us, because we won’t let them. We intentionally spread false facts about our hierarchy, our methods and means, and the various ways our order is run. It is the best way to keep our secrets to ourselves. In fact, as one advances in degree in our order, various truths will be learned and falsehoods revealed. Our own Journeyman-degree members likely believe many lies about us, our 1st-degree members know more but not as much as a 2nd-degree member, and so on. One must reach the upper degrees of the order to have some of the lies—perhaps lies one has been operating under for years—revealed. That is our way. In fact, once you get involved, you’ll likely find it highly entertaining.

Philosophy and Outlook: We Makers are problem solvers and planners. A challenge arises or a difficulty makes itself known, and we create a solution. We would rather create something ourselves than gain it some other way, because we cannot truly and completely understand a thing that we didn’t make.

Relationships: We get along with most everyone, although we aren’t especially close to any of the other orders. Many resent us for our secrecy or distrust us because they are aware that at least some of what they know about us isn’t true.

Other Names: Crafter, creator, source.

MAKER'S MATRIX



The Maker's Matrix is included as one of the handouts in The Black Cube.

THE WAY

Maker's Matrix, page 58

It's worth noting that characters can handle up to three objects of power at one time. This limit is similar to the ephemera limit—the power of more objects is just too much to handle. Those who have learned the Magical Management secret gain the ability to handle two additional objects of power, for a total of five.

Path to Joy: The following actions give us Joy.

- + Create an original, magically imbued object of power for the first time.
- + Create an object of power more potent than any we have ever crafted before.
- + Instruct another Maker in a crafting technique for a month.
- + Study under another Maker in a crafting technique for a month.

Path to Despair: The following actions give us Despair.

- + Mishap in the creation of an item.
- + Rejection by a Maker of a higher rank.
- + The destruction or theft (not depletion) of an item we have crafted.

1ST-DEGREE MAKER: SHAPER

Maker characters start at the 1st degree with the following abilities.

Connection: We have 1 level of connection with the Order of Makers.

THE RED SHAPER
AN ITINERANT EMPATH OF
THE ORDER OF MAKERS WHO
SHEPHERDS MINDS



Ephemera Use: We can safely possess four ephemera at any given time, but only two of these can be incantations.

Spell: We learn one general spell that we have enough Sorcery to cast.

Special Skill: We have 1 level of skill with anything having to do with understanding, assessing, or identifying materials.

Skill: We have 1 level in one type of crafting, such as woodworking, metalworking, and so on.

Crafting Magic: We have the ability to create objects of power and ephemera—any item imbued with magical energies. We can use the **Maker's Matrix** to create items if we have the proper materials and ingredients, up to level 4.

We start the game with two level 1 materials and one level 1 ingredient.

Kindled Items: We can make **kindled items** if we have the proper materials and at least 2 levels in a skill that is appropriate to the item (leatherworking for leather items, sewing for cloth items, and so on). The materials usually cost half of the cost of the given item. It takes two to five days to make the item, depending on the item. We do not use the Maker's Matrix when making kindled items.

Crafted Object: We begin with one object of power (level 1 or 2) of our choosing that we have created. Choose from the Objects of Power deck, or pick a level 1 or 2 effect from the **Effects by Level table** and assume the object of power has a depletion of 0 (check each use).

Signature Object: We possess a single object of high quality that we have fashioned ourselves. Only we can use this item—it is a useless bit of junk in the hands of anyone else. While we can have only one signature object at a time, if it were ever destroyed, we can invest 1 Crux and a month's worth of time to create a new one. In this case, we don't need to create the same object or imbue it with the same properties.

Our signature object does not count toward the total number of objects of power we can safely handle at once.

We can use the Crafting Magic ability to give our signature item powers once play begins, but to start with, our signature object has one of the following properties:

Maker's Matrix, page 43

Kindled items, page 183

THE WAY

*Effects by Level table,
page 21*

*There is a name for a god
so potent that it can destroy
that god.*

- + **Extra Armor:** If the item is armor (not clothing, but actual armor), it provides +1 Armor.
- + **Asset:** The item adds +1 to the action it is associated with. A rope is easier to climb. A lockpick makes picking locks easier. A jaunty hat improves persuasion. We cannot imbue this property in weapons, nor can we imbue this property more than once in a given object.
- + **Glamour:** The item makes us look more attractive if we have it on our person, regardless of its form. This minor illusion adds 3 bene each day to our Interaction pool.
- + **Hidden Away:** The item can be stored within the folds of space up our sleeve, in our hair, or in some other non-obvious place where it cannot be seen, takes up no space, has no weight, and cannot be found except by us or a Maker of a higher degree.
- + **Protection:** The item grants +1 to one type of defense of our choosing (Dodge, Resist, or Withstand), even if it is not an obviously defensive item (such as armor). We must have it on our person for this to function.
- + **Warding:** While we hold the item, it renders us immune to level 1 magical effects.
- + **Weapon:** If the item is a weapon (or an item that could be used as a weapon), it inflicts +1 damage. This can simply be more damage, or it can be themed—fire, cold, acid, soul-searing, and so on. We can imbue this property more than once.

2ND-DEGREE MAKER: CRAFTER

A Maker can attain the 2nd degree only if they have created a magical item and given it to a Maker of a higher degree, who tests it and (hopefully) accepts it in a formal ceremony. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Crafting Magic: We create magic items of up to level 6 using the Maker's Matrix.

Hasty Assembly: When using the Maker's Matrix to make ephemera, we can make such items in half the time, although the level of the challenge is +2 if we choose to speed up the process.

Improving Items: With a cost of 1 magecoin in materials and one day to work, we can increase the level of any nonmagical item by +1. An item can be improved in this way only once.

Identifying Ingredients: If we examine something, we learn if it can be used as a material, ingredient, catalyst, stabilizer, or power source for an item. If it is something out of the ordinary, we can also determine how it can be handled or stored.

Signature Object: We add another property to our signature object. We choose one from the list of 1st-degree properties or one of the following:

- + **Combat:** If the item is a weapon (or an item that could be used as a weapon), it adds 3 bene each day to our Accuracy pool. Obviously, we must be using the object in order to use these bene. We can imbue this property more than once.
- + **Durable:** The object has +5 Armor to resist damage. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- + **Summoning:** The item can be summoned to us from any distance, regardless of barriers or restrictions, with a snap of our fingers, using an action.
- + **Virtual Armor:** An item that is not actual armor provides us with +1 Armor.

3RD-DEGREE MAKER: MAKER

A Maker can attain the 3rd degree only if they have performed the **Invocation of Knowledge** as a 2nd-degree Maker while in the presence of a higher-ranking Maker. A Maker of a higher degree inducts us in a private ceremony, preferably in our own workshop. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Use: One of our ephemera can be a conation incantation.

Crafting Magic: We create magic items of up to level 7 using the Maker's Matrix. We can also use materials to make items that are 1 level higher than the level of the material.

Hasty Assembly: We can make ephemera items in half the time with no change in level.

Improving Items: With a cost of 2 magecoins in materials and one day to work, we can increase the level of any nonmagical item by +2.

More information on the Order of Makers can be found in The Path, in the Organizations chapter, page 108.

THE WAY

Invocation of Craft, page 36

Invocation of Knowledge, page 36

The knife's point tells tales of longing.

Signature Object: We add another property to our dedicated object. We choose one from the 1st- or 2nd-degree properties or one of the following:

- + **Better Warding:** While we hold the item, it renders us immune to magical effects of up to level 2.
- + **Easy Enchantments:** The object reduces the challenge involved in adding more magical abilities to it by 2 levels. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- + **Light Wield:** If the item is a weapon, it is so light and well balanced that we can use it in one hand while wielding another weapon in the other. In combat, we make two attacks, one with each weapon, as a single action.
- + **Magical Weapon:** If the item is a weapon (or an item that could be used as a weapon), it adds +1 die to the attack roll. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- + **Sense Location:** We always know the location of our signature object.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 3rd-degree Maker can call upon lower-ranking Makers to help with crafting projects. They are expected to review the work of Makers of lower degree and provide advice and assistance when asked.

4TH-DEGREE MAKER: PRIME MAKER

A Maker can attain the 4th degree only if they have performed the **Invocation of Craft** as a 3rd-degree Maker while in the presence of a higher-ranking Maker. A Maker of a higher degree inducts us in a private ceremony, preferably in our own workshop. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess five ephemera at any given time, but only two of these can be incantations.

Crafting Magic: We can create magic items of up to level 8 using the Maker's Matrix.

Hasty Assembly: We can make kindled items in half the time, although the level of the challenge is +2 if we choose to speed up the process.

Reconfigure Object: We can take something that is already magical and reshape it to our desires. This can be an existing object of power, a material with

inherent magical energies, or perhaps even the body of a dead magical being. The conversion is a challenge 2 levels higher than the level of the magical object or substance. The resultant creation is always 2 levels lower than the original object or substance. If the object is an ephemera, it can only be made into another ephemera. Only non-intelligent objects or substances can be reconfigured.

The time required is at least one day per level of the original object or substance. Circumstances (conditions, tools available, and workability of the original object or substance) can alter this greatly, but only to make it longer.

Signature Object: We add another property to our signature object. We choose one from a lower degree or one of the following:

- ✦ *Immunity:* The object cannot be harmed by nonmagical means.
- ✦ *Greater Armor:* If we have imbued the 1st-degree ability Extra Armor, we can use it to add +1. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- ✦ *Greater Asset:* If we have imbued the 1st-degree ability Asset, we can use it to add +1. Alternatively, we can use it to replace the +1 from the original Asset and make it +1 die instead. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- ✦ *Mobility:* The item can move on its own, floating through the air up to a long distance away, mentally controlled by us. Thus, we could send a knife to attack a foe or a lockpick to open a lock at range, and as long as we concentrate (using our own actions), it would act as though it were in our capable hands.
- ✦ *Retribution:* If anyone else attempts to use our signature object, the object inflicts damage equal to its level on the transgressor.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 4th-degree Maker can call upon lower-ranking Makers to help with crafting projects or run minor errands on their behalf. They are expected to review the work of Makers of lower degree, participate in advancement rituals, and provide advice and assistance when asked. They may be called upon by higher-ranking Makers to perform vital and sometimes dangerous missions and tasks.

The Maker's character tome has space for the Maker's order abilities.

Makers do not wear badges or symbols that show their order or degree, although many wear fakes to sow confusion.

There's said to be a secret order, using music as its basis.

5TH-DEGREE MAKER: MASTER SHAPER

A Maker can attain the 5th degree only if they have created a magical item as a 4th-degree Maker and given it to a Maker of a higher degree, who tests and (hopefully) accepts it in a formal ceremony. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Mastery: Two of our ephemera can be conation incantations.

Crafting Magic: We can create magic items of up to level 9 using the Maker's Matrix. We can also use materials to make items that are 2 levels higher than the level of the material.

Hasty Assembly: We can make kindled items in half the time.

Improving Items: With a cost of 3 magecoins in materials and one day to work, we can increase the level of any nonmagical item by +3.

Signature Object: We add another property to our signature object. We choose one from a lower degree or one of the following:

- ✦ *Defensive:* If unattended and threatened, the item will teleport somewhere safe.
- ✦ *Greater Magical Weapon:* If we have imbued the 3rd-degree ability Magical Weapon, we can use it to add +1 die. We cannot imbue this property more than once.
- ✦ *Greater Warding:* While we hold the item, it renders us immune to magical effects of up to level 3.
- ✦ *Intelligence:* The item has intelligence all its own, with a limited amount of self-awareness (although not much in the way of emotions or emotional intelligence). It can speak and hear language (but not other sounds) and remember information, but it has no other senses. The object can act on its own, activating its other abilities, but since it cannot sense, this capability is limited in many situations.
- ✦ *Perception:* The item can see, hear, and sense other things around it.

Authority and Responsibilities: A 5th-degree Maker can call upon lower-ranking Makers to help with crafting projects, errands, and material gathering. They are expected to review the work of Makers of lower degree, participate in important ceremonies, and provide advice

and assistance when asked. Lower-ranking members look to them for leadership and inspiration. The plans for their unique creations are expected to be made available to Makers of 4th degree and higher.

6TH-DEGREE MAKER: IMPERATOR

A Maker can attain the 6th degree only if they have performed the Invocation of Craft as a 5th-degree Maker in the company of a 6th-degree Maker. No ceremony represents the advancement into the 6th degree, as it is entirely a personal affair. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Greater Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess six ephemera at any given time, but only three of these can be incantations.

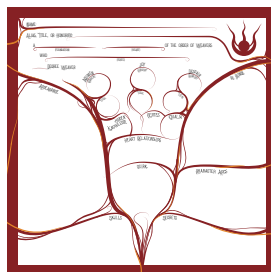
Crafting Magic: We create magic items of any level using the Maker's Matrix. We can also use materials to make items that are 3 levels higher than the level of the material.

Hasty Assembly: We can make ephemera in a single action, although the level of the challenge is +3 if we choose to speed up the process.

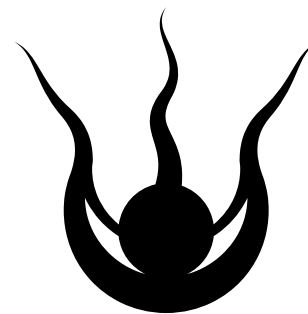
Signature Object: We add another property to our signature object. We choose one from a lower degree or one of the following:

- ✦ *Formshift:* The item can take on the form of any object or creature that is the same size as it or the same size as its Maker. It gains no special capabilities other than the obvious (a feather turned into a chair can be sat upon). If the item is unintelligent, having a creature's form conveys only appearance. However, an intelligent item in a creature's form can move around, manipulate other objects, and so on.
- ✦ *Telepathic:* The item can receive thoughts directed at it from long range. If intelligent, it can also send its thoughts at that range to another intelligent being.
- ✦ *True Immunity:* The object cannot be harmed by spells or effects of level 10 or lower.

Authority and Responsibilities: Obviously, the Imperators are as close to leaders as the order has, but most details about them remain a mystery.



Players who really want to stretch their creativity will love to play Weavers. They probably think well on their feet. They face fewer constraints. But weaving is more taxing than casting traditional spells. Choose this order if you like the idea of being able to do a few magical things with few limits rather than more things that have strict parameters.



WEAVER

Magic is a fluid thing and resists being confined into rigid practices like spells. True magic, we Weavers know, requires an understanding of and intersection with the universe and the universal truths. Such things cannot truly be encapsulated—imprisoned—in spells.

Weavers take magical concepts deeply imbued into the world and weave them together to produce effects. Perhaps not surprisingly, we refer to these concepts as threads, and we consider each a fundamental aspect of creation.

We use creativity rather than simply dry knowledge to wield magic. We take various qualities, which we call aggregates or—as previously stated—threads, and weave them together to get a desired effect. A Weaver might have access to the aggregates of Freedom and Moonlight and weave them together to create an effect that allows us to move with uncanny grace after the sun has set. If we also pull a thread of Hate, we could turn it into a spell of vengeance that comes in the night. We conceive our magic as we go, and thus we are always unpredictable. We are the artistes of the vislae.

We Weavers can also learn a few premade spells to give ourselves something to fall back on, the way a fantastic fencing master might carry a pistol at his side. Just in case.

The Order of Weavers is a collection of almost-unrelated cells. Each cell has its own hierarchy, its own rules, and its own outlook. Each is quite independent, but rarely hostile to the others. These autonomous cells are led by the highest-degree member involved—not every cell has a 6th-degree

individual involved. There is some amount of secrecy among these cells, but most of the time, it is not secrecy from each other. In other words, an isolated community far from nowhere might not even know they have a Weaver cell among them, but should another Weaver come along, they might welcome the newcomer as a friend or even a prospective member. We maintain a level of respect for anyone who understands the universal truths as the rest of us do.

This lack of grander organization makes it very difficult to even guess how many Weavers exist. Some claim that this order is the smallest of the four, but a few speculate that it might be far larger than anyone guesses.

One commonality among all Weavers is the Spider's Game. This game is played on a complex set of at least four and as many as nine boards at once, with a wide variety of specific pieces representing different moves and combinations, depending on the piece and the board it currently occupies. The Spider's Game, which can take many hours to complete, is intricate in the extreme, and showcases each player's creativity and deep thinking. Those who excel at the game think many, many moves ahead and remain aware of a wide variety of possibilities. Although non-Weavers can play the game, most do not. However, all Weavers own a copy of the game and play with other Weavers as often as they can.

Philosophy and Outlook: Magic is art, not science. While knowledge is good, insight and talent are just as important, if not more so. Plan ahead, but at the same time, be ready to improvise. Look at all the factors. Don't rely only on what you've studied—adapt to the current situation. Determine the various possible consequences of your actions before you act, but do so quickly.

We Weavers see a beauty in magic that others seem to miss. There's an artistry in what we do that you won't find in complex formulae.

Relationships: Vances and Goetics have a tendency to dismiss us as undisciplined or mistrust us for being difficult to understand. Makers understand us

Since they work in isolated cells, Weavers do not have an automatic starting level of connection to their order, unlike Vances, Makers, and Goetics.

Some sample Weaver cells can be found in The Path, page 110

There are single-player and multiplayer variants of the Spider's Game.

THE WAY

Aggregates, page 64

THE WAY

Effects by Level table, page 21

better, for we both work with something to create something new. Apostates often feel a kinship with us, considering us to be the least ordered of the orders.

Other Names: None.

Path to Joy: The following actions give us Joy.

- + Spending one month instructing a Weaver of a lower rank.
- + Winning a match of the Spider's Game against a Weaver of a higher degree.
- + Finding and recruiting a new member to our cell.

Path to Despair: The following actions give us Despair.

- + A woven effect taking on an entirely unexpected nature.
- + Using a woven effect to accidentally destroy or harm something we love.

1ST-DEGREE WEAVER: MASTER OF THE LOOM

Weaver characters start at the 1st degree with the following abilities.

Ephemera Use: We can safely possess three ephemera at any given time.

Special Skill: We have 1 level of skill with anything having to do with understanding, quantifying, or identifying magic that lies outside of codified magical practices like spells, rituals, invocations, and the like. This might include natural magical effects, magic produced by creatures, and so on.

Threads: We take two different categories of power, called **aggregates**, and combine them to create a magical effect. Each aggregate has a number of qualities that can be drawn upon to produce the effect—for example, an aggregate with the light quality could be used to illuminate a dark area. Each aggregate also has at least one absence. An absence is something that the power of the aggregate can never be used for, no matter what it is combined with. The level of the effect is determined by consulting the **Effects by Level table**. We must expend Sorcery bene equal to the level of the effect.

At 1st degree, we have access to two aggregates and can weave them.

PALOME
A STALWART STOIC OF
THE ORDER OF WEAVERS WHO
EXPLORES THE NOÖSPHERE



2ND-DEGREE WEAVER: MASTER OF THE TEMPLE

A Weaver can attain the 2nd degree only if we have studied with a Weaver of a higher rank for at least a full month, learning the more experienced Weaver's techniques. At the end of that month, the higher-ranking Weaver has a private, informal ceremony involving all the members of the cell. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Threads: We have access to three aggregates and can weave two of them at a time.

Practiced Weave: Upon attaining 2nd degree, we choose an effect that we have created in the past, and now if we recreate it, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

3RD-DEGREE WEAVER: MASTER OF THE SPINDLE

A Weaver can attain the 3rd degree only if we have spent at least a full month training Weavers of a lesser rank in our own personal discoveries. The cell has another informal ceremony to induct a member in the 3rd degree. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Use: One of our ephemera can be a conation incantation.

Threads: We have access to four aggregates and can weave up to three of them at a time. Weaving in a third aggregate might simply expand the breadth of an effect, but it might also magnify it. If two aggregates of the three have similar or identical qualities, the level of the effect is increased by +1 (without increasing the cost), depending on the circumstance. For example, a level 3 effect that weaves Fire, Freedom, and Moonlight could use the movement quality from both Fire and Freedom and the quiet quality from Moonlight to make a stealthy movement effect that operates as level 4 but still costs only 3 Sorcery.

Enhanced Weave: Upon attaining 3rd degree, we select one of the qualities of an aggregate that we have access to, and if we use that quality in a weave, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Weaver aggregates can be found in The Way, page 64. You will also find cards that have aggregates and their various qualities and absences. Keep the cards for the aggregates you know, so you always have a reference at hand.

WEAVING MAGIC

1. The Weaver determines the desired effect.
2. If the qualities of the Weaver's aggregates suggest that the effect is within their capability, the GM determines a level and a color for the effect. At that point, the effect can be treated, for all intents and purposes, as a spell.
3. The Weaver then casts the woven spell as they would any other: they spend Sorcery equal to the spell's level.
4. If a roll is required, they calculate the venture of the action, which includes:
 - + the level of the woven spell
 - + additional bene spent (if any)
 - + any circumstantial modifiers, as determined by the GM
5. The venture is subtracted from the challenge, and the result is what the Weaver player needs to roll on a die. Being magical effects, all Weaver spells add +1 die, so typically the player rolls two dice, hoping to roll the target number or higher on at least one of them.

Practiced Weave: Upon attaining 3rd degree, we choose another effect that we have created in the past, and now if we recreate it, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Authority and Responsibilities: A 3rd-degree Weaver is expected to work with lower-ranking Weavers in their cell and instruct them in the methods and practices of good weaving.

4TH-DEGREE WEAVER: MASTER OF THE WEFT

A Weaver can attain the 4th degree only if they have created an entirely new way to combine two aggregates and presented it to a Weaver of a higher rank, who (hopefully) accepts it as a part of a fairly formal ceremony. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess four ephemera at any given time.

Threads: We have access to five aggregates and can weave up to three of them at a time.

Enhanced Weave: Upon attaining 4th degree, we select another of the qualities of an aggregate that we have access to, and if we use that quality in a weave, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Practiced Weave: Upon attaining 4th degree, we choose another effect that we have created in the past, and now if we recreate it, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Authority and Responsibilities: A 4th-degree Weaver is expected to work with lower-ranking Weavers in their cell and instruct them in the methods and practices of good weaving. Within the cell, the Master of the Weft is expected to lead certain ceremonies and come up with new weaves and share them with the others.

5TH-DEGREE: MASTER OF THE WARP

A Weaver can attain the 5th degree only if they have written and published a treatise on an entirely new way to combine two aggregates. There is no ceremony to induct a 5th-degree Weaver; it is a station claimed by the individual. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Mastery: Two of our ephemera can be conation incantations.

Threads: We have access to six aggregates and can weave up to four of them at a time. If three aggregates of the four have similar or identical qualities, the level of the effect is increased by +2, depending on the circumstance.

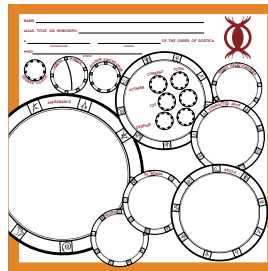
Enhanced Weave: Upon attaining 5th degree, we select an aggregate that we have access to, and if we use that aggregate in a weave, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Practiced Weave: Upon attaining 5th degree, we choose another effect that we have created in the past, and now if we recreate it, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Authority and Responsibilities: A 5th-degree Weaver often leads a cell. They help those of lower rank and are expected to write and record their findings and accomplishments (and those of the rest of the cell as well).

Red isn't just destruction. It is also change.

Supposedly, each magical order has its own secret currency that can be used only by those of 3rd degree or higher.



6TH-DEGREE WEAVER: GRAND ARTIST

A Weaver can attain the 6th degree only if they defeat a 6th-degree Weaver at the Spider's Game. There is no ceremony beyond that. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

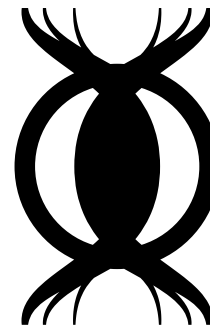
Greater Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess five ephemera at any given time.

Threads: We have access to seven aggregates and can weave up to four of them at a time.

Enhanced Weave: Upon attaining 6th degree, we select another aggregate that we have access to, and if we use that aggregate in a weave, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Practiced Weave: Upon attaining 6th degree, we choose another effect that we have created in the past, and now if we recreate it, it costs 1 less bene from our Sorcery pool (minimum 1).

Authority and Responsibilities: A 6th-degree Weaver is expected to start their own cell and lead it.



GOETIC

If you seek true power, you would be wise to join the ranks of the Order of Goetica. We of the order summon, communicate with, and sometimes control spirits, demons, angels, and far stranger beings. This is where true magical power lies. We call upon pacts and the ancient rituals that accompany them to forge deals with powerful nonhuman entities in this and other universes, drawing power from them in exchange for . . . various things. Allegiance, deeds, life force, or even more esoteric needs. We call upon these beings to serve us, help us, or simply do as they will.

The **Nightside of the Path of Suns** concept (revolving around a particular current of magic) originated with the Goetics. Summoners who favor demonkind over other patrons and servants call themselves Walkers of the Nightside. Sometimes they refer to themselves as “we who favor our left hand.” Those who call upon angels or other gifts of the **Legacy**, then, could be referred to as “those favoring their right hand.” Many of us, however, eschew such frippery.

At the very heart of our art is the negotiation and interaction with the inhuman otherworldly beings we conjure. This process is called the colloquy. It can involve gifts, bribes, persuasion, intimidation, compulsion, or trickery. It can rely on agreements made in ancient pacts, contracts signed, or obligations owed. There is no one right way to convince a conjured entity to do what we want it to do—we use many strategies.

We Goetics must have a good understanding of the beings that we deal with. The complexities of entreating or attempting to control such entities make the undertaking tricky, to say the least. Dangerous to one’s very soul might be more accurate.

The Goetic Order is an intricate organization with a complex structure. Whole books of bylaws, guidelines, and requirements make it almost as complicated as the hierarchies of spirits that we interact with. As without, so within. Leadership in the order is, of course, based on degree, but within the ranks of the 6th-degree Goetics, the understanding of who commands what aspect of the order is byzantine and confusing, even to most Goetics. Each of the Ultima Mysterions (6th-degree Goetics) oversees a specific area, which means that each has a secondary title, such as Master of the Initiations, Master of Namekeeping, Master of Pact Records, Master of the Ceremonies, and Master of the Libraries, to name just a few.

Philosophy and Outlook: Goetics typically choose either the left-hand path or the right-hand path, which are also called the Nightside Path and the Path of Suns. Thus, we mostly focus on the ideals of

THE PATH

*Nightside of the Path of
Suns, page 36*

THE PATH

Legacy, page 6

Players who like the idea of employing both diplomacy and domination mixed with a deep understanding of the immortal worlds and the complexities of magic should play Goetics. They’ve got all the trappings of the classic demonologist if you want them, or you can go for something different if you just like the idea of summoning something else to do your dirty work or to watch your back when you need it.

Pacts are ancient, elaborate agreements made with otherworldly entities. If a Goetic knows the details of a pact that involves a summoned entity, they gain bonuses in dealing with that entity.

demons or of angels. That saddles us with a pretty heavy “good and evil” dichotomy, but it’s more nuanced than that. Nightside Path Goetics might undertake working with demons as simply the best way to accomplish our (not necessarily evil) ends.

Relationships: Goetics and Vances typically see (more or less) eye to eye, at least when our eyes are buried in a tome. Weavers and Makers can be too focused on their individual undertakings to truly appreciate our ties with the larger world.

Path to Joy: The following actions give us Joy.

- + Complete a successful colloquy with a being of a level higher than any we have dealt with before.
- + Complete a successful colloquy with a being of a type that we have never dealt with before.
- + Complete a successful colloquy with a specific being that we have dealt with a dozen times or more.
- + Instruct another Goetic in various interaction skills for a month.
- + Come upon a summonable entity’s name or information about a pact through atypical means (not by purchasing it with Acumen).

BEINGS AND THE REALMS

Each sun shines down upon a different realm, and within each realm dwell various beings that a Goetic can attempt to summon and enter into colloquy with. These include, first and foremost, the demons of the Red and the Dark, but also spirits of the dead from the Pale, representatives of life from the Green, dream entities from the Blue, and so on. More than that, however, beings not aligned with a particular realm, such as the angels and other creatures of the Legacy, can also be summoned.

Goetics often choose a particular type of being that they primarily interact with.

Path to Despair: The following actions give us Despair.

- A summoned being gets out of our control and harms someone or something we hold dear.
- A summoned being, in addition to performing whatever action we've given it, tells us something horrifically disturbing about ourselves, our future, or someone we love.

1ST-DEGREE GOETIC: INITIATE OF THE MYSTERIES

Goetic characters start at the 1st degree with the following abilities.

Connection: We have 1 level of connection with the Order of Goetica.

Ephemera Use: We can safely possess three ephemera at any given time.

Spell: We learn one general spell that we have enough Sorcery to cast.

FAVORING THE RIGHT OR LEFT HAND

Some Goetics refer to themselves as "favoring their right hand" or "favoring their left hand." The former focus primarily on dealing with angels, and the latter with demons. That does not make one "good" and one "evil," however. Many favoring their left hand think of demons as a tool that can be used however they wish—for good, evil, or neither. Some, however, consort with demons and embrace their manner and what they stand for. Likewise, some see angels as pure and noble exemplars of spirit, while others just see them as a means to an end (perhaps—and perhaps foolishly—thinking them the safer option).

Some Goetics eschew this distinction altogether and don't refer to their left or right hand at all.

It is very possible that as a Goetic travels about the realms, they might discover entirely new sorts of spirits or demonic creatures that could be summoned, bound, or bargained with.

THE WAY

Types of summoning, page 81

Counsel, page 81

Aid, page 81

Guard, page 81

Spy, page 81

Invocation of Knowledge, page 36

"Nightside" is a term for the forces that those walking the left-hand path deal with. They also use the term for the Inverted Path of Suns and the current of magic that it represents.

Familiars are independent spirits, not servants or slaves. They seek to help the Goetic but always have their own agenda. That agenda doesn't have to be counter to the Goetic's agenda, but it could be. The GM plays the familiar.

Speak With Spirits: We can speak, read, and write the language of any but the most obscure spiritual entities.

Create a Protective Circle: We inscribe a protective barrier that offers +2 defense against spiritual entities of the realm we choose when we create the circle. The circle is large enough to accommodate us or perhaps one other person instead. Alternatively, if summoning an entity, we can create a protective circle and summon the being inside the circle. In this case, the circle is always large enough to accommodate the conjured being.

Creating a circle requires ten minutes of work.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 3. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move up to a mile away from us, and can take up to an hour to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires one round of time and the devotion of 1 Sorcery per level of the summoned being.

There are thirteen **types of summoning**. To a 1st-degree Goetic, only four are available: **counsel**, **aid**, **guard**, and **spy**.

2ND-DEGREE GOETIC: MYSTERION

A Goetic can attain the 2nd degree only if they have performed the **Invocation of Knowledge** in the presence of a summoned entity of at least level 3. Induction as a 2nd-degree Goetic involves a closed ceremony and a luncheon afterward. In the ceremony, we receive a small jewel that is added to our order badge to signify our new rank. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Identify Spirit: We can attempt to recognize any spiritual entity by sight. The challenge is equal to the level of the being.

Familiar: We summon a level 1 spirit from a realm we choose. The incorporeal spirit remains with us as an advisor, granting us 1 bene in Intellect. It usually spends about three to four hours each day with us, and during that time it doesn't leave our side—it's always whispering in our ear. When it is not with us, it returns to its own realm,

and its own “life.” We can have only one familiar at a time. Should our familiar ever die, we suffer 1 scourge in all Qualia pools for a week and gain 1 Despair, and then we can summon a new one.

Each time we increase in degree, the familiar’s level increases by +1. We can also increase the level (up to 10) by spending 1 Crux. Higher-level familiars have these abilities:

Level 2: +1 bene in Intellect, for a total of +2.

Level 3: Once each day for about an hour, can manifest in the physical form of a small animal like a cat or a bird. A familiar with a physical form can travel away from us (to spy, carry a message, and so on) as their natural form allows during that hour.

Level 4: +1 bene in Intellect, for a total of +3.

Level 5: Once manifest in the form of a small animal, can further transform into a human.

Level 6: +1 bene in Intellect.

Level 7: +1 bene in Sorcery.

Level 8: Can manifest in physical form for as long as desired.

Level 9: +1 bene in Intellect and Sorcery, for a total of +2 in both.

Level 10: Once manifest in the form of a small animal, can further transform into a monstrous beast with 3 Armor, +3 defense, and +3 damage.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 5. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move up to 10 miles (16 km) away from us, and can take up to a day to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires one round per level of the summoned being.

There are thirteen types of summoning. To a 2nd-degree Goetic, only seven are available: counsel, aid, guard, spy, **query**, **theft**, and **assail**.

Further, we learn the name of a being from a realm of our choosing and gain the ability to research more names at a cost of 1 Acumen for every 2 levels of the being.

Authority and Responsibilities: Goetics of the 2nd degree living in Satyrine are expected to spend at least one hour a week working in the Hall of Records.

A Goetic can normally only have one summoned entity working for them at a time, although 3rd-degree Goetics and above can summon more than one being at a time, as described in their ability descriptions. Further, entities whose names or pacts are known, entities bound into an object, or entities that a 6th-degree Goetic entreats with, do not count in this regard, so a Goetic could summon and task a demon whose name they know and then summon another before the first finished their task.

THE WAY

Query, page 81

Theft, page 82

Assail, page 82

THE PATH

*Goetic Hall of Records,
The Path, page 101*

3RD-DEGREE GOETIC: CONJURER

A Goetic can attain the 3rd degree only if they have gained the written sponsorship of a summoned entity of at least level 5, presented to (and hopefully accepted by) a Goetic of at least the 4th degree in a formal, closed ceremony. In the ceremony, we receive a small jewel that is added to our order badge to signify our new rank. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Use: One of our ephemera can be a conation incantation.

Protective Sign: We learn protective signs against beings of other worlds. Each sign is both a gesture and an easily scrawled glyph (easy for us, anyway), and when we use either, it is as though we stand in a protective circle. As with all signs, the understanding involved is more important than the gesture or glyph, so someone can't observe either and simply copy it.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 6. Alternatively, we can summon two level 1 beings at once, interacting with them as one entity. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move up to 100 miles (160 km) away from us, and can take up to a week to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires one round per level of the summoned being.

There are thirteen types of summoning. To a 3rd-degree Goetic, only ten are available: counsel, aid, guard, spy, query, theft, assail, **restore**, **influence**, and **creation**.

4TH-DEGREE GOETIC: MASTER CONJURER

A Goetic can attain the 4th degree only if they have the sponsorship of a higher-ranking Goetic. In a formal, closed ceremony, our name, family history, and other details are added to the order's records. In the ceremony, we also receive a small jewel that is added to our order badge to signify our new rank. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess four ephemera at any given time.

Compel: When we conjure a being and we have its name, if we spend additional bene equal to the being's level, we have a chance to outright control

THE PATH

Order of Goetica as an organization, page 110

THE WAY

Glorify, page 82

Binding, page 82

Ally, page 82

THE WAY

Restore, page 82

Influence, page 82

Creation, page 82

The Seven Secret Syllables and the Six Sundered Words are rare and precious secrets, but knowledge of them conveys no special abilities. Knowing them is a matter of prestige and honor instead.

them. The challenge is equal to the being's level. If this fails, we can interact with them as normal.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 7. Alternatively, we can summon two level 2 beings at once, interacting with them as one entity. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move 1,000 miles (1,600 km) away from us, and can take up to a month to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires one round per level of the summoned being.

There are thirteen types of summoning. To a 4th-degree Goetic, all are available: counsel, aid, guard, spy, query, theft, assail, restore, influence, creation, **glorify**, **binding**, and **ally**.

Further, we learn the details of an ancient pact made with the leader of a group of beings that we can use to compel the actions of any member of that group. We also gain the ability to research new pacts at the cost of 5 Acumen each.

Authority and Responsibilities: Goetics of the 4th degree can require 2nd-degree Goetics to perform minor errands and tasks for them. They are expected to spend at least two hours each week overseeing lower-ranking members in the Hall of Records and assisting in ceremonies conducted by the order.

5TH-DEGREE GOETIC: MASTER OF THE PACTS

A Goetic can attain the 5th degree only if they have learned the Seven Secret Syllables or the Six Sundered Words from a summoned entity (or entities) of at least level 7. Proof of this knowledge is presented to no fewer than two 6th-degree Goetics in a formal, closed ceremony. In the same ceremony, we also receive a small jewel that is added to our order badge to signify our new rank. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Incantation Mastery: Two of our ephemera can be conation incantations.

Binding: We can attempt to bind a demon, angel, ghost, or other spiritual entity into an object we touch, but we cannot bind a being of a level higher than we could summon. If we spend additional bene equal to the being's level, we can attempt

LORD VRYX
AN ICONOCLASTIC ARDENT OF
THE ORDER OF GOETICA WHO
HOSTS A LEGION



GOETIC MAGIC

1. The Goetic decides what sort of entity they wish to summon (angel, demon, or other spirit), the level of the entity, and for what purpose (often called the type of summoning). They also decide if it is a specific individual whose name they know, or just a general summoning.

2. The Goetic spends Sorcery equal to the level of the entity. If summoning a specific individual, the level is also the challenge for the summoning task if the individual entity is unwilling. The Goetic calculates a venture that includes only additional Sorcery spent (if any), and circumstantial modifiers determined by the GM. If the summoning is not a specific individual, success is automatic.

3. The Goetic chooses a type of colloquy, which can be a conversation, an offering of payment or gifts, a threat, or a trick. Each involves two or three different Interaction-based actions (see Goetic Summoning in *The Way*, page 74).

4. If the Goetic is successful in all required actions, the conjured entity agrees to do what has been asked of it (and nothing else).

to imprison them. The challenge is equal to the being's level. Bound entities are typically trapped for a year and a day. Threat of binding is effective in the Goetic's colloquy with a summoned being, but an attempt at binding almost certainly ruins any future attempts at persuasion.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 8. Alternatively, we can summon two level 3 beings or five level 1 beings at once, interacting with them as one entity. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move any distance from us, and can take up to a year and a day to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires only one round per 2 levels of the summoned being.

There are thirteen types of summoning. To a 5th-degree Goetic, all are available: counsel, aid, guard,

The Goetic character tome has space to list the entities the Goetic has dealt with, the names they know, and the pacts they are familiar with.

THE WAY

Invocation of Craft, page 36

Goetic interactions with summoned entities are called colloquies and they always require at least two if not three successful Interaction actions, because the exchanges and dialogues are tricky and delicate.

spy, query, theft, assail, restore, influence, creation, glorify, binding, and ally.

Authority and Responsibilities: Goetics of the 5th degree can require any lower-ranking Goetics to perform minor errands and tasks for them and help them in summonings. Goetics of the 5th degree must work as sponsors for 4th-degree Goetics and serve in administrative positions in the Hall of Records.

6TH-DEGREE: ULTIMA MYSTERION

A Goetic can attain the 6th degree only if they have performed the **Invocation of Craft** in the native realm of an inhuman entity of at least level 8 (after being brought to the realm by the entity). The entity, or a representative of that entity, then attends a formal, secret ceremony with us and a gathering of other 6th-degree Goetics. At this point, we gain an entirely new order badge that indicates our rank. As part of our training and initiation into the ranks of this new degree, we learn the following:

Greater Ephemera Mastery: We can safely possess five ephemera at any given time.

Entreat: When we conjure a being and we have its name and associated pact, we have a chance to interact with them as allies and equals rather than as adversaries at no extra cost. The challenge is equal to the being's level. If this fails, we can interact with them as normal.

Summoning: We can summon beings of up to level 9. Alternatively, we can summon two level 4 beings or five level 2 beings at once, interacting with them as one entity. Once we successfully convince them to perform the desired task, they can move any distance away from us, and can take up to five years to complete the task, if needed and appropriate. Summoning requires only one round per 2 levels of the summoned being.

There are thirteen types of summoning. To a 6th-degree Goetic, all are available: counsel, aid, guard, spy, query, theft, assail, restore, influence, creation, glorify, binding, and ally.

Authority and Responsibilities: Goetics of the 6th degree are the leadership of the order. They often work as sponsors for 4th- and 5th-degree Goetics and serve in administrative positions in the Hall of Records.

GAMEMASTERING SUMMONED ENTITIES AND FAMILIARS

Summoned entities and familiars are NPCs under the GM's control. Summoned beings do precisely what they agree to do, and no more. Different entities have personalities and philosophies. An angel might be more willing to help carry innocents to safety. A nature spirit would be more likely to help someone trying to put out a forest fire. And so on. But no intelligent summoned being will do what they're told just because the Goetic thinks it's within their oeuvre. The entity still needs to be successfully convinced (persuaded, intimidated, or tricked), or rewarded for its time. Attempts to take advantage of an angel's good nature, for example, should usually end up with a disappointed Goetic.

An entity in a physical form risks real death in a dangerous situation, and most won't mindlessly endanger themselves if they can avoid it (the compulsion to carry out the terms negotiated with the Goetic, however, are more powerful than self-preservation). A being summoned to guard or assail might fight to the death, but that doesn't mean they take stupid chances or don't take whatever steps they can to survive.

Familiars are spirits who agree to be an advisor and ally to the Goetic, but they're neither slaves nor equipment and shouldn't be treated as such. A mistreated familiar won't come back tomorrow.

Both conjured entities and familiars are knowledgeable and wise in ways that mortals are not, but they are not omniscient. GMs should use them as they would any NPC. Just as a PC might ask an NPC guide to help get them through the wilderness, conversing with a familiar or an entity using the counsel summoning type should provide new ideas and insight, but there's no certainty of truth or correctness.





APOSTATE

Autonomy. Freedom. Individuality. Anarchy. These are the precepts of truly understanding magic. Anyone who believes magic can be understood within constricting, confining rules systems, structures, hierarchies, and tenets set forth in the who-knows-how-fucking-long-ago past is a fool. Magic comes from discovery and understanding, not obedience and lessons. Magic cannot be taught. It must be seized.

Apostates are excommunicated members of the **Invisible Church** (the formal magical orders), though sometimes that so-called excommunication is self-imposed. We eschew the orders, and reject organized magical study altogether. Sometimes we call ourselves rogues, sometimes mage errants. Very rarely, chaos magicians—some of us spelling it “*xaos*” for that extra touch of rebellious rejection of authority, rules, or organized . . . anything. Others call us warlocks or forsakers, or even oathbreakers, but we simply don’t care. Some of us have been expelled from one or another of the orders. Others were never accepted in the first place. Most, however, never sought succor from their tried and true—and thus mundane—ways and trite bits of philosophy and arcana.

Not all of us are quite so rebellious, inflammatory, or punk. Some of us are simply introverts who would rather study magical tomes and test theories all on our own. Individualists, rebels, introverts, and castoffs, we find our own way by using bits of magic

Players who don't want their character tied to any kind of organized structure might be interested in an Apostate. They lose access to some of the proprietary knowledge that the orders hold, but they gain the freedom to explore literally any sort of magic, or even invent their own.

Invisible Church, page 35



from each of the other orders, plus new discoveries we make. Sometimes while making rude gestures.

Apostates follow no single path. Rather, we each have our own path—our own focus, specialization, and areas of expertise. We are explorers who eschew maps and blaze new trails, mostly for our own edification.

Likewise, obviously, Apostates have no organization or hierarchy. No degrees or rankings. We are often quite unaware of each other. That is not to say, however, that Apostates are loners, don’t have friends, or cannot learn to respect other vislae, even those who work within the system of magical orders.

Philosophy and Outlook: Apostates are individualists. Even compared to other Apostates, most of us blaze our own trails. That means we often “reinvent the wheel,” but at the same time it means we aren’t mired in orthodoxy or out-of-date ideas.

Relationships: Goetics and Vances see the most distance between themselves and Apostates. Makers and Weavers can appreciate our individualism and lack of organizational structure a bit more.

Other Names: Rogue, rogue mage, mage errant, chaos magician, *xaos* magician, warlock, forsaker, oathbreaker.

Path to Joy: The following actions give us Joy.

- + Developing a new spell or other magical practice.
- + Finding a specific success as a direct result of not being part of an order.
- + Discovering an unexpected effect in what had been a tried and true magical practice.

Path to Despair: The following actions give us Despair.

- + Being presented with a clear example of the benefits of being part of an order.
- + Finding that a new spell, magical practice, or other development that we created is actually not new at all.



LAUK, THE THIEF OF IDEAS
A CONNECTED GALANT
APOSTATE WHO WEAVES
STEALTH WITH SORCERY

BEGINNING APOSTATES

Apostates have no degrees, but all starting Apostate characters begin with the following abilities.

Ephemera Use: We can safely possess three ephemera at any given time.

Skill: We are trained in 1 level of magical lore.

Spell: We learn two general spells that we have enough Sorcery to cast.

Counterspell: As an action, we can cast a counterspell that unravels and dispels one active, ongoing spell or magical effect that is level 1 or level 2. The cost for the counterspell is the same as the cost for the original spell (almost always 1 Sorcery per level).

Raw Power: Apostates start with 3 additional bene in their Sorcery pool as a permanent bonus.

Testament Rejection: As we reject the idea of the orders and the **Testament of Suns** that they use as their symbol, so too can we ignore the effect of a Sooth card held by the Testament of Suns if we choose.

Apostate Abilities: We gain two selections from the list of abilities for which we meet the prerequisites.

APOSTATE ABILITIES

Once an Apostate begins play, we can select a new ability for which we meet the prerequisites for a cost of 1 Crux.

Additional Ephemera: The maximum number of ephemera we can possess at one time increases by 1.

We cannot select this ability again until we have gained at least two other Apostate abilities.

Counterspell: The maximum level of spells we can affect with our counterspelling power is increased by 1.

We cannot select this ability again until we have gained at least two other Apostate abilities.

Combative Caster: All our spells inflict +2 damage (+1 if a spell affects multiple targets or an area).

We cannot select this ability again until we have gained at least two other Apostate abilities.

True to your nature, the Apostate character tome doesn't direct you where to record anything. Customize it for your character and your needs. Don't let someone else tell you where to record your important information!

Testament of Suns, page 16

Some say that every spell cast has a twin that echoes off into the aethyr.

Conation incantation, page 106

Extra Spells: We learn two general spells that we can master and cast.

Spellbreaker: We can turn our ability to counterspell into a passive defense. Using no action (although we must still be aware that a spell is incoming), we negate any level 1 or level 2 spell cast upon us that we do not want.

We cannot select this ability until we have gained at least four other Apostate abilities. When we do, the maximum level of spell we can negate increases by 1.

Street Magic: We gain 1 level of skill in two of the following skills: lying, sleight of hand, stealth, or searching.

Telestic Strike: We inflict +2 damage with any weapon attack, enhanced with magical energies.

Haven of Magic: We gain 1 level of skill in one type of defense in which we are not already trained: Dodge, Resist, or Withstand.

Exultant Warrior: We gain 1 level of skill in one weapon.

We cannot select this ability at all as a beginning Apostate. Once we do select it, we cannot select this ability again until we have gained at least two other Apostate abilities.

Drain Magic: We steal Sorcery from another vislae. With a touch, we take 2 Sorcery from the vislae.

We cannot select this ability as a beginning Apostate.

Incantation: One of our ephemera can be a **conation incantation**.

We cannot select this ability at all as a beginning Apostate. Once we do select it, we cannot select this ability again until we have gained at least two other Apostate abilities.

Guided Hand: For any weapon in which we have at least 2 levels of skill, we enhance the attack roll by +1 die.

We cannot select this ability as a beginning Apostate.

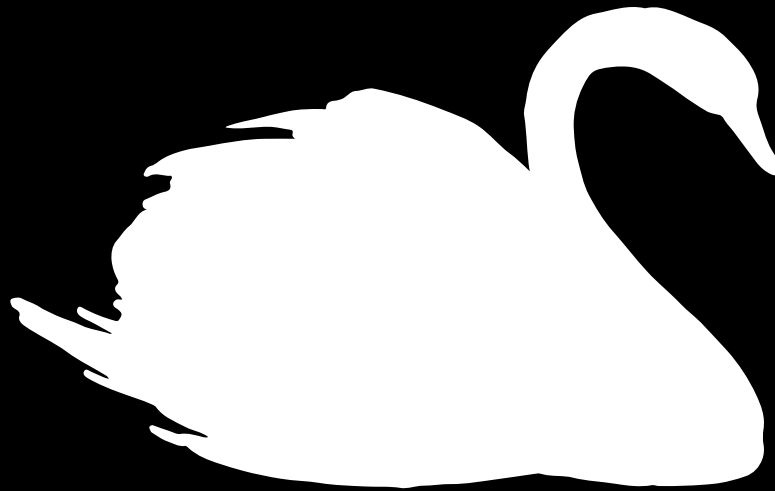
GAMEMASTERING ORDERS

Order is probably the most fundamental aspect of a character. When people ask “What’s your character?” the players’ instincts will be to respond with their order. And that’s fine. But it means that you should give each character’s order a lot of narrative weight.

NPC friends of the characters will likely come from their orders. The members of a Weaver's cell, for example, are likely to be their closest friends (other than, perhaps, the other PCs). Order brings with it responsibilities—a directive from a higher-ranking member is something a Goetic cannot ignore. If a Weaver's cell is in need, the members must come together to solve the problem. Members of the various orders are expected to train lower-degree members, either one on one as an apprentice, or as a teacher in a classroom environment. Plus, there are social expectations with the orders—parties and functions that members are expected to attend. A 2nd-degree Vance doesn't have to attend the parties thrown by the 3rd-degree members they know, but one who is smart and interested in advancement certainly will do so.

Members of a higher degree in an order have real authority over those of lower degrees. They can expect those of the lower degrees to do as they say, but abusing that power will earn them chastisement from members above *them*. And to be clear, the authority is not absolute. A higher-degree member can't require a lower-degree individual to give them money, for example. Still, if a 3rd-degree Maker needs help building something, it's easy to assume they can get 1st-degree (or, for that matter, Journeyman) members to provide that assistance. If a 4th-degree Vance needs a message delivered, they can command a 1st-degree Vance to do it for them. And so on.

Advancement to a new degree should be an important event. Sure, a player having enough Crux is the main impetus, but narratively, one can imagine that a Vance or Goetic has likely filled out paperwork and been interviewed to get to that position. Weavers have had discussions with more experienced Weavers. Makers have taken classes in crafting and practiced a lot. Even if there isn't a ceremony involved, it's a time for friends to take the character out to lunch or host a private party in their honor. Proud family members might come from some distance or send gifts or cards.





HEART (DA)

Heart is the very basis of your character. Order defines you, forte distinguishes you, but heart is your purest, truest self. It is not, however, your soul. Heart is more open, and more overt. Souls are secret. Heart suggests your most basic nature.

The philosopher Niul Rellistas first said that a vislae has three centers (no, four). He defined the heart as the vislae's emotional core, while the order represents the intellectual core. Forte is the spiritual core. And of course, there is the secret soul.

After choosing your order, you should select your heart from one of the four different types: Galants, Stoics, Empaths, and Ardents. There are also names, antiquated and awkward to today's ears and rarely used. Galants were once called Flamehearts. Stoics were Stonehearts. Empaths were Wavehearts, and Ardents were Stormhearts. Few modern vislae think in terms of the classical elements outside their Sooth Deck card family associations, and so only occasionally think of heart in these terms.

To make things even more dynamic, some vislae use the older, more classical name, but drop the "heart" portion, simply calling themselves a flame, a stone, a wave, or a storm. Each individual heart's section, below, has even more possible adjectives that a player can choose to fit an individual character. Players should call their heart what they wish.

In this general section, we will use the basic names for simplicity's sake.

Heart is emotion and one's emotional core that (among other things) defines how to react to other people or outside stimuli. If there are four hearts, each represents a quadrant on a coordinate



grid measuring extroverted/introverted nature and impulsive/thoughtful nature. A Galant is extroverted/impulsive, a Stoic is introverted/thoughtful, an Empath is extroverted/thoughtful and an Ardent is introverted/impulsive. Of course, every individual is different and reflects their own personal heart in different ways.

Each heart is tied not only to one of the classical elements but also to a family of cards in the Sooth Deck. Thus, Galants (Flamehearts) are tied to Secrets, Stoics (Stonehearts) to Mysteries, Empaths (Wavehearts) to Visions, and Ardents (Stormhearts) to Notions. This, then, directly ties them to a particular animal and an object because each card family has animal and object correlations as well. This affinity is only rarely more than superficial, but for some, such a connection can take on a more profound meaning. A Stoic living in a gallery of mirrors or an Ardent with a multitude of cats is certainly not unheard of.

Record your heart and any pertinent associations—like Sooth Deck card family—in your character tome.

You increase your stats by advancing in your forte. See Advancing Your Forte, page 74.

HEART AND THE PLAYER CHARACTER

Heart determines your starting stat values and grants you a pair of skills.

After you choose your heart, you take the base stat values provided and put them into both the core and refined values of each stat. Then, add 6 additional points to any of those four values as you see fit. Let's say a Galant who starts with Certes 9, Qualia 8 adds 3 points to Certes and 3 to Qualia. This means Certes will be 12, and Qualia 11. Later, as the character advances, she will gain more points to divide among her stats.

Galant: You are nimble in thought and deed. Quick thinking means you're good on your feet, ready with an extemporaneous plan or action. You let your intuition be your guide more often than not, allowing you to be calm, even sanguine, in heated or stressful situations.

Card family: Secrets.

Animal: Raven.

Object: Book.

Stoic: You are quiet and slow to action, but contemplative, even analytical. Rarely shaken. And you have great depths should anyone ever explore them. You rely on thought above sensation, emotion, or intuition. Sometimes you are said to have a phlegmatic temperament.

Card family: Mysteries.

Animal: Rat.

Object: Mirror.

Empath: You touch and are touched by the emotions and thoughts of those around you. Your words are wise and fall just right upon the ears of those who listen. You let your feelings serve as your guide. You are typically relaxed and peaceful. One might say you have a melancholic temperament.

Card family: Visions.

Animal: Swan.

Object: Blade.

Ardent: Quick to potent action, you react with strength and emotion, a veritable force of nature all on your own. At times, people might consider you short-tempered or even choleric in temperament. Your senses are what you trust.

Card family: Notions.

Animal: Cat.

Object: Clock.

GALANT

Precise with power.

Your heart burns with an internal flame that cannot be quenched. Flame is motion, life. It is delicate precision and broad destruction. It is the tool of the crafter as well as the destroyer. You take action quickly, but with trained moves and practiced skills. You are confident, optimistic, and likable in social situations. The proverbial life of the party.

Acrobats, athletes, explorers, fencers, swashbucklers, martial artists, military commanders, spies, and thieves are often Galants.

Characters who don't wish to be called a Galant or a Flameheart can use the following adjectives to describe their heart, depending on which they deem suits them best:

- + Stealthy
- + Quick
- + Daring
- + Charming
- + Roguish
- + Fearless
- + Mischievous

Stats: You start with these base amounts in both your stats, and have 6 points to divide among them as you wish.

Certes: 9

Qualia: 8

Skills: Choose two skills from this list. You have 1 level in each of those two skills.

- + Acrobatics
- + Balance
- + Climbing
- + Disguise
- + Dodge
- + Jumping
- + Lockpicking
- + Persuasion
- + Pickpocketing
- + Searching
- + Stealth

Card family: Secrets.

Animal: Raven.

Object: Book.

Who is the lord of the desperate spaces?

Some long-form magical practices require one or more performers to have a certain heart.

STOIC

Steadfast and sturdy.

Your heart is unmoved like a mountain, and strong like a boulder. Stone is slow and steadfast. It holds its vast treasures deep within itself. Rarely rash or impetuous, a Stoic considers their actions carefully. You discuss, you contemplate, you analyze. And then you act.

Thinkers, philosophers, scholars, leaders, planners, architects, builders, and masterminds are Stoics.

Characters who don't wish to be called a Stoic or a Stoneheart can use the following adjectives to describe their heart, depending on which they deem fits their outlook:

- + Calm
- + Careful
- + Thoughtful
- + Stolid
- + Dependable

Stats: You start with these base amounts in both your stats, and have 6 points to divide among them as you wish.

Certes: 7

Qualia: 10

Skills: Choose two skills from this list. You have 1 level in each of those two skills.

- + Crafting
- + Geography
- + History
- + Magical lore
- + Medicine
- + Memorization
- + Repairing
- + Searching
- + Seeing through deception
- + Withstand

Card family: Mysteries.

Animal: Rat.

Object: Mirror.

EMPATH

Equal parts reactive and proactive.

Your heart is always in motion. You are moved by the hearts of others, and you move others' hearts. You're expressive, empathetic, relaxed, and accepting. But you can raise others to action if need be. You feel emotions strongly, and you evoke the same in others. You understand people—you have insight into their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. You know what inspires, frightens, or distracts others.

Orators, diplomats, teachers, politicians, priests, and con artists are Empaths.

Characters who don't wish to be called an Empath or a Waveheart can use the following adjectives to describe their heart, depending on which they deem suits their personality best:

- + Empathic
- + Understanding
- + Gregarious
- + Nurturing
- + Compassionate
- + Perceptive

Stats: You start with these base amounts in both your stats, and have 6 points to divide among them as you wish.

Certes: 8

Qualia: 9

Skills: Choose two skills from this list. You have 1 level in each of those two skills.

- + Deception
- + Disguise
- + Oratory
- + Persuasion
- + Religious lore
- + Resist
- + Searching
- + Seeing through deception
- + Understanding people's motives

Card family: Visions.

Animal: Swan.

Object: Blade.

Heart is one thing about your character that absolutely will never and can never change. It's your core.

ARDENT

Raw power, untamable.

Your heart is filled with passion—love and rage are your fuel. Without warning, you strike. Few remain unaware of your presence. When you see something that moves you, you react. You trust what you can see, hear, or touch with your hands, and if you use them to perceive a problem, you take action to fix it.

Soldiers, warriors, rescue workers, heroes, knights, and killers are Ardents.

Characters who don't wish to be called an Ardent or a Stormheart can use the following adjectives to describe their heart, depending on which they deem suits them best:

- + Volatile
- + Passionate
- + Strong-willed
- + Strong-hearted
- + Spirited
- + Wild
- + Enthusiastic

Stats: You start with these base amounts in both your stats, and have 6 points to divide among them as you wish.

Certes: 10

Qualia: 7

Skills: Choose two skills from this list. You have 1 level in each of those two skills.

- + Balance
- + Breaking objects
- + Climbing
- + Escaping bonds
- + Jumping
- + Moving objects
- + Resist
- + Running
- + Swimming

Card family: Notions.

Animal: Cat.

Object: Clock.

THE SOOTH DECK AND CHARACTER HEART

Because each card family in the **Sooth Deck** has ties to each element, and thus each heart, turned cards affect characters differently based on their heart. When a card is turned, characters whose heart is associated with the card's family gains a +1 bonus to all actions as long as that card is in play (the exception being **Apprentice cards**, which give a -1 penalty to characters associated with the family).

CHARACTER HEART AND THE WORLD

Although it's possible to describe anyone in terms of their appropriate heart (hotheads are Ardents, careful thinkers are Stoics, and so on), only vislae talk about heart in this way. It's an insight into how vislae see the world, and how people interact with the (often unseen) magical world.

There is no reason that characters of different hearts can't get along and be best friends, lifelong companions, or lovers. In fact, it's easy to see how each could complement the others, with the various strengths of one making up for the weaknesses of another.

The differences between two hearts are not unlike those between two people who scored differently on a personality test. There also is no familial relationship between two different hearts. An Ardent father and a Stoic mother are as likely to have an Empath child as any of the other hearts.

Ultimately, then, the four hearts are fairly simplistic categories with somewhat esoteric significances, but the significances are still real. The more one delves into the magical currents, spellcraft, and other mystical pursuits, the more one sees the importance of each heart. Some rituals, for example, require performers of different hearts. Some objects of power or ephemera react differently to those of different hearts. A wise and powerful vislae is always going to keep their own heart in mind, always aware of how it can affect the magic around them.

Sooth Deck, page 23

THE GATE

*Apprentice cards,
page 8*





FORTE (TU)

So we've discussed a bit about each of the orders that an **Invisible** Sun character can join. We've seen that heart is the innermost, basic essence of a vislae. However, there is yet another important component to each character. Forte reflects a talent or focus that is essentially unique to the character. It's both what you do best and what you can do that most people can't (or at least, not the way you do it).

Forte is the most active aspect of your character, so the names are always phrased as verbs like, "Travels as a Spirit," "Revels in Beauty," or "Fuses Nightmare to Fist." Heart is who you are, order is where you belong, but forte is what you *do*.

Like orders, fortes have built-in character goals, loves, successes, fears, and disappointments in the form of suggestions for character arcs as well as earning Joy or Despair. The choices players make guide character development throughout the game, and vice versa.

Step 3 of character creation is selecting your forte. There are many to choose from.

FORTE DESCRIPTIONS

Each forte has a number of categories that define it.

Background: Forte usually contributes to the backstory of the character, or at least raises questions the player should answer about their past.

Appearance: Forte often dictates or suggests clothing or even the physical appearance of a vislae.

Character Arcs: Forte might suggest character arcs appropriate for the character.

Path to Joy: A few suggestions for things that might earn the character **Joy**. This is not meant to be a limiting list, but rather thought-starters to give



Joy, page 203

players and GMs ideas. Most of these suggestions can be used just one time each.

Path to Despair: A few things that might happen that would give the character **Despair**. This is not meant to be a limiting list, but rather suggestions to give players and GMs ideas. Most of these suggestions can be used just one time each.

Forte Abilities: Forte abilities, unless stated otherwise, cost **Sorcery** to use, equal to the level of the effect.

You can always spend points from your Sorcery pool to increase the level of effect of an ability you possess on a one-for-one basis, to a maximum of level 10, unless you know the **Divine Ability secret**.

Color: In addition, each forte ability is associated with a particular sun. The color of the associated sun is important for Sooth card effects and occasionally other effects.

USING ABILITIES

Unless stated otherwise, using a forte ability is an action. Most of the time, you roll to see if it takes effect. Like any action, you can use bene to add to your **venture**. Further, you always add the ability level to the venture. The **challenge** is the level of the target modified by defenses or other factors. That means if you're using an ability to attack a person, you use their level as the challenge. If you're using it to open a sealed gateway, you use the gateway's level as the challenge.

You don't need to roll to see if an ability takes effect if:

- + You're using the ability on yourself.
- + You're using the ability on a being that wants it to take effect, even if they're not aware of it. Example: you use a healing ability on your unconscious friend.
- + The ability has no direct effect on any being or object.
- + The ability conjures or creates something (unless otherwise noted in the ability).
- + The ability affects an object with no meaningful level, like a bit of dirt or a piece of candy.

Sometimes you have to roll two or more successes to succeed. In such a case, you must have an enhancement to even have a chance, because you can't roll two successes on one die.

Despair, page 203

Sorcery, page 27

THE WAY

Divine Ability secret, page 87

THE GATE

Venture, page 22

Challenge, page 18

If an ability doesn't give an enhancement die (or two), it's a good clue that it never (or practically never) requires a die roll to use.

Another, perhaps easier way to look at it is this: you roll to see if you affect something only if the ability affects something that doesn't want to be affected. This only works, of course, if you assume that inanimate objects don't *want* to be altered in any way.

You can cancel an ability's ongoing effect whenever you wish, and doing so is not an action. Further, the GM can end an effect at any time, but must award the PC that created it 1 Despair when this happens.

BONUSES AND ENHANCEMENTS

Some abilities give you a bene to one or more of your pools. Others grant you a bonus to a specific action. A bonus to your action is always a bonus to your venture. You subtract your total venture from the challenge of the action, and the result is the number you need to roll on the die.

An enhancement is an additional die you get to roll when you attempt an action. Rolling a success on either die results in a success. Sometimes, it will say "(+1 die)" after the level. If it does, when you use the ability to affect the target, you get an enhancement of 1 additional die. Sometimes, using an ability will grant you an enhancement on another action. This means you get to roll an additional die for that action.

For example, if you need a 4 on the die after subtracting your venture from your challenge, and you get to roll +1 die thanks to the ability you are using, you roll two dice. If you get a 4 or higher on either die, you succeed.

RANGES AND TARGETS

Ranges are divided into four categories. If an ability affects a target within a certain range category, it could also affect a target at any shorter category (unless the ability description specifically says otherwise).

Close: Anything close enough to touch (or touch after taking a few steps) is close. Two things next to each other are close, even if they're not touching.



(Unless the word “touch” is specifically included in the spell, close implies the potential of touch, not an actual touch.) Very loosely speaking, this range extends up to about 10 feet (3 m). Conversationally, this might be referred to as “point-blank range.” An ability that affects an area that encompasses this distance, more or less, is said to affect a **small area**.

Near: Something you could reach fairly quickly is near. Often referred to as “nearby” or “short range,” it represents a distance of 10 to 50 feet (3 to 15 m). An ability that affects an area a short distance in diameter is said to affect a **medium area**.

Far: Something you can see clearly but not reach quickly is far. Commonly referred to as “far away” or “long range,” this is a distance of about 50 to 100 feet (15 to 30 m). An ability that affects an area a long distance in diameter is said to affect a **large area**.

Very Far: Something you can see but not clearly is very far. Called “very far away” or “very long range” at times, this is anything from about 100 to 500 feet (30 to 150 m). An ability that affects an area a very long distance in diameter is said to affect a **very large area**.

Unless the ability specifically says otherwise, a solid barrier (like a wall or door) prevents magic from being cast through it, although a certain level of logic and common sense should be used in adjudicating this. Further, to use an ability on a target, you usually have to be aware of them and have a line of sight to them. There are obvious exceptions. For example, an ability that affects an area affects everything in that area, whether you are fully aware of it or not. An ability that specifically seeks the location of a thing, by its very nature, does not require the caster to know the location of the thing. These are guidelines, not hard-and-fast rules.

More definitively, the following terms specifically designate what can and can’t be affected by a given ability:

Target: Anything.

Being: Any self-aware thing, be it human, animal, elderbrin, demon, spirit, vampire, ghost, or thoughtform. Even most quasi-intelligent constructs are considered beings.

It is the responsibility of the player to keep track of effects they put into play and ongoing effects that require depletion rolls, and to make those rolls. Generally speaking, abilities that need to be checked each round are checked at the end of your turn. If a player loses track of this information, ongoing spells are assumed to have depleted.

You always begin the game with the first (topmost) ability for your forte, at no cost. If there are two abilities at the top, you choose one.

Calls Upon the Serpent, page 82

Bite of the Serpent, page 82

Voice of the Serpent, page 82

Hypnotic Gaze of the Serpent, page 82

1 Crux = 1 Joy + 1 Despair; see page 22

Creature: A being of flesh and blood. Thus, any being other than a spirit, demon, ghost, elemental, construct, and the like.

Person or People: A human, elderbrin, or something very similar. Thoughtforms that look like people can be considered people for such purposes.

DEPLETION

Either abilities are over immediately, or they last until their magic depletes. Sometimes conditions (the rising or setting of the sun, for example) will end an effect. Other times, the amount of time is random. To determine if an ongoing effect depletes, roll a die. If the result on the die matches the depletion result, the effect ends. So if the depletion says “0 (check each round),” at the end of each round roll a die. On a roll of a 0, the effect comes to an end that round.

ADVANCING YOUR FORTE

A character’s forte is a suite of additional abilities they can perhaps learn to harness. Each forte has an “ability tree” showing the path of advancement. Beginning with the starting ability (or, in some cases, one of the two starting abilities at the top of each “tree”), the lines show the possible paths for attaining another. You must acquire the abilities along the given paths, in order, although you can also move back to a point where the path branched and make a choice you didn’t choose the first time. Thus, learning one ability unlocks the potential acquisition of another (or sometimes two) later, and the new ability in turn provides access to another farther down the “tree.” Typically, the farther you move down the path, the more potent the abilities become.

For example, **Calls Upon the Serpent** presents the choice of two different starting abilities called **Bite of the Serpent** and **Voice of the Serpent**. If you choose **Voice of the Serpent**, you can later choose **Bite of the Serpent**, but **Voice** also unlocks **Hypnotic Gaze of the Serpent** for you to choose later if you want. And so on.

Unlike learning spells, but similar to advancing in your order, gaining a new ability in your forte does not require **Acumen**. Instead, it requires **Crux**. An ability

of level 1 to 4 requires 1 Crux, level 5 to 6 requires 2 Crux, and level 7 and above require 3 Crux.

FORTE AND CHARACTER STATS

Practicing and improving your forte is an active way to advance the entirety of your character. Every time you gain a new forte ability, you permanently increase one of your stats by 2 points (or two of your stats by 1 point each). If that stat is Certes or Qualia, the points are distributed into the refined pools of that stat.

This is the primary way vislae can improve their stats.

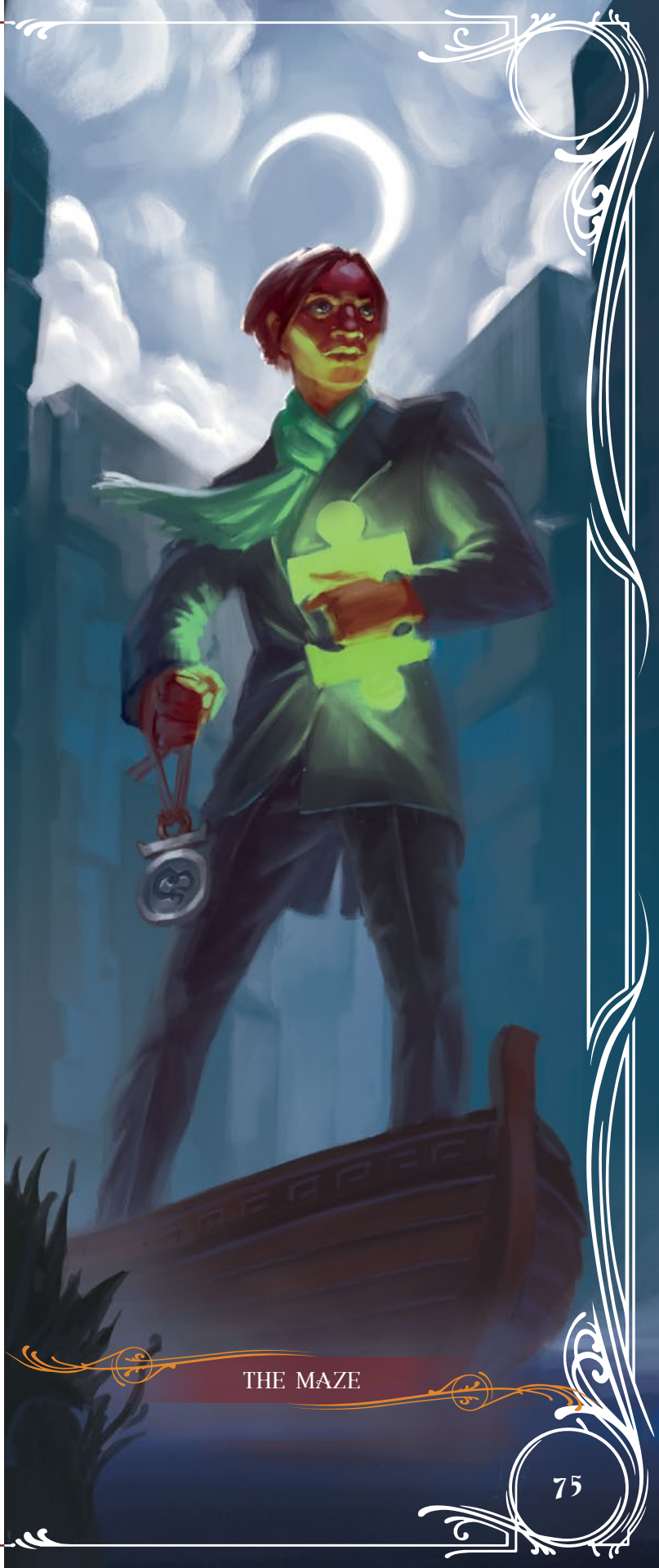
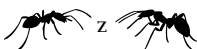
FORTE LIST

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*What if there are many
invisible suns?
How would we know?*

*Record your forte and
whatever forte abilities you
gain in your character tome.
Perhaps even add enough
notes so that you don't need
to refer to the book to use
each ability.*



THE MAZE

BEARS AN ORB

The Fanadon Orbs are well known throughout the Actuality. Although their origins are not known conclusively, most of us believe them to be part of the *Legacy*. Regardless, the orbs—while appearing to be stone spheres about 4 inches (10 cm) in diameter—seem to be concentrated power. Those who understand them and have obtained one can tap into this power and use it for their own ends. We call ourselves orb-bearers, and usually end up embedding our orbs into our bodies to more completely attune to their energies. In fact, to use level 5 or higher abilities from this forte, I must embed the orb in my body.

The orb, to start with, has three charges that I can access. Charges can be used for a variety of things. The orb can be recharged using one of my rests, restoring one charge per rest instead of restoring points to my stats.

Background: I must determine how I got my orb. Perhaps I discovered it somewhere. Perhaps I stole it. Perhaps it was a gift from a powerful or influential person. Perhaps I inherited it.

Appearance: Although the appearance of the orb-bearer can vary greatly, the orb ties them together. Most eventually end up embedding the orb in their own flesh—in their head, a shoulder, their chest, or other places.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for orb-bearers.

- + Current orb-bearers seek knowledge about the Fanadon Orbs, always striving to learn more about their power and their genesis. (*Uncover a Secret*.)
- + If the bearer believes the orb to be a part of the Legacy, learning more about the various aspects of the Legacy might also play a role in the bearer's tale. (*Learn*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Embedding the orb into flesh at a changery.
- + Using the power of the orb to help complete a character arc's climax.
- + Discovering concrete information about the nature or origin of the Fanadon Orbs.

THE PATH

Legacy, page 6

Wounds, page 23

Anguish, page 23

Uncover a Secret, page 178

Learn, page 172

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + The orb is damaged and needs magical repair.
- + Alcohol consumption interferes with the connection to the orb.
- + Due to magical fluctuations, the charge drawn from the orb inflicts 1 Wound upon me instead of its proper use.
- + Another being touches the orb and somehow draws a charge from it, using it for themselves.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so. Abilities that use a charge of the orb do not cost bene from my Sorcery pool unless otherwise stated.

FEED UPON THE POWER

Level: 2

I use one charge of the orb to nourish me for a day and heal 1 **Wound** or **Anguish**. If I increase the level of this effect to 4 by spending 2 Sorcery, I can use the orb to nourish or heal another creature instead of me.

Color: Green

VIGOR

Level: 3

I use one charge of the orb to enhance any physical action I take in the next round by +1 die.

Color: Green

IMPROVE SPELL

Level: 4

I use one charge of the orb to empower one of my spells as I cast it. Doing so results in the spell level increasing by 2. This is a part of the action to cast the spell.

Color: Gold

ENHANCE SENSES**Level:** 4

I use one charge from the orb to enhance all Perception-related actions by +1 die.

Depletion: Effect ends automatically when the sun next sets

Color: Indigo**ABSORB SPELL****Level:** 4 (+1 die)

I spend Sorcery equal to the level of this ability rather than a charge. I attempt to absorb the next spell cast at me. If I'm successful, the spell has no effect. The absorbed spell (regardless of level) restores one charge to my orb. My orb cannot gain more than its usual maximum number of charges.

Color: Invisible**EMPOWER SPELL****Level:** 6

I use one charge of the orb to empower one of my spells before casting. Doing so results in the spell level increasing by 3.

Color: Gold**REPLENISH****Level:** 7

I use two charges of the orb and restore all the pools of either my *Certes* or my *Qualia* to full.

Color: Green

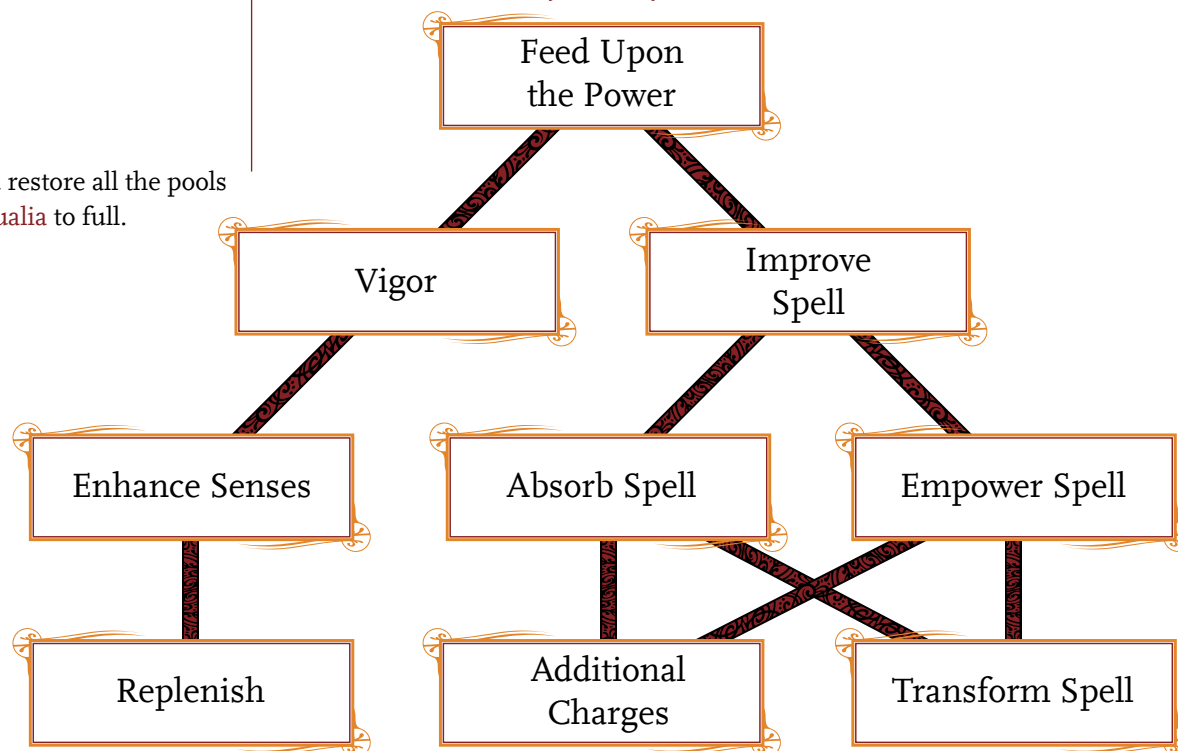
The Fanadon Orbs have been found in Legacy caches in Silver and the Red, but also, strangely, amid the remains of dead creatures in Indigo and in riverbeds in Gold.

*Certes, page 26**Qualia, page 27***ADDITIONAL CHARGES****Level:** 7 (no cost)

My orb now has one additional charge. I can select this ability multiple times, gaining one additional charge each time. Not an action.

Color: Silver**TRANSFORM SPELL****Level:** 8

I use one charge of the orb and not only power the next spell I cast so that it costs me no Sorcery, but also change one aspect of the spell: its range (down to close, up to very long range), its number of targets (down to one, or up to three times as many as normal), its area (down to a single target, or up to a large area), or its duration (a spell with a depletion does not end until I roll within the depletion range twice).

Color: Gold**BEARS AN ORB**

BREATHES RUNES

The magic inherent within me manifests in every exhalation. Shapes, letters, and words can be seen as misty remnants of my breath that hover in the air before they fade. With a little concentration, I can make these runes appear in any language in which I can read and write. They remain for a few moments before dissipating. However, with great concentration and a bit of *Sorcery*, I can control these breath runes and use them to my advantage to store specific magical effects.

I can typically have only one breath rune at a time hovering by me. In any event, breath runes always fade if I sleep or lose consciousness. I can easily dispel a rune I've breathed at any time.

Background: I should determine how I gained this ability. Some rune breathers were possessed by a demon or other spirit at an early age, and even though they are no longer possessed, the runes remain as a manifestation of that experience. Others breathe runes as a hereditary trait. Still others may have smoked an unknown substance inadvertently (or a known substance intentionally, with the goal of gaining these powers).

Appearance: Obviously, the most distinctive visual aspect of a rune breather is the runes. Those who want to keep their nature secret sometimes carry fake cigarettes or pipes to make it appear that the breath runes are smoke exhalations. Others take up smoking for real so the smoke hides the runes.

On the other hand, many of us embrace our nature, wearing clothing or jewelry that bears runic symbols to complete and enhance the theme.

Regardless, rune breathers tend to be stylish but relatively casual in our appearance.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for rune breathers.

- + Rune breathers are usually very interested in discovering all they can about runes, glyphs, and other visible representations of magic to incorporate into their breath runes. (*Learn.*)
- + Many rune breathers like the idea of creating a magical device that would allow them to more easily breathe out the magic within them. (*Creation.*)

Sorcery, page 27

Learn, page 172

Creation, page 167

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Mastering a new language with fluency and using rune-breath to write in that language in the air.
- + Using the power of my runes to help complete a character arc's climax.
- + Unconsciously, my breath creates the answer to a mystery in the air near me.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I literally choke on a rune.
- + The truth of a falsehood I speak aloud is betrayed in the runes that I exhale at the same time.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with one of the first ones (my choice as to which) and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

PROTECTIVE RUNE

Level: 1

I breathe a rune that hovers near my head. When I am next attacked, the rune grants me +1 to my defenses and then fades away.

Color: Invisible

ASSISTING RUNE

Level: 1

I name an action and breathe a rune that hovers near my head. When I next take that action, the rune grants +1 to my action and then fades away.

Color: Gold

TRANSFER RUNE

Level: 3

I take a breath rune that is hovering next to me and transfer it to a willing being that I touch. Now it works for them just as it would have for me.

Color: Gold

ENHANCING RUNE**Level:** 4

I name an action and breathe a rune that hovers near my head.

When I next take that action, the rune enhances my action by +1 die and then fades away.

Color: Gold**MULTIPLE RUNES****Level:** 5 (no cost)

I can now have up to three breath runes at a time hovering about me. Not an action.

Color: Silver**SPELL RUNE****Level:** 5

I create a breath rune that stores a spell of up to level 4 that I can cast, triggered in a way that I desire when the rune is touched. Once created, the rune remains where I was, even if I leave, and I can place it in a specific location (on an object, for example, although the rune stays with the location, not the object). The rune can remain visible or fade from sight. I can have only one spell rune in existence at a time.

Color: Silver**GREATER PROTECTION RUNE****Level:** 6

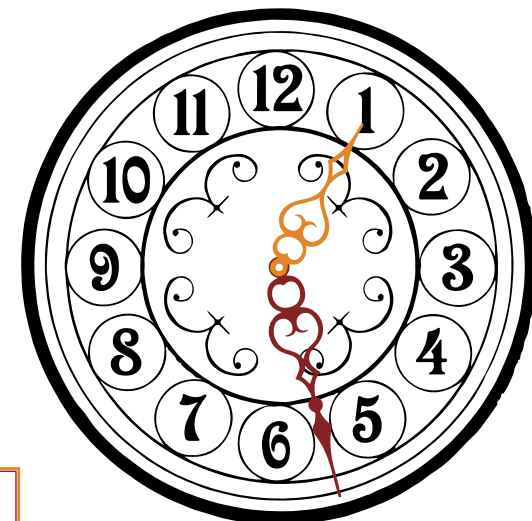
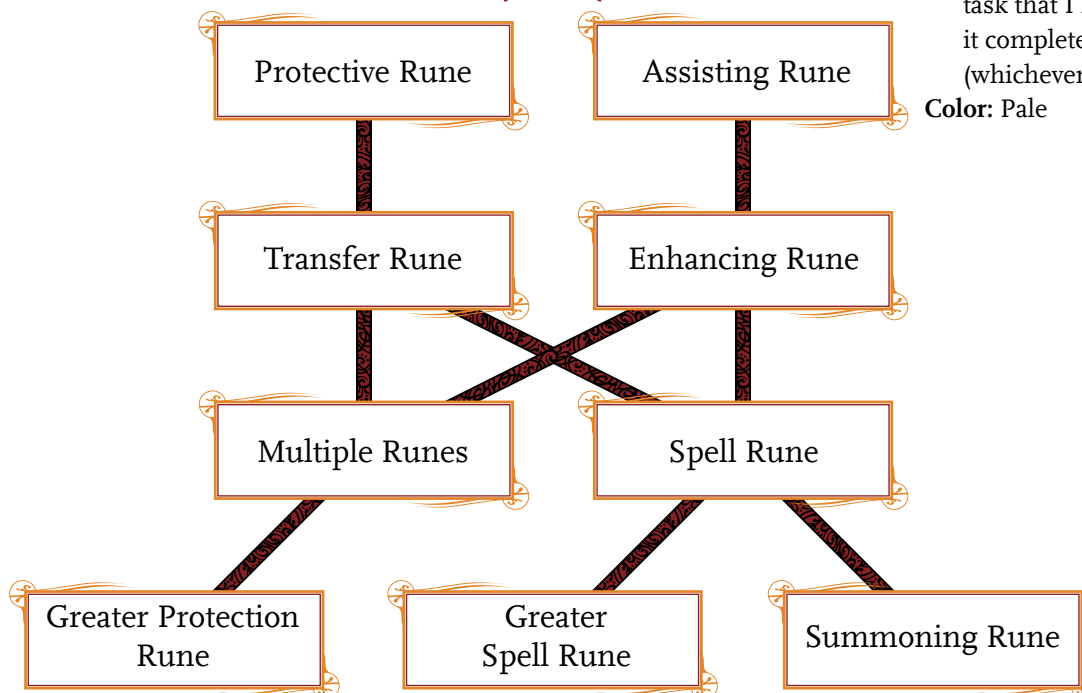
I breathe a rune that hovers near my head. When I am next attacked, the rune grants me +2 to my defenses and then continues to offer that protection until the end of that combat encounter.

Color: Invisible**GREATER SPELL RUNE****Level:** 5

I create a breath rune that stores any spell that I can cast, triggered in a way that I desire when the rune is touched. Once created, the rune remains where I was, even if I leave, and I can place it in a specific location (on an object, for example, although the rune stays with the location, not the object). The rune can remain visible or fade from sight. I can have only one greater spell rune in existence at a time. I can, however, have a spell rune and a greater spell rune active at once.

Color: Silver**SUMMONING RUNE****Level:** 8

I create a breath rune that immediately turns into a level 6 demon, angel, or spirit. The being carries out a single task that I have in mind when I create the rune. When it completes the task, or when the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first), the being returns whence it came.

Color: Pale**BREATHES RUNES**

CAGES ADVERSARIES

Some beings don't deserve freedom. The cage is best for them, and their captivity is best for everyone else. The one who holds the key to the cage door is always the one in control. And someone needs to be in control—better me than someone else.

Cage bearers, or gaolers, use magic to imprison other beings and then drain them of energy, information, or identity. Many consider this a dark art for obvious reasons. As the name would suggest, cage bearers carry with them small cages, usually not unlike a birdcage in size and appearance. This cage has been extensively magically treated to work with the gaoler's magic. I cannot have more than one such cage at a time. Creating a new cage takes approximately one month.

Some cage bearers imprison only nonhuman entities like demons or ghosts. Others imprison anyone without compunction. This latter group is not at all popular with those who see them walking around with a cage that holds an unfortunate prisoner.

Background: I learned this rather idiosyncratic form of magic somewhere well off the beaten path. I likely had a mentor who trained me over a long period of time.

Appearance: The very act of bearing a cage is an overtly physical manifestation of this forte. The cage, with its prisoner, is often visible and must be carried with the bearer all the time. About half of all cage bearers flaunt their cage openly, while the others keep it as their guarded secret. The former sometimes wear it from their belt or attached to the top of a walking cane, or have fashioned it into a hat. The latter keep it in a special bag or perhaps under a large hat.

Many who bear a cage use the magic of a changery to have it become a part of their body, replacing their stomach, chest, or head, or they have it hang from a metal pole that juts from a shoulder or spine.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for gaolers.

- ✦ It may befall a cage bearer to take on a pupil or apprentice to teach them the unique powers inherent in the art. (Instruction.)
- ✦ It is difficult to wield this kind of power gracefully, without misuse. (Fall From Grace.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- ✦ A being of a level higher than I've ever imprisoned is trapped in my cage.
- ✦ A being I've imprisoned offers me something unexpected and remarkable to get me to free them.

Instruction, page 171

Fall From Grace, page 170

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- ✦ The prisoner manages to rattle the cage, making noise at the worst possible moment.
- ✦ A prisoner in my cage somehow gets free.
- ✦ A prisoner in my cage takes control of my body.
- ✦ The cage is damaged and requires magical repair.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

DURANCE VILE

Level: 1 (+1 die)

I create a magical cage and imprison a nearby being inside it. The being must be of a level no higher than the level of the effect, so I'd better have some idea of the level of the being before I try to imprison them. Further, the effective level of a spiritual (rather than material) being is 1 higher than normal for these purposes.

The cage is, in size, somewhere between my fist and my head, and the being is made to fit. Once inside, the prisoner cannot be heard or felt (only seen) unless I wish it. They cannot take actions other than to attempt an escape at each new sunrise. I can attempt to imprison a new being, but doing so (whether I succeed or fail) releases any prisoner I might have. If I am ever farther than short range from the cage, it disappears and the prisoner is freed. Released prisoners appear next to me.

Color: Gold

FEED UPON STRENGTH

Level: 3 (+1 die)

I absorb points into my **Physicality** pool equal to the level of this effect or the level of the imprisoned being, whichever is greater. Each time I use this ability, I roll a die. If I roll 0, the prisoner dies.

Color: Green

FEED UPON MIND

Level: 3 (+1 die)

I absorb points into my **Intellect** pool equal to the level of this effect or the level of the imprisoned being, whichever is greater. Each time I use this ability, I roll a die. If I roll 0, the prisoner dies.

Color: Blue

Physicality, page 26

Intellect, page 27

FEED UPON HEALTH**Level:** 5 (+1 die)

I absorb life energy from the imprisoned being, restoring 1 Wound or Anguish. Each time I use this ability, I roll a die. If I roll 0, the prisoner dies.

Color: Green**INTERROGATE PRISONER****Level:** 5 (+1 die)

I can pry into the prisoner's mind to get information in the form of the answer to a single question. I get an answer only if the prisoner knows the answer. Each time I use this ability, I roll a die. If I roll 0, the prisoner dies.

Color: Indigo**IMPERSONATE PRISONER****Level:** 6 (+1 die)

I look, feel, sound, and smell precisely like the prisoner. I can speak the prisoner's language in this guise, and I possess a very basic, surface-level understanding of their life (such as the name of a spouse, the location of a home, and so on, but not a secret password or a specific memory from childhood).

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises

Color: Grey**ADDITIONAL PRISONER****Level:** 6 (no cost)

When I already have an imprisoned being, I can use the Durance Vile ability to imprison a second without risking losing the first. I can use any of my other abilities on either prisoner at my choosing. If I have only one prisoner, they can no longer attempt to escape (a mishap or the loss of the cage can still free them). Not an action.

Color: Gold**USURP ABILITY****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

I steal one spell, special ability, or other mystical quality of the imprisoned being that I can use for myself as if it were mine (including paying any cost to use it).

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises

Color: Gold

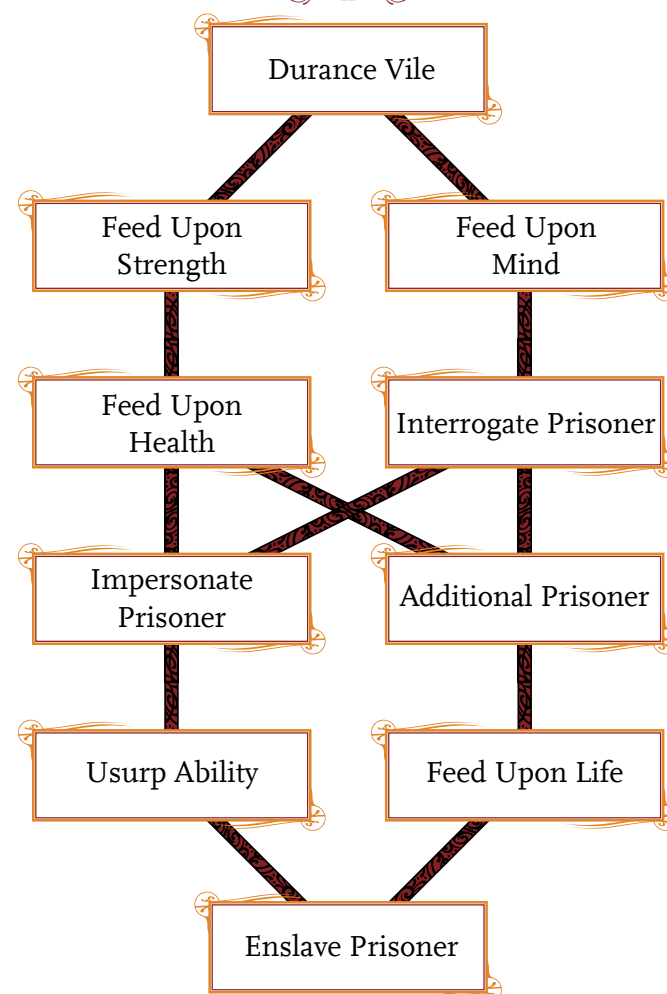
Moths hide secrets beneath their wings.

FEED UPON LIFE**Level:** 8 (+1 die)

I absorb all the life energy from the imprisoned being, which heals all my Wounds and Anguishes and makes me effectively 10% younger. The imprisoned being dies.

Color: Pale**ENSLAVE PRISONER****Level:** 9 (+2 dice)

When I release a prisoner, it becomes my mental slave. It does as I command mentally, and there is no limit to the range of this connection. The released prisoner can attempt to break free of this enslavement at each sunrise.

Color: Blue**CAGES ADVERSARIES**

CALLS UPON THE SERPENT

The Serpent is a living manifestation of magic. It has no corporeal form, and inhabits the worlds of all suns, although it is closely tied to the **Invisible Sun**. Those of us that call upon the Serpent are called serpentkin or, derogatorily, serpent cultists.

We do not see ourselves as cultists or worshippers. To us, the Serpent is not a god, but much more. It is the source of all that is, to us, important. The Serpent is magic, and being kin to the Serpent, knowing the Serpent, and walking with the Serpent are to be truly and directly connected to magic.

Despite common associations with snakes and evil, the Serpent is not necessarily a sinister force. By some standards, it may be dark and cold, but it is not directly associated with demons or the **Nightside Path**, and because it is a creature of the suns, it abhors the Dark and the creatures of that void. That said, many who walk the Nightside Path associate their magic with the Serpent.

Background: I learned of the Serpent first in whispers, and then, after I sought more information, I eventually came upon the truth somewhere—likely a place of great lore and magic. Some serpentkin claim to have been schooled by the Serpent itself in their dreams.

Appearance: Whenever a serpentkin calls upon any of their powers, the translucent head and hood of the Serpent—in this case, a dark green cobra—appears like an aura around them.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for followers of the Serpent.

- ✦ Serpentkin stick together. When one is in need, others feel compelled to help. (**Aid a Friend**.)
- ✦ Learning more about—and perhaps even communing with—the Serpent is of utmost importance. (**Learn**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- ✦ The Serpent blesses me by making one of my enemies disappear mysteriously when no one is looking.
- ✦ I use the changeries to make myself look more like the Serpent in some significant manner.

The Serpent is the father/mother of the being known as the Angular Serpentine, which is more of a corrupted portion that the Serpent calved off long ago.

THE PATH

Angular Serpentine,
page 66

Nightside of the Path of
Suns, page 36

Interaction, page 27

Movement, page 26

Aid a Friend, page 165

Learn, page 172

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- ✦ A powerful and important spell is countered or dispelled (not just resisted).
- ✦ The Serpent does not heed my call, and I must discover what I have done wrong before I can use my abilities again.
- ✦ The Serpent shows me visions of my own demise in my sleep.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with one of the first ones (my choice as to which) and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

BITE OF THE SERPENT

Level: 2 (+1 die)

The head of the Serpent appears and attacks a close creature, inflicting 2 points of damage and injecting venom that hinders the victim's next action.

Color: Red

VOICE OF THE SERPENT

Level: 3

When I call upon the soothing voice of the Serpent, it adds 3 bene to my **Interaction** pool.

Color: Blue

SPEED OF THE SERPENT

Level: 3

When I call upon the blinding speed of the Serpent, it adds 3 bene to my **Movement** pool.

Color: Green

HYPNOTIC GAZE OF THE SERPENT

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I make my eyes the Serpent's eyes, granting myself the ability to make a close creature freeze for as long as I do nothing but stare at them. If they or I am attacked, or even roughly jostled, the effect is broken.

Color: Blue

SCALES OF THE SERPENT

Level: 5 (no cost)

The scales of the Serpent manifest around me, granting me +2 Armor permanently. Not an action.

Color: Invisible

MIND OF THE SERPENT

Level: 5 (no cost)

The Serpent's mind becomes part of my own. I permanently add 4 points to my core **Qualia** stat, to be distributed among my refined pools. Not an action.

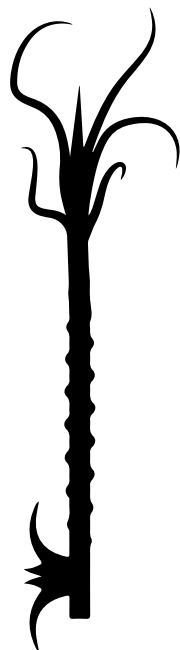
Color: Blue

SLITHERING SERPENT

Level: 7

Calling upon the knowledge and power of the Serpent, I can slither between the folds of the worlds, slipping into a random location in a world whose existence I am familiar with. Alternatively, I can move up to 1,000 miles (1,600 km) in the world in which I currently stand. For every 2 additional points I spend from my Sorcery pool, I can take one being with me.

Color: Green



Qualia, page 27

BREATH OF THE SERPENT

Level: 8 (+2 dice to cause people to fall unconscious)

I breathe out a cloud of mist that fills a large area.

The mist obscures vision, but more important, all within the cloud (other than myself and close allies I designate when I call upon this power) fall unconscious. The mist persists as long as I remain within the cloud, but it does not move with me and is subject to the wind and other conditions.

Color: Blue

COILS OF THE SERPENT

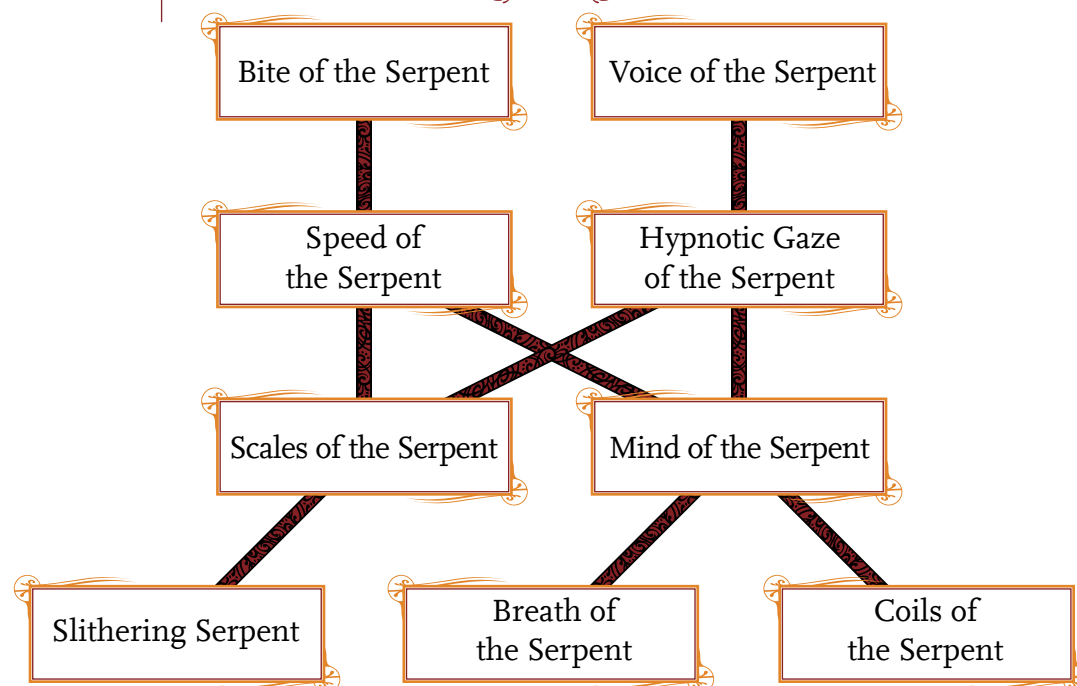
Level: 9

I am embraced and entwined in the coils of the Serpent. Its raw mystic energies infuse me. All my spells are enhanced by +2 dice. Sometimes, while within the coils, I gain mystic visions about the future, the past, or whatever the Serpent wishes me to see.

Depletion: When the sun next rises or sets

Color: Indigo

CALLS UPON THE SERPENT



CAUGHT FIRE'S EYE

Fire is a being—all flames everywhere are part of that being. Fire dances. Fire smiles. Fire laughs. Fire has thoughts, emotions, and a singular will. And, rarely, fire falls in love.

The fiery beloved have an intimate relationship with fire. It is a part of my every thought and action. I wield fire like a weapon. I let fire caress me like a lover.

As fire burns, the flames bend in the direction of the fiery beloved. As I near, flames glow brighter and hotter. Fire loves me as much as I love it.

Background: The vast majority of those called the fiery beloved are part of a hidden cultlike organization that reveres fire as a creator and destroyer god. Members give themselves to fire and take it on as their betrothed. And fire accepts.

Appearance: Those who have caught fire's eye often have reddish hair and dark skin. Others, however, have fiery red eyes instead. Most people find them very warm to the touch, as though feverish.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for fiery beloved.

- + The cult of the fiery beloved must sometimes call on its members. (*Assist an Organization.*)
- + Fire loves me, and I return that love. (*Romance.*)
- + Even if I find a surrogate parent, my child will actually be the child of fire. (*Birth.*)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Burning a higher-level creature or object than I have ever burned before.
- + Having a fire rage around me that is more violent than I could have ever predicted.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Being cut off from the flame.
- + My fire being snuffed out.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

FLAME CALLS TO ME

Level: 2 (no cost)

I have 3 points of **Armor** against fire damage, and for each new ability I gain in this forte, this Armor increases by 2 points.

Not an action.

Color: Invisible

I CALL TO FLAME

Level: 3 (+1 die)

A flame appears in my hand. As an action, I can hurl this flame at a nearby target, inflicting damage equal to this ability's level and starting flammables on fire.

Color: Red

EMBRACED BY FIRE

Level: 3 (+1 die to damage others)

I am sheathed in flame. The flames do not harm me or anyone else unless I will it. Anyone close to me that I want to harm suffers damage from the fire equal to the level of this ability minus 2. The flames also provide warmth and light to see by.

Depletion: 0–3 (check each hour)

Color: Red

FIRE COMPANION

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I call a bit of fire, similar to a torch's flame, to accompany me.

This bit of flame floats just to one side of me and goes wherever I go. It is not intelligent, but it moves as I will it (an action), as long as it remains close to me. It provides light and warmth, and I can use it to set combustibles ablaze, or even to attack a close foe and inflict 2 points of damage. I can also use it for any of the other abilities that require flame present.

Depletion: Ends when the sun next rises

Color: Silver

SOLID FIRE

Level: 5

I reach into fire and shape fairly simple objects out of flame that I can use as if they were solid. These objects must be something I could hold in one or two hands. I can perform this action anew every round, although only I can use the objects. So I could create a spear of fire and hurl it every other round.

Fire weapons are always 1 level higher than normal and inflict +3 damage from the flames. Fire tools are likewise 1 level higher than normal and always add +1 to the action I take with them.

Fire shields, armor, or clothing offer +1 Armor (although I cannot use more than one such defensive fire object at a time).

Color: Silver

Assist an Organization, page 166

Romance, page 176

Birth, page 166



THE GATE

Armor, page 30

SEE THROUGH FLAME**Level:** 6

I can see out of any flame anywhere in the world, as long as I have a good idea that it's there. (If there is no flame at the location I try to see through, the effect fails.) When using this ability, I have 360-degree vision, but no other special sight. This effect lasts until I choose to see through my normal eyes.

Color: Indigo**FLAME STRUCTURES****Level:** 7

I pull fire from a nearby source and expand and shape it to make large, simple structures like walls or bridges that can fit into a large area. I choose whether they are solid or permeable. Those passing through a permeable structure of fire suffer damage equal to the level of this ability.

Color: Silver**FLAMING REPLICA****Level:** 7

I use nearby flames to create a rough replica of myself made of flames. Each round thereafter I use my action to control this replica. It sustains damage as if it were a being of a level equal to the level of this ability. It can do anything I can do (skills, secrets, spells, and so on), and, if I wish, its flames burn everything close for 1 point of damage. The replica does not have my equipment unless I take the time to give it my things, but if I choose to have it burn the surrounding area, it burns whatever it is holding as well.

I can sense through this replica as if it were me, and when it takes actions, it is as though I am performing them. If I stop focusing on the replica, it fades away.

Color: Silver**TRUEFIRE****Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

A target within long range bursts into flame. This is true even if the target is not flammable. Metal

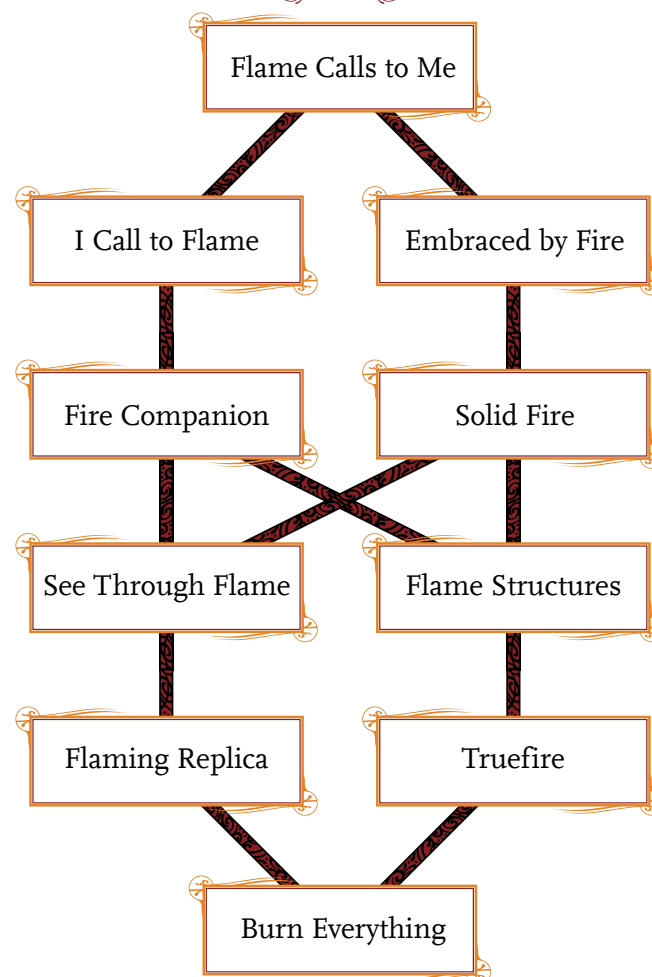
Beware the secret, final moment of every day. It can be a trap.

bursts into flame. Water bursts into flame.

Even things with a special resistance to fire are subject to this effect. Creatures affected by this suffer damage equal to the level of the ability.

Color: Red**BURN EVERYTHING****Level:** 10 (+2 dice)

I flare with flames that do not harm me, but they inflict damage equal to the level of this ability minus 5 to everything nearby, and even 1 point of damage to everything far away. Combustibles catch on fire. These flames keep burning (and inflicting the same damage) each round that I continue to use my action to concentrate.

Color: Red**CAUGHT FIRE'S EYE**

CHANNELS STRENGTH AND SKILL

Sometimes it's easier to borrow than to create from scratch. This is a truth of craftspeople and artists, and it can be a truth of skill and talent as well.

Channelers use the currents of magic to tap into the abilities of others in the world (or the other worlds) to use as their own. Some call them essence thieves, but most would suggest that they borrow rather than steal. Channelers do not choose (or even know) who they borrow their talent or ability from. The Actuality is a big place.

Although channelers can be mistaken for others who are simply very skilled, their skills are often not actually their own. Many attempt to hide the fact that they are channelers, while others are quite proud of it.

Background: Channeling is an ability that many are simply born with, discovering that the talents they thought were their own are not. Others are trained to be channelers by those with the knowledge.

Appearance: Channelers look like everyone else.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for channelers.

- + The more a channeler knows, the more they can build upon with their magical abilities. (Master a Skill.)
- + Sometimes, finding out where your abilities come from allows you to develop them further. (Mysterious Background.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + I gain a skill or ability at the expense of a foe, who is hindered.
- + A skill I gain is even greater than I was expecting.
- + Use of my ability taps into interesting information that grants me Hidden Knowledge.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Somehow I channel the talents or abilities of someone who is terrible at the skill in question, and I gain a penalty rather than a bonus.

Master a Skill, page 172

Mysterious Background, page 173

Hidden Knowledge, page 30

- + I choose the same skill for my skill du jour too many times and can never choose that skill again.
- + My magic inadvertently steals the ability I channel from an ally temporarily, putting them at risk.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with one of the first ones (my choice as to which) and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

PROWESS

Level: 2

I add 3 bene to my Accuracy, Movement, Perception, or Intellect pool.

Color: Silver

SKILL DU JOUR

Level: 3 (no cost)

With each new sunrise, I can choose a skill in which I am trained. This can include a defense, but not attacks. Yesterday's skill fades and today's skill takes the fore.

Color: Blue

FEROCIOUS MIGHT

Level: 4

My next use of physical strength, including making melee attacks, is enhanced by +1 die.

Color: Green

DELICATE GRACE

Level: 4

My next use of physical agility or precision, including making ranged attacks, is enhanced by +1 die.

Color: Green

MYSTICAL DEFENSE

Level: 6

My defense actions are enhanced by +1 die.

Depletion: Ends automatically at the next sunset

Color: Invisible

INFUSED SKILL

Level: 6

My chosen skill du jour is now enhanced by +1 die.
Alternatively, I can choose to have two skills that day.

Depletion: Ends automatically at the next sunset

Color: Blue

SPECIALIZED DEFENSE

Level: 9

My defense actions are enhanced by +2 dice.

Depletion: Ends automatically at the next sunset

Color: Invisible

REMARKABLE SKILL

Level: 9

My chosen skill du jour is now enhanced by +2 dice.
Alternatively, I can choose to have four skills that day.

Depletion: Ends automatically at the next sunset

Color: Blue

OMNISKILLS

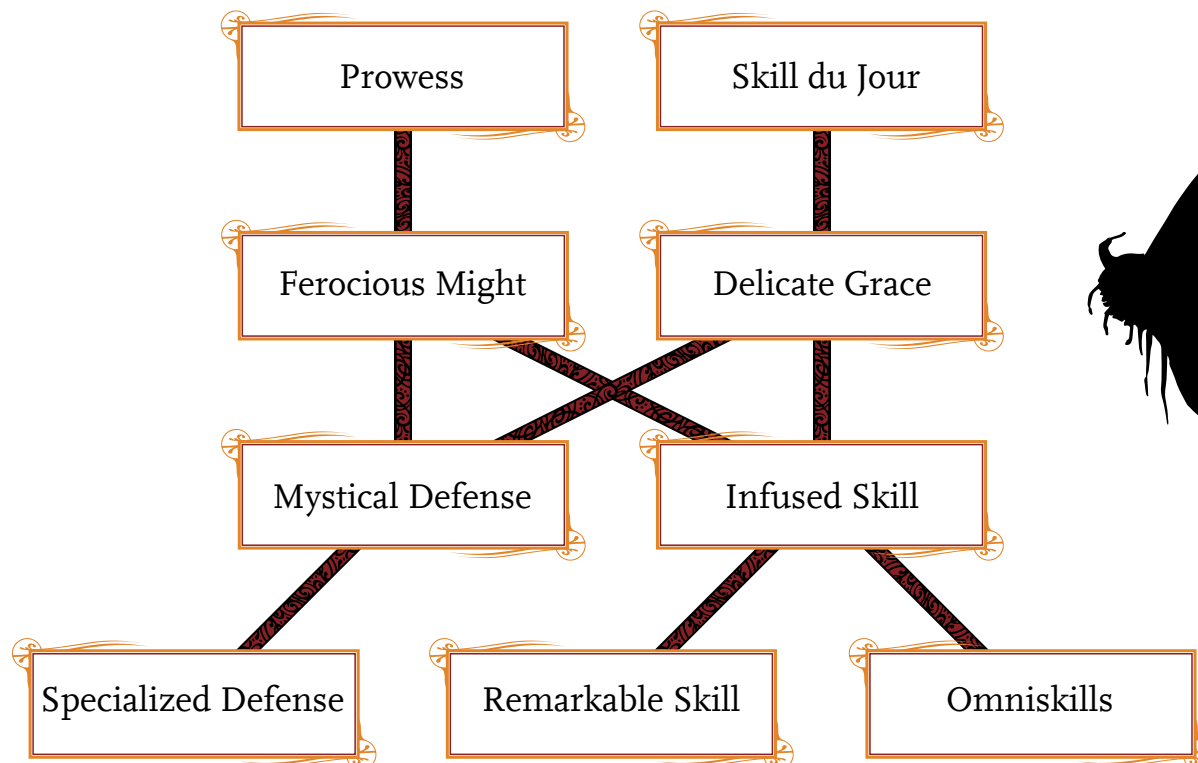
Level: 9

All my actions are enhanced by +1 die.

Depletion: Ends automatically at the next sunset

Color: Silver

CHANNELS STRENGTH AND SKILL



CONSUMES FLESH

The flesh of others is my eucharist, transformed by my touch and my teeth into something mystical. Even sacred.

Mystic cannibals, or—derogatorily—ghouls, gain power when they eat flesh.

Eating meat isn't enough. Many people eat meat. I intentionally consume the flesh of an intelligent being for the express purpose of gaining power. And it must be very fresh—preferably a creature I have killed myself. Many people do not find this practice to be acceptable.

Mystic cannibals must eat corpse flesh to use an ability.

Background: Mystic cannibals have usually lived a life of secrecy and danger, as their abilities and predilections are rarely accepted.

Appearance: A good mystic cannibal ensures that they look like everyone else. However, sallow flesh, red eyes, and pointed teeth become self-evident when they are about to feed.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for mystic cannibals.

- + When a mystic cannibal's secret gets out, sometimes drastic measures must be taken to restore a reputation. (**Restoration**.)
- + Those who consume flesh are not the kind of people to be trifled with. Do not cross them. (**Revenge**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Feasting on the flesh of a higher-level victim than I have ever before eaten.
- + Gaining special insight by eating the flesh of a particular individual.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I get a disease from someone I ate.
- + I have nightmarish visions of the life of a person I ate.
- + Images of the person I ate physically appear in my flesh, as if they are trying to get out of me.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with one of the first ones (my choice as to which) and then select more,

Restore a stat pool, page 29

Enhancements, page 26

Restoration, page 175

Revenge, page 176

following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

RESTORATIVE FLESH

Level: 2

When I spend at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I **restore one stat pool**.

Color: Green

THE MEMORY OF MEAT

Level: 3

When I eat the flesh of a dead person, I can ask one question that they would have known the answer to, and get an answer to that question.

Color: Indigo

POWER IN FLESH

Level: 5

When I spend at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I gain 4 **enhancements** in whatever pool I choose.

Color: Gold

TRANSFORMATIVE MEAL

Level: 6

After spending at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I can make myself look like that person. I can speak their language in this guise, and I possess a very basic, surface-level understanding of their life (such as the name of a spouse, the location of a home, and so on, but not a secret password or a specific memory from childhood).

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises

Color: Gold

STRENGTH OF FLESH

Level: 6

After I spend at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I heal all my Wounds and gain 3 **bene** to be placed in my Accuracy or Physicality pool.

Color: Green

SPIRIT OF THE FEAST**Level:** 7 (+1 die)

After spending at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I can conjure and command their dead spirit to my bidding. If the spirit's level is not higher than the ability's level, it will do as I bid, including manifesting in physical form to affect the world. If the spirit is higher level than this ability, I can merely bid it to travel to one person I know (anywhere in the Actuality) and convey a short message.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)**Color:** Pale**CANNIBAL WARRIOR****Level:** 7

After spending at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I gain +2 Armor and 3 bene and 3 enhancements to my Accuracy pool. The Armor lasts until the sun next rises.

Color: Invisible

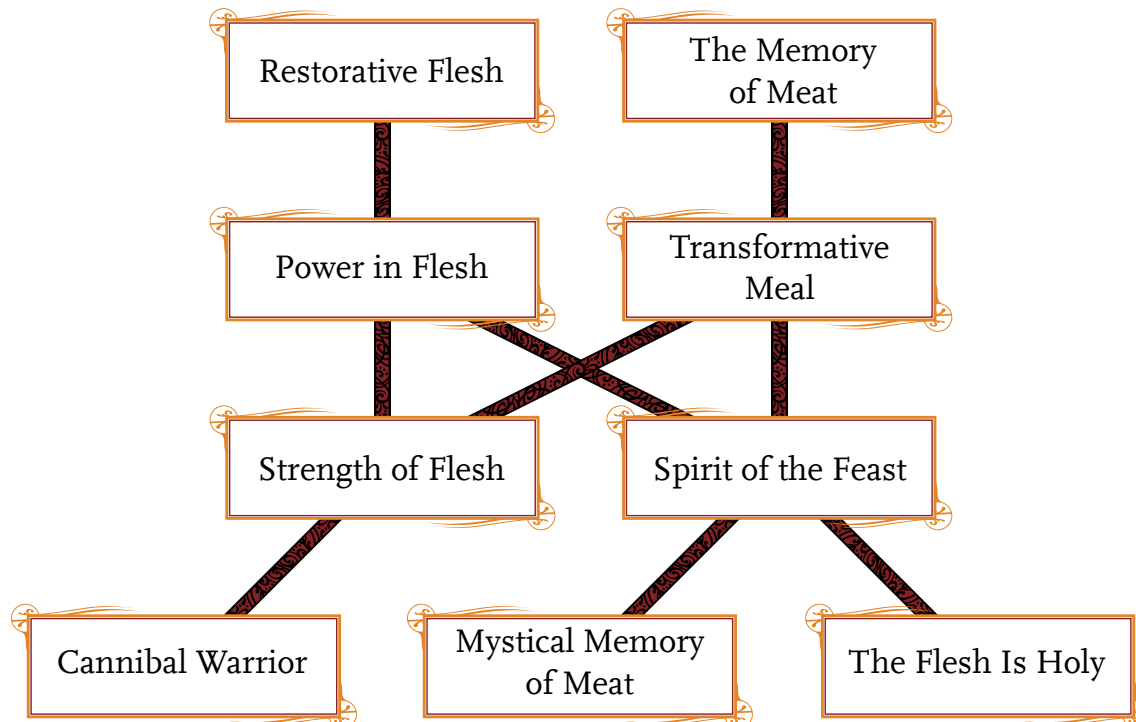
Cannibalism isn't illegal in Satyrine, although murder obviously is, and graverobbing is just another kind of theft. It is deeply frowned upon by most people, though.

MYSTICAL MEMORY OF MEAT**Level:** 8

After spending at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I absorb one spell, special ability, or other mystical quality of the dead person that I can use as if it were mine (including paying any cost to use it).

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises**Color:** Blue**THE FLESH IS HOLY****Level:** 9

After spending at least fifteen minutes eating the flesh of a dead person, I can convey their power and strength to others. Those I touch (up to one willing target for each level of this ability) have their Wounds and Anguish healed and gain 3 bene to put into whichever pools they wish (NPCs gain +1 level until the sun next rises).

Color: Green**CONSUMES FLESH**

CONVERSES WITH EVERYTHING

The best conversations I have are with the spider spinning its webs in the corner. My best friend might very well be my hat.

Omnispeakers are vislae who not only speak many languages, including those most do not know (such as the languages of animals), but also converse with things that normally do not speak, such as plants or inanimate objects.

I enjoy finding ways to plumb the depths of knowledge and secrets by speaking with the creatures and things that might have that knowledge, and yet are always ignored as sources of information.

When I want to find out if the person I'm looking for has gone into a building, I ask the building's door. If I want to know what lies on the other side of the lake, I ask the bird that just flew from there.

Background: The secrets involved in my abilities are well kept. I need to determine where I got them.

Appearance: Most people think that omnispeakers have a look that is specific but difficult to describe. They see the world differently, surrounded by objects and creatures that others ignore, but which they see as possible friends or peers.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for omnispeakers.

- + Omnispeakers love learning new languages. (Learn.)
- + Where do I come from? Where did I acquire these abilities? (Mysterious Background.)
- + Omnispeakers have been known to develop unique relationships with nonhuman creatures or even objects. (Develop a Bond, Romance.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + The first time I speak with an object that has never been spoken to.
- + Learning a new language to complete fluency.
- + The first time I make a permanent friend or ally with a plant or object.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

An omnispeaker with a long-term nemesis that is an inanimate object could make for an excellent story.

Objects are rarely loquacious. Communication just isn't inherent in their nature. Most will ignore someone trying to talk to them without some kind of lengthy process of cajoling, persuading, threatening, or bribing. Further, their outlook is not always logical to people. A stone that lies outside a house might have no knowledge of (or interest in) what goes on inside the house.

Learn, page 172

Mysterious Background, page 173

Develop a Bond, page 169

Romance, page 176

Plants are even stranger to talk to than objects. They are traditionally very suspicious (and terrified) of creatures, particularly people. Their thought processes are very different from those of people, and many common concepts are alien to them. Conversely, plants think a great deal about things for which most humans have no concept, like the songs that soil sings or the personalities of different droplets in a rainstorm.

- + The thing that I speak to develops an instant dislike for me.
- + A conversation that I have is overheard (and understood) by someone who will use the information gained against me.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

PSYCHOMETRY

Level: 1 (+1 die)

When I touch a creature or object, I get a sense of something about its nature or past.

Color: Indigo

THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS

Level: 3 (no cost to use)

I can speak to and understand any animal (this ability has no effect on people or understanding their languages). This ability does not grant me any particular influence over animals, nor does it compel them to speak.

Color: Indigo

THE LANGUAGE OF THE VOICELESS

Level: 4 (no cost to use)

I can speak to any inanimate object. This ability does not grant me any particular influence over objects I speak to, nor does it compel them to speak.

Color: Indigo

THE LANGUAGE OF PLANTS

Level: 4 (no cost to use)

I can speak to any plant. This ability does not grant me any particular influence over plants I speak to, nor does it compel them to speak.

Color: Indigo

ONE OF US

Level: 5 (no cost to use)

A creature, plant, or object that I speak to reacts to me as though I were one of its own kind. This

is not a change in perception—just a change in opinion. A badger doesn't literally believe me to be a badger, but it treats me as it might treat another badger.

Color: Blue

CHARM OBJECT

Level: 5 (+1 die)

An object I touch reacts to me well, as a person might react to a friend, and is open to the possibility of conversation.

Depletion: Ends automatically after the interaction is over

Color: Blue

OBJECT AFFINITY

Level: 5

After speaking to an object for a round, I have an affinity for it. My actions with the object are enhanced by +1 die.

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next sets

Color: Blue

LOVE OF LIFE

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

A close living creature will do anything I say.

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next sets

Color: Blue

LIFE TO THE LIFELESS

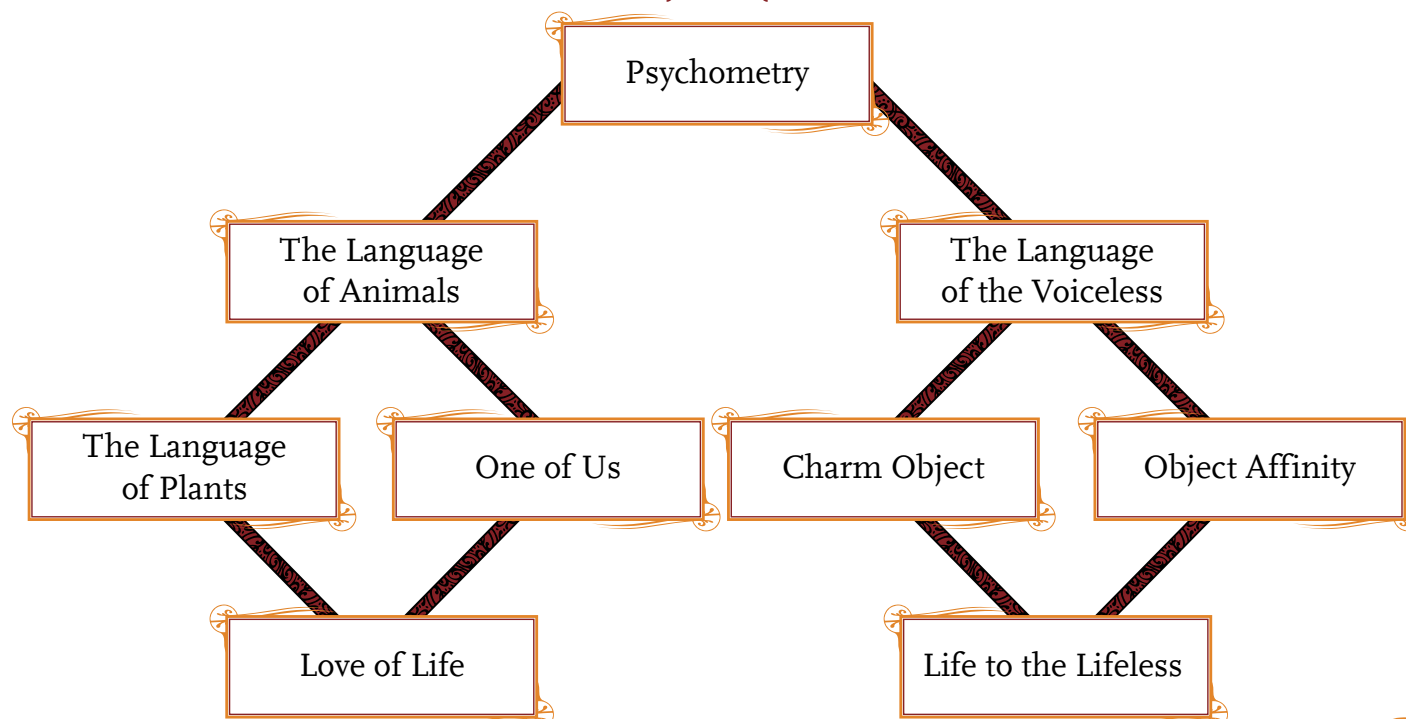
Level: 8

After speaking to an object for a few minutes, I convince it to take on the burden of ambulatory, intelligent life. It has intelligence, a personality, and the ability to speak aloud whenever it wishes (although not everyone will be able to understand it). It is a creature 2 levels lower than the ability's level. I grant it limbs, eyes, a mouth to speak, and anything else it might require, but otherwise it operates based on its shape and nature. For example, a chair might use its existing legs, but it grows wooden arms and its cushion forms a face. A statue of a person would likely need no modifications. Neither would a corpse (although the corpse will continue to rot, as its body still operates under its original nature). At any time, the living object can revert to its original form as the inanimate object it once was, if it so chooses.

I have no control over the new creature, but it is probably somewhat well disposed toward me for giving it life (although some objects might resent that).

Color: Gold

CONVERSES WITH EVERYTHING



DISGORGES CREATURES

I am never alone. Within me stir other creatures, part of myself, yet separate. I can feel them squirming in my gut. I can hear them chittering in my head. And although it's a bit unpleasant, I can disgorge them from my mouth and let them roam free. They obey me, like loyal children that I have spawned. I am their god.

Each creature is unique. Most are not comely—they are asymmetrical, misshapen, wrinkled masses of slimy flesh. They rarely have the same number of limbs, eyes, or other features. They stink of bile and blood.

Each time I vomit a creature, it costs me not only Sorcery (as would any forte ability) but also 1 Physicality. The abilities of level 8 and above cost 2 Physicality.

My creatures never venture farther than a far distance away from me. If they are somehow separated from me at a distance greater than that, they disincorporate into a bloody, phlegmy mess. If they are slain, they likewise disincorporate. Regardless of anything else, when the sun next sets, they disincorporate (unless otherwise noted in the ability).

Many people find disgorgers unsettling and distasteful.

Background: Most disgorgers initially acquired their abilities by contracting a virus. They call it the lifeseed, and while it is ironically fatal to most victims, to a few, it grants the ability to create life. Of a kind.

Appearance: Disgorgers are usually somewhat haggard and gaunt after they have expelled a creature.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for disgorgers.

- + Disgorgers may want to experience the creation of life the conventional way. (*Birth*.)
- + Is there a new type of creature I can spew forth? (*New Discovery*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + One of my creatures persists longer than normal.



THE GATE

NPC Levels, page 19

Birth, page 166

New Discovery, page 173

- + One of my creatures is instrumental in completing a character arc's climax.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + One of my creatures betrays me.
- + It takes twice as long and costs me twice as much to disgorge a particular creature.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

LITTLE HORROR

Level: 2

I vomit forth a small creature of **level 1**. It moves slowly and is quite weak, but it does as I command.

Color: Silver

COUNSELOR

Level: 4

I disgorge a small but intelligent creature of level 2. It takes no physical actions other than follow me around, but it can offer me advice and information. It grants me 2 bene to my Interaction pool and 2 to my Intellect pool.

Color: Silver

DEFENDER

Level: 4

I spew forth a creature that quickly grows to about my size. It is level 3, has 3 Armor, and protects me. Although it takes no offensive actions, as long as it's near, it grants me +1 to Dodge actions.

Color: Invisible

ASSISTANT

Level: 6

I vomit forth a creature that quickly grows to about my size. It is level 3 and does as I command. Although it takes no offensive actions, as long as it's near, it grants me +1 to all physical actions.

Color: Silver

ATTACKER

Level: 7

I release a creature that quickly grows to about my size. This level 5 creature moves quickly and has 3 Armor. It does as I command, but its primary function is to attack creatures up to a long distance away. It fights to the death.

Color: Silver

MOUNT

Level: 7

I disgorge a creature that quickly grows to three times my size. This level 4 creature moves quickly and has 2 Armor. It does as I command, but its primary function is to carry me, either in its arms or on its back.

Color: Silver

AGENT

Level: 8

I release a creature that quickly grows to about my size. This level 5 creature moves quickly and has wings. It does as I command and is fairly intelligent. In the time it has allotted, it can travel any distance away from me to perform its given task.

Color: Silver

DESTROYER

Level: 9

I release a monstrous beast that quickly grows to twice my size. This level 7 creature moves quickly and has 3 Armor. It does as I command, and its primary function is to attack creatures or destroy structures up to a long distance away. In either of these actions, it gains +1 level. It fights to the death if necessary.

Color: Silver

CONSTANT COMPANION

Level: 9

I vomit up a creature that quickly grows to about my size. This level 6 creature moves quickly and has 2 Armor. It never discorporates and is my

There should be plenty of space in your character tome to record all of your forte abilities.

stalwart, faithful companion at all times. It obeys all my commands. If it dies, I can create a new companion, but I can never have more than one active at a time.

Color: Silver

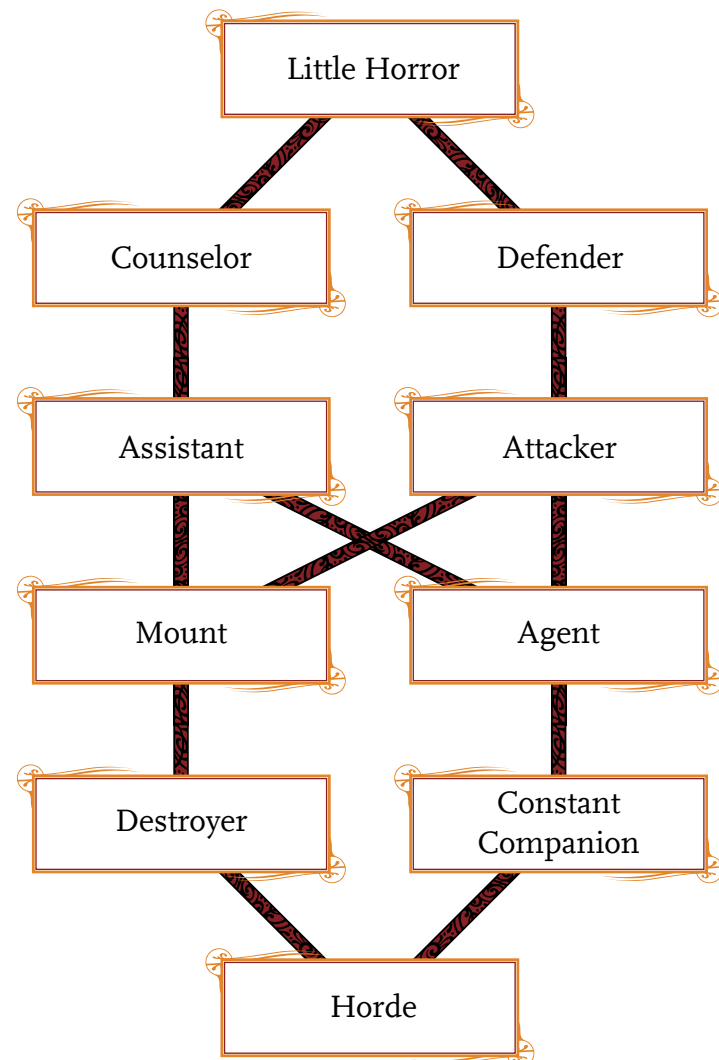
HORDE

Level: 10

I disgorge a variety of creatures of all sizes and shapes, each level 3. Their number equals the level of this ability. They obey my commands.

Color: Silver

DISGORGES CREATURES



DWELLS IN DARKNESS

The darkness is my cloak. It is my lover's arms. It hides and protects me.

Dark dwellers like to operate out of the light, where our actions are unseen. We are private and tend to be schemers and plotters who make an appearance only as our plans come to fruition. Some dark dwellers worship dark gods or demons, while the rest merely respect them for their power and outlook.

Dark dwellers usually have more power in the darkness, but even in the light, we can draw the darkness to ourselves and wield it like a weapon or a defense. We call upon the dangerous beings of the **Dark** as our allies, so we are not cowards.

It is not fear that drove me from the light, but the desire for the treasures of the darkness.

Background: Thought to be sinister by most, dark dwellers are often shunned or looked down upon by others. I must decide why I chose this path, or why it chose me. Does my predilection for the Dark mean that I walk the Nightside Path?

Appearance: Dark dwellers typically wear dark clothing good for skulking about.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for dark dwellers.

- + Dark dwellers are often interested in vengeance upon those in the light. (**Avenge, Revenge.**)
- + Time in the darkness provides time for contemplation. (**Growth.**)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + The first time I speak to a being of the Dark.
- + I find a great treasure I wasn't expecting hidden deep in the darkness somewhere.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + A sudden light that cancels a currently active power.
- + The first time I spend a full day in the bright light.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

Dwells in Darkness is a good forte for vislae who won't be spending a lot of time with others.

THE PATH

Demons, page 23

Dark, page 62

Avenge, page 166

Revenge, page 176

Growth, page 171

COMFORT IN DARKNESS

Level: 1 (no cost)

I can see in complete darkness as though it were light. Not an action.

Color: Indigo

THE WELCOMING DARK

Level: 2 (no cost)

If I am in complete darkness, I gain +1 to all actions. If I am in deep shadows, I gain +1 to all non-combat actions. Not an action.

Color: Grey

DARK WEAPON

Level: 5 (+1 die)

I launch a spear-like bolt of pure darkness at a target within long range, which inflicts cold, soul-numbing damage equal to the level of this ability.

Color: Red

KITH IN DARKNESS

Level: 5

Reaching into an area utterly devoid of light, I produce a small demon of darkness. The demon is 2 levels lower than the ability and serves as my ally, aiding challenges or carrying out my orders to the best of its ability. However, if it enters an area of bright light, it is immediately banished back to darkness. Otherwise, unless it is slain, it remains with me until the next sunrise.

Color: Pale

CLOTHED IN DARKNESS

Level: 6

Darkness folds around me like a cloak regardless of the light levels around me. My stealth actions are enhanced by +1 die.

Depletion: 0–1 (check each use)

Color: Grey

DARK CONDUIT**Level:** 7

I travel from one spot of utter darkness to another instantaneously, slipping along the pathways that exist only when no light shines upon them. The range of this transference is unlimited, but I must travel along a path without light.

Color: Green**CALL UPON THE DARKNESS****Level:** 7

I infuse myself with darkness. I gain 5 enhancements that I can distribute in my pools as I wish.

Color: Silver**SHAPE THE DARKNESS****Level:** 8 (+1 die)

In an area of shadows and dim light, I can use the darkness to create whatever shapes I wish within a very large area. These permanent phantoms have sound, smell, and touch, and it requires no action on my part to have them move and cavort. In fact, I can “program” the shapes to do things. Although they cannot truly affect the material world, anyone more than 4 levels lower than the level of this ability who views this illusion will flee for a round if I desire.

Color: Grey**SOOTHING DARKNESS****Level:** 9

I and anyone else nearby that I wish can rest in total darkness for ten minutes and in perfect safety. As long as it is completely dark and all involved take no action other than to rest, nothing can harm any of us. All stat pools are refreshed. No one affected by this can benefit from it again until the sun next sets.

Color: Invisible

In the Dark lies the infamous Black Cube, summoned by a variety of spells and rituals to discover its secrets, but none of them do it justice.

DARK SUMMONS**Level:** 10

I call forth a demon from the Dark and give it a single command that it must obey. If the task that I command of it is short (taking rounds to accomplish, such as helping me in an encounter), the demon is 3 levels lower than the level of this ability. If the task is more involved and complex (traveling to another place, searching for something, and so on), it is 4 levels lower.

Color: Pale**DWELLS IN DARKNESS**

EATS KNOWLEDGE

Logovores feed upon knowledge like others consume food. I absorb information and lore and internalize it. I often like the taste of history and memory over that of math and numbers, but to each their own. Although secrets and spells objectively have the most interesting flavors. Not always the best, but certainly the most varied and strange.

Logovores absorb knowledge from books, from people, and eventually from the greater universe itself, usually by touch. More, more, more is generally the motivation for their actions.

If I feed on information, I don't need actual food for the rest of that day. Just a little lore and some water will sustain me. In fact, I prefer knowledge to food. It stays with me longer and nourishes me better.

Logovores are not well liked. I find, for example, that libraries often take special precautions to keep me out. This forces me to use my powers discreetly and with a bit of subterfuge, but that's fine.

Background: Many logovores were literally starved for knowledge as young children. This lack of teaching, understanding, and information helped shaped their strange abilities.

Appearance: Logovores sometimes bear an amulet with an arcane symbol that combines the concepts of secret and hunger.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for logovores.

- + I must learn. (*Learn.*)
- + I must know everything. (*Solve a Mystery.*)
- + Everything. (*Uncover a Secret.*)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + I learn a particularly juicy secret in the information I consume and gain some Hidden Knowledge.
- + I absorb a higher-level spell than I have ever absorbed before.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I learn something disturbing and jarring when I feed.

Learn, page 172

Solve a Mystery, page 176

Uncover a Secret, page 178

- + I accidentally consume too much at once and the information overload affects my mind.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with one of the first ones (my choice as to which) and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

FEED UPON TEXT

Level: 2

I touch a book and absorb its knowledge (not spells or secrets, but general information) in just one minute. This consumes the text, leaving the pages blank.

Color: Indigo

PERFECT MEMORY

Level: 2 (no cost)

I absorb everything I read or experience. It's all information to me, and I consume it all. I add 3 bene permanently to my Intellect pool. Not an action.

Color: Blue

FEED UPON THOUGHTS

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I know the thoughts of the person that I touch. This momentarily disrupts their thinking (because I am taking and eating their thoughts), so if I am able to affect them and continue touching them, they lose their action. Maintaining contact with someone longer than a brief touch is very difficult if they are not restrained, and requires a separate action each round.

Color: Indigo

CONSUME MEMORY

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I take away the memory of the last five minutes from the person that I touch. I, in turn, gain that memory.

Color: Blue

FEED UPON SPELL

Level: 6 (+1 die)

I devour a random spell from the mind of the person that I touch. They cannot use that spell again until the sun next rises, while I can use it once in the same timeframe (paying the regular cost for it). If they know no spells, this ability gives me nothing.

Color: Blue

CONSUME SPELL

Level: 7 (+1 die)

If I use my action to wait, and someone casts a spell upon me while I wait, I can consume the spell. I must succeed on an action with the spell's level as the challenge, and I must achieve two successes. If I do, the spell has no effect, I gain points to my Sorcery pool equal to the level of the spell, and the caster loses the ability to cast the spell again until the sun next rises.

Color: Invisible

FEED UPON MIND

Level: 9 (+2 dice)

I render the person I touch completely unable to form a coherent thought. I have devoured their mind. The only way for them to recover is through some kind of mental restoration or curse removal magic. At the same time, I internalize their mind and can get the answer to three questions that they knew the answer to.

Color: Red

THE WAY
Divinations and
Information-Gathering
Magic, page 17

DEVOUR THOUGHTS

Level: 9 (+2 dice)

I feed upon the thoughts of all nearby creatures.

Not only do I know their immediate thoughts, but they also lose their next action, as their thought processes are disrupted. I gain 1 point in Hidden Knowledge, but I cannot gain more than 1 point a day in this way.

Color: Indigo

GNAW AT THE UNIVERSAL MIND

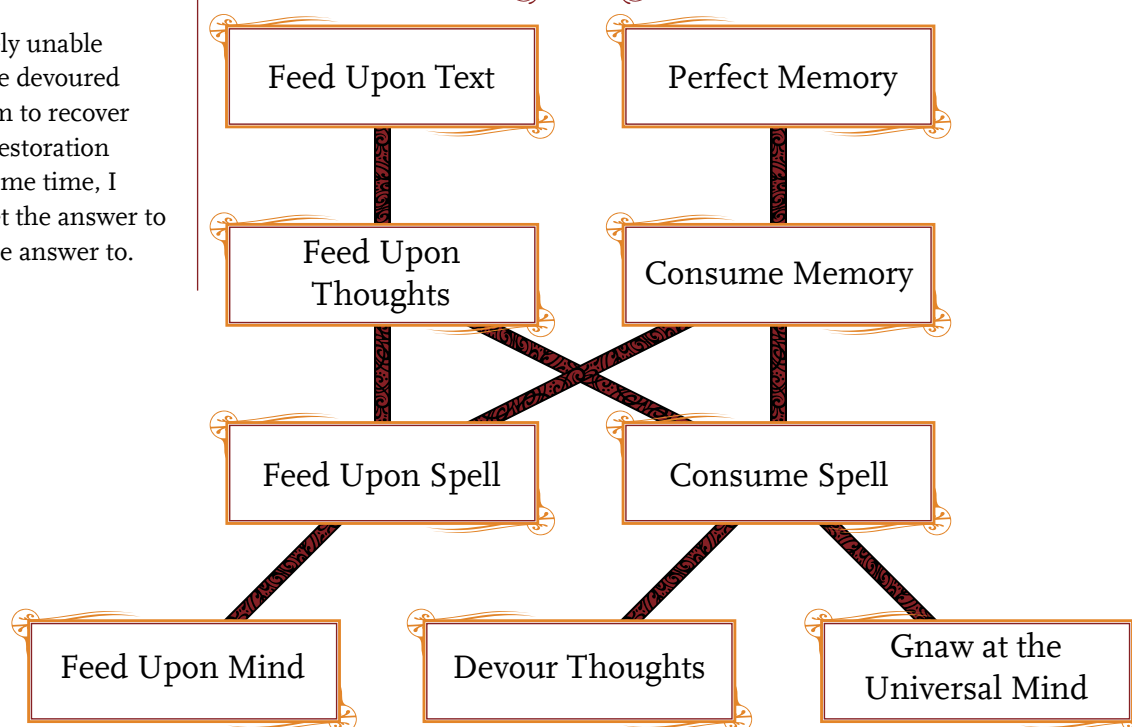
Level: 9

I feed upon the universe itself, and gain all of the following:

- + 3 enhancements to my Intellect pool.
- + The answer to one question.
- + The ability to use one new secret or spell, half the level of this ability (round down), of my choosing, until the sun next sets.

Color: Indigo

EATS KNOWLEDGE



EXPLORES THE NOÖSPHERE

The **Noösphere** connects minds through the media of the aethyr. It is, in a way, its own immaterial plane that connects all others (wherever there are minds).

Noösphere adepts can, with just a moment's concentration, project our psychic self into the Noösphere without the aid of an **Aethyr Link**. This costs nothing, except for the fact that while in the Noösphere, my physical body is motionless and unaware. Entering the Noösphere, then, is not hard. Finding anything there other than random thoughts, meaningless dreamlike imagery, or useless memories of unknown strangers, however, is another story.

All thinking beings are connected to the Noösphere, and thus can be located and even attacked through it. Noösphere adepts cannot cast spells on such targets without the ability to channel a spell. However, targets within the Noösphere itself are always fair game. In other words, spells function normally (or as normally as possible, depending on the effect) within the constructed reality of the Noösphere.

Background: I must determine where I got my training and what my first experience was (and what my later important experiences were) in the Noösphere.

Appearance: Noösphere adepts look like everyone else.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for Noösphere adepts.

- + The Noösphere offers a great deal of potential for new uses. (*New Discovery*.)
- + I am, after all, an explorer. (*Explore*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + I find an unexpected secret while exploring the Noösphere.
- + Using access to the Noösphere to help complete a character arc's climax.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I find myself in a location where I cannot access the Noösphere.
- + I encounter a powerful entity who ejects me from the Noösphere.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

SEARCH THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 2 (+1 die)

Everyone is connected to the Noösphere. If I spend one hour or more in total concentration, I can find a person whose name and general appearance or nature I know (or have had clearly described to me).

People who don't want to be found have +2 added to their level

New Discovery, page 173

Explore, page 170

Aethyr Link, see Objects of Power deck

THE PATH
Noösphere, page 14

above and beyond any other defenses they might have. Once I find them, I can learn one of three things: their general well-being, their general physical location, or how to use the Contact Through the Noösphere ability to send them a message.

Color: Blue

CONTACT THROUGH THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 3

Spending ten minutes in concentration, I contact someone I know well or have found using the Search the Noösphere ability. I can send them a message of up to twenty-five words and can receive a similar reply.

Color: Blue

MENTAL SHIELD

Level: 3

I gird myself in psychic protection that grants me +2 defense to resist all mental attacks, including any attack that occurs within or from the Noösphere.

Depletion: 0–2 (check at the end of each combat encounter involving mental attacks)

Color: Invisible

INQUIRE WITHIN THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 4

I scour through the sea of information that makes up the Noösphere and gain the answer to one question that I ask.

Color: Indigo

CREATE NOÖSPHERE CHAMBER

Level: 4

I create a permanent location within the Noösphere. Using this ability, I can mentally travel there, leaving my physical body behind, in a trance, for the entirety of the time I am there. I can remain in the chamber as long as I wish, but my body is defenseless and without water or food. If I am away from my body for more than one full day, I take 1 point of damage on the first day after that, 2 points of damage on the second, and so on until my physical body has withered and died.

The chamber can be any size and appears as I wish. There, I can relax, store information, and interact with others who have the ability to reach it, such as those with an Aethyr Link device (as we have a “meeting place”), without needing to use the Contact Through the Noösphere ability. Only those who I tell

about the chamber can find it, and I can eject anyone from the chamber whenever I wish if I am present. I can have only one chamber at a time, but I can dissolve a chamber I create whenever I wish while in the Noösphere.

As a Noösphere adept, I can travel to and enter a chamber created by someone else as an action, but I must be invited (unless I use some other ability to find it). It is possible that non-Noösphere adepts can travel to a Noösphere chamber using magical items or spells.

Color: Silver

PSYCHIC ATTACK

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I launch a psychic attack at anyone connected to the Noösphere who I can perceive or who I have found through the use of the Search the Noösphere ability. The attack inflicts mental damage equal to the level of the ability. If I am successful, the disruption causes me to lose track of the target unless I use the Search the Noösphere ability again or they take an action I become aware of (such as attacking me).

Color: Red

CHANNEL SPELL THROUGH THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 7

I can cast spells through the Noösphere on targets that I have located using the Search the Noösphere ability. Any such target is treated as being touched. Because the Noösphere is purely mental, however, physical effects can't extend through and then back out of it. Thus, I can cast **Marionette** and affect a target I have located, but I can't cast **Barrage** on the same target.

Color: Blue

DELVE INTO THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 9

I use an action to leave my body and travel into the Noösphere. My spirit moves along the connections of the realm, which are the minds of all thinking beings. I walk the spaces between each mind, touching them one at a time. While I do this, I can do one of the following each round, as an action:

Marionette, see Spell Deck

Barrage, see Spell Deck

- ✦ Attempt to use the senses of the mind I am next to.
- ✦ Attempt to disrupt the mind I am next to, so that they lose their next action.
- ✦ Attempt to shut down a mind's access to the magical currents (this inflicts 1 point of mental damage on a vislae or other magic-wielding creature, and they cannot use magic until that damage is healed).

Delving through the Noösphere is a random, chaotic process, so to find a specific mind I must use the Search the Noösphere ability.

I can remain in the Noösphere as long as I wish, but my body is defenseless and without water or food. If I am away from my body for more than one full day, I take 1 point of damage on the first day after that, 2 points of damage on the second, and so on until my physical body has withered and died.

Color: Blue

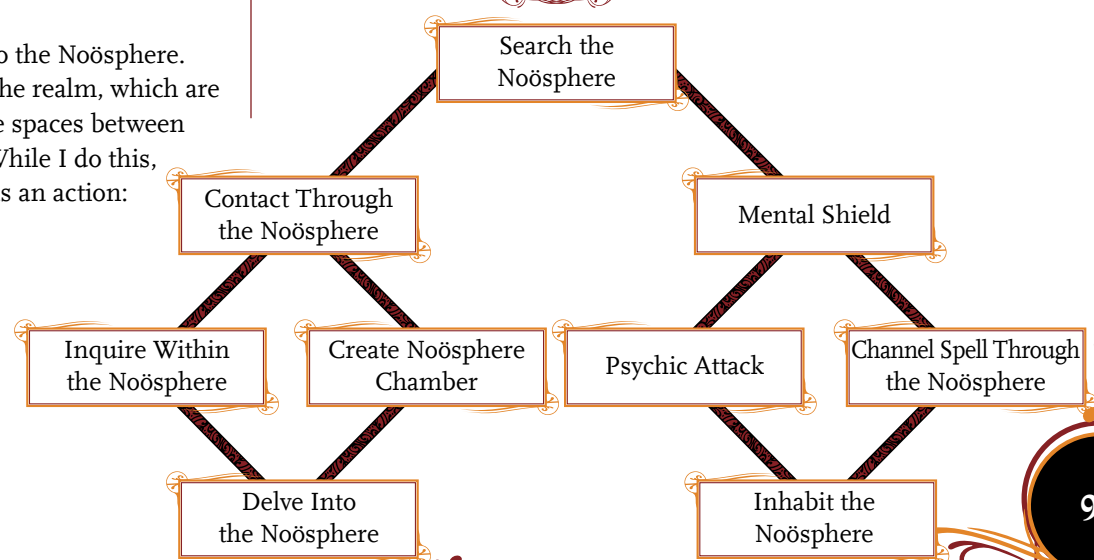
INHABIT THE NOÖSPHERE

Level: 9 (no cost)

I take up permanent residence in the Noösphere. My physical body withers and dies, and my spirit lives in a Noösphere chamber that I have created using the Create Noösphere Chamber ability. For a cost of 9 Sorcery, however, I can manifest a physical body in the real world that lasts until the sun next sets. This physical body is exactly like the one I had before, but if it is killed, my spirit returns to the Noösphere and I must remain there for a week and a day. I can use all my other forte abilities from within the Noösphere, so I can channel spells out, or delve to use other people's senses to see what's happening in the physical world.

Color: Blue

EXPLORES THE NOÖSPHERE



FUSES NIGHTMARE TO FIST

Nightmare fighters aren't people who fight nightmares. They use nightmares to fight.

My terror can't be conquered, but it can be redirected. The things that haunt my dreams are too terrible to face, so the best use of them is to make my enemies face them. I take my own dreams and use them as an attack. When I strike someone, I am doing so with my fist and skill, but also with the horrors of my nightmares.

Background: Most nightmare fighters lived a life plagued by terrible dreams. I learned to protect myself from my own nightmares by using them rather than struggling against them. I should determine if I learned this on my own or if I was trained.

Appearance: Nightmare fighters are brawlers and usually look the part. When they use their powers, their fists seethe with dangerous energies that almost look like flickering monsters.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for nightmare fighters.

- + Nightmare fighters excel at defense as well as offense. (**Defense**.)
- + If ever anyone was going to track down and confront a foe head on, it would be a nightmare fighter. (**Defeat a Foe**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + A particularly horrific nightmare grants me greater-than-normal powers the next day.
- + Using the power of my nightmares to help complete a character arc's climax.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + The nightmare gets loose.
- + I lose contact with my nightmares and have only pleasant dreams—nothing to fight with.
- + The people I am personally closest to start to have my terrible nightmares.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

There is a being known as the Prince of Nightmares, but it is no friend to nightmare fighters. See The Path, page 46.

Defense, page 168

Defeat a Foe, page 168

TERROR STRIKE

Level: 2 (no cost)

Fueled by my nightmares, I inflict +2 damage when I attack with my fist. Not an action.

Color: Red

GIVING VOICE TO MY DREAD

Level: 4 (+1 die to unnerve others)

I use my action to describe a recent nightmare that I have not yet talked about aloud. In so doing, I accomplish two things. First, my next attack is enhanced by +1 die, infused with fresh nightmare energy. Second, anyone near me when I speak is unnerved and their next action is hindered.

Color: Red

BLINDING ATTACK

Level: 4 (+1 die)

The next person I strike with my fist is blinded for the rest of the combat encounter by a burst of nightmare energy as I connect.

Color: Red

USE MY FEAR

Level: 4

The next time I am attacked, I channel my own fear from a recent nightmare to heighten my protection. My defense is enhanced by +1 die.

Color: Invisible

STUNNING STRIKE

Level: 5 (+1 die)

The next person I strike with my fist loses their next action, their mind distracted by nightmare imagery.

Color: Red

INSTILL TERROR

Level: 5 (+1 die)

All nearby creatures not allied with me sense the power of my nightmare and flee in terror when I make a fist.

Depletion: 0–2 (check each round)

Color: Blue

SMASH THROUGH**Level:** 7

The next time I attack an inanimate object, whether it be punching my way through a door or destroying a foe's weapon, my nightmare-fused attack is enhanced by +2 dice.

Color: Red**STAB OF MADNESS****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

The next person I strike with my fist is driven to permanent madness, hallucinating nightmarish imagery. They take utterly random (often violent) actions half the time, and do absolutely nothing the rest of the time.

Color: Blue**STEAL NIGHTMARE****Level:** 9 (+1 die)

I reach into the mind of a close being and steal their worst nightmare to power my attacks. Not only do I learn what terrifies them, but I can also fuse that fear to my fist so that henceforth, when I make an attack with my fist against that being, I add +2 dice.

Color: Blue**FLURRY OF FEAR****Level:** 10 (+2 dice)

I become a living nightmare. I lash at every foe nearby simultaneously with my fist, inflicting +4 damage. Further, I terrify anyone struck so much that they lose their next action.

Color: Blue**FUSES NIGHTMARE TO FIST**

HOSTS A LEGION

I contain multitudes.

I am possessed not by one demon, but by many. They work with me, because my success and well-being are theirs. Thus, “I” is actually “we.”

Most people do not understand the possessed. They brand us as maniacs. They think us servants of evil. What they don’t see is that we are not servants, but partners. The demons within the possessed do not necessarily force them to be dark crusaders, although it would be a lie to say that the demons don’t occasionally suggest courses of action that one would never call “good.”

Background: What did I do to get possessed? How long ago did it happen?

Appearance: Most who host a legion dress the part—either all rags, frothing mouth, and unkempt hair, or dapper red-and-black suits with a sinister grin. Some, however, attempt to blend in for safety’s sake.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for the possessed.

- ✦ It’s very easy to be tempted by what the demons whisper to me. (**Fall From Grace**.)
- ✦ I can redeem myself for the deeds that the demons convinced me to do. (**Redemption**.)
- ✦ Don’t do wrong by a demon. (**Revenge**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- ✦ The demons provide me with a particularly useful idea or piece of information.
- ✦ I complete a character arc that is as important to my demons as it is to me.
- ✦ I destroy a major foe of demonkind.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- ✦ Someone attempts to exorcise my demons.
- ✦ Someone controls my demons.
- ✦ My demons turn against me for some reason.

Forte Abilities: We have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

Certes, page 26

Perception, page 27

Accuracy, page 26

Fall From Grace, page 170

Redemption, page 175

Revenge, page 176

Interaction, page 27

STRENGTH OF DEMONS

Level: 1 (no cost)

The demons enhance our body so that they do not utterly burn me out by their presence. We add +4 to our core **Certes** to divide among our pools. Not an action.

Color: Gold

WE ARE MANY

Level: 2

The demons are always watching. We add 3 bene to our **Perception** pool, as the demons are even more aware of what’s going on around me than I am.

Color: Blue

DEMONIC SAVAGERY

Level: 4

The demons enhance my attacks and encourage my offensive actions. We add 3 bene and 1 enhancement to our **Accuracy** pool.

Color: Red

SPEAKING WITH MANY TONGUES

Level: 4

The demons whisper within me, making suggestions of what I can or should say. We add 3 bene and 1 enhancement to our **Interaction** pool.

Color: Indigo

HAND OF THE DEMON

Level: 4

We can move objects of about my size and weight that are within a short distance once, or objects about a quarter of that in size and weight until the sun next rises or sets. In a given round, we can move the object in question a short distance.

Color: Green

DEMONIC RESILIENCE

Level: 4

The next time we are attacked, we have an enhancement of +1 die to our defenses.

Color: Invisible

HELL'S HEALING

Level: 5

We heal 1 Wound that we have. It closes or disappears with a whiff of brimstone.

Color: Green

SPREADING THE LEGION

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

We send forth some of the legion to possess other creatures within close distance. Those affected work with us as if we were one entity, even to their own detriment. They are essentially mind controlled.

Depletion: 0–1 (check each round)

Color: Blue

*Is this as strange as when
you dreamed it?*

DREAD BURST

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

With a horrific, multi-voiced shout, we blast the medium area around us for an amount of damage equal to 4 lower than the level of this effect. The shout does not affect me. This burst, however, deals +2 damage to living creatures, –2 damage to undead or demons, and no damage to spiritual entities of any kind. The ground heaves with black flames and squirming, dying worms.

Color: Red

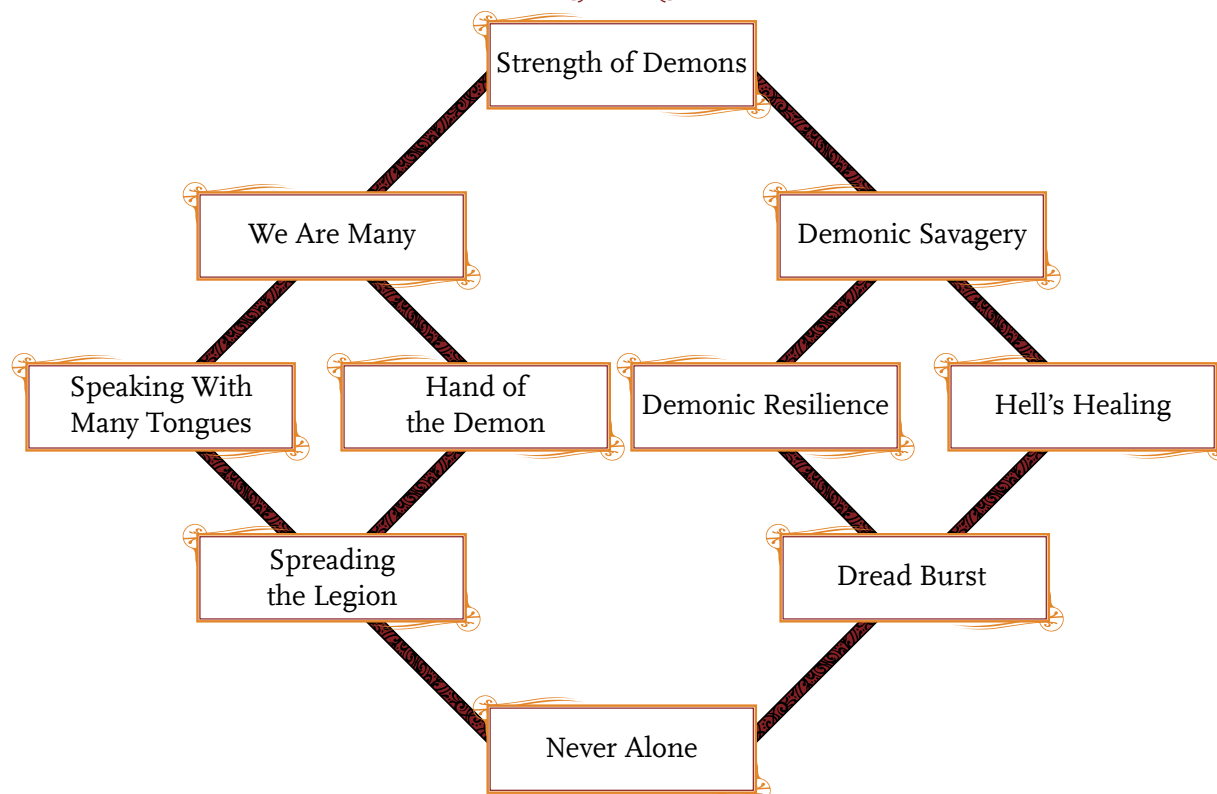
NEVER ALONE

Level: 10

When I am attacked, three of the demons within me take on physical form as level 6 beings. They defend me and attack my foes, disappearing when they are slain or when the combat ends. None of this (even their initial appearance) requires an action on my part. However, once triggered, it cannot happen again until after the sun next rises.

Color: Silver

HOSTS A LEGION



INHALES THE AETHYR

You and I do not breathe the same air, even as we stand shoulder to shoulder. We could not be more different. You can never understand me.

Living creatures breathe air. Ghosts breathe **aethyr**. Normally, a living creature is utterly unaware of the aethyr—it is entirely outside their capability to experience. Aethyr breathers are different. This substance permeates the Actuality, and it is what sustains the dead, allowing them to travel from wherever they died to the **Pale**—and sometimes back again.

Background: Many aethyr breathers are born that way. A few acquire it as a skill.

Appearance: Aethyr breathers are almost always pale and gaunt. Something about the aethyr does not encourage what others consider to be a “healthy” look.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for aethyr breathers.

- + Who were my real parents? Some people say that one or both of them must have been dead. (**Mysterious Background**.)
- + Aethyr breathers usually focus on learning as much as they can about the Pale and the Dead. (**Learn**.)
- + Eventually, exploring the Pale is something that most aethyr breathers wish to do. (**Explore**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Speaking with a ghost of someone important or influential to me personally.
- + Traveling to the Pale for the first time.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Finding myself in a strange place with no connection to the aethyr.
- + A ghost possesses me as I try to substantiate the aethyr.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

THE PATH

Aethyr, page 14

THE PATH

The Pale, page 53

Ectoplasm, page 14

*Mysterious Background,
page 173*

Learn, page 172

Explore, page 170

AETHYR BREATH

Level 1 (no cost)

I don’t need air to live. Aethyr is everywhere, even in the water or solid rock. Not an action.

Color: Gold

SUBSTANTIATE THE AETHYR

Level: 3 (+1 die if used as an attack)

I can draw aethyr in through my mouth and then expel it as a semi-solid substance that many call ectoplasm. I can use this ability as an action to create a mass of **ectoplasm** about my size that hovers in the air. Doing so next to a foe can coat the foe in ectoplasm, which causes all their actions to suffer a –1 penalty for the remainder of the encounter.

I can also use this ability as an action to manifest a close ghost in a material form, but only if they are willing. The form lasts a few rounds, but this varies greatly based on how much exertion they take—the more, the less time it lasts.

Color: Silver

SEE THE DEAD

Level: 3 (no cost)

I can see ghosts and dead spirits. I cannot hear them or communicate with them without assistance from some other ability (such as **Speak With the Dead**). Not an action.

Color: Indigo

INTO THE AETHYR

Level: 5

I can use the aethyr as a medium through which to move. In other words, I can move in any direction not blocked by a solid object—I can walk or climb straight up into the air and back down again. I can hover in the air. I can walk across water.

Depletion: Ends when the sun next rises or sets

Color: Pale

HEDGE OUT SPIRITS

Level: 6

I shape the aethyr so ghosts and other spirits cannot come close to me.

Depletion: 0 (check each minute)

Color: Pale

SPEAK WITH THE DEAD

Level: 6

I can speak with the dead near me. I can ask a number of questions equal to this ability's level. They will give me the answers if they know them. Alternatively, I can call out into the aethyr to the ghost of any person with a level equal to or less than the ability level, ask a single question, and get an answer if they know it.

Color: Indigo

AETHYREALNESS

Level: 8

I can take on the form of a spirit. I can pass through solid matter and cannot be affected by physical attacks. As a spirit, I can move to anywhere in the world in just ten minutes, or I can travel to the Pale in one hour.

Depletion: 0 (check each hour)

Color: Pale

THE WAY
Divinations and
Information-Gathering
Magic, page 17

SPIRITUAL STRIKE

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

I tap into the aethyr and make an attack against a spirit or a material target with spiritual energy. The target must be within very long range, and it suffers damage equal to the level of this ability.

Color: Red

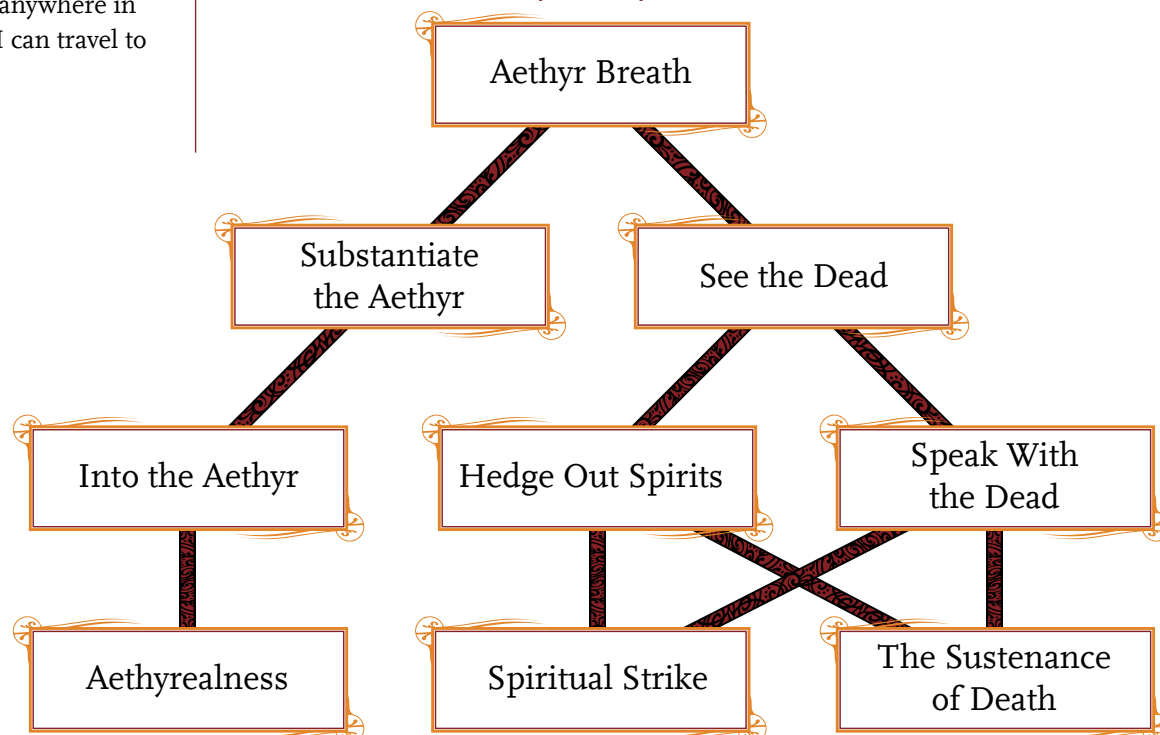
THE SUSTENANCE OF DEATH

Level: 9 (no cost)

If I die, I immediately become a ghost, already accustomed to the aethyr. I have full awareness and control the round following my death, and my spiritual form floats immediately beside the spot where I died. I can partially or fully manifest without needing to make a roll (although manifesting is still an action) and gain +1 to all actions made while a ghost.

Color: Pale

INHALES THE AETHYR



IS ADORED BY THE SEA

Sons and daughters of the sea, know that your adoptive parent loves you and wants only the best for you. My bosom is your refuge, my expanse your home.

I am adored by the sea. I know it in the deeps of my saltwater-filled heart. It watches over me, protects me, and guides me. I am never far from the safety of its welcoming embrace.

The sea-loved. The sea-cherished. The children of the ocean. We have many names, but one truth. The sea adores us. It shares with us its strength and its bounty. It would like nothing better than for me to live within its embrace at all times, where I am always safe, but it understands that I likely have business on the land as well. Still, its power extends to me wherever I go.

Background: At some point in my past, I dwelled near the sea or took a long sea voyage. The sea found me and revealed its care and concern.

Appearance: Sea-loved smell of salt, and their hair moves as though underwater, even when dry.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for the sea-loved.

- + Something has gone wrong in the sea. (**Undo a Wrong**.)
- + I will create a work of art to honor the sea unlike anything anyone's ever seen. (**Creation**.)
- + As I am a child of the sea, I will have a child of my own and care for it as deeply (and perhaps the sea will as well). (**Birth**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Crossing the sea in a voyage that takes more than three days.
- + Spending more time underwater than I have ever spent before.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Being demonstrably far from the sea, such as in a deep desert.
- + I or someone I care for is greatly harmed in or by the water.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and

Out in the sea known only as the Alone lies a tiny island where the very concept of being awake lives.

Undo a Wrong, page 178

Creation, page 167

Birth, page 166

then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

BRINY BREATH

Level: 2 (no cost)

I can breathe water as easily as air. Not an action.

Color: Gold

MOOD OF THE SEA

Level: 3

I can affect a small area of water around me, making it either calm or roiling. Although this might have different effects, it always either lowers or increases the challenge of swimming in that area by 1.

Color: Gold

THE PROTECTIVE ARMS OF THE SEA

Level: 3

I am surrounded by a nimbus of swirling water.

This grants me +1 Armor (+3 versus fire).

Depletion: Ends automatically at the end of the next combat encounter

Color: Invisible

SEAMIST

Level: 4

I conjure a bank of thick, salty mist in a medium area around me. I can see within it perfectly, but all others within it are virtually blind.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Grey

WALL OF WATER

Level: 5

I create a churning wall of water. The wall must be contiguous and must fit within a medium area, but within those bounds it can curve and turn. Moving through the wall takes a full action and can be successfully attempted only by those whose level is equal to or higher than the ability's level.

Color: Invisible

SEA SUMMONS**Level:** 6 (+1 die)

A 6-inch (15 cm) portal momentarily opens at my hand, leading directly into the deepest regions of the sea. With great pressure, saltwater, small stones, and even bits of sea creature shells and coral shoot up to a short distance at a single target, inflicting damage equal to the level of the ability.

Color: Pale**VISIONS FROM THE DEEP****Level:** 7

I concentrate for ten minutes, and during that time I hear the voice of the sea and see what it wants me to see. The vision is something that I need to know. I can try to inquire about a specific topic, but just as often, the sea's will is stronger than mine and it shows me something I didn't even know I needed to be aware of. The sea is always interested in my safety and happiness.

Color: Indigo**BURIAL AT SEA****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

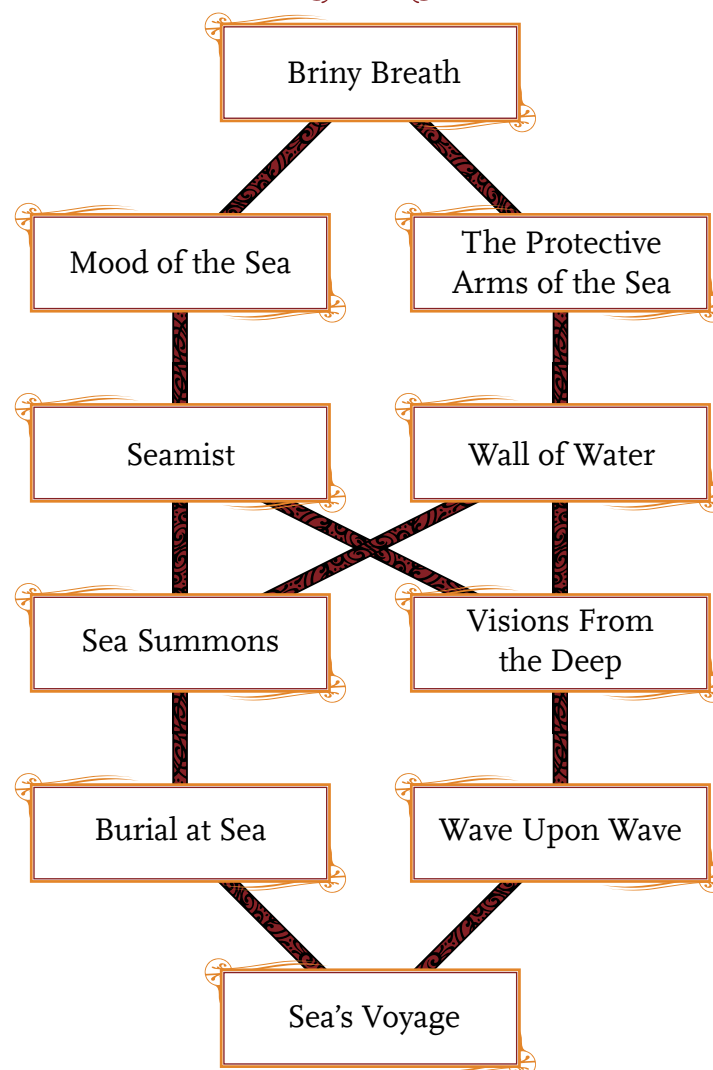
I send a target I touch away to be entombed in stasis deep below the sea. When the effect ends, they return to exactly where they were, in the same condition as when they left (except they are now soaking wet), unaware that any time has passed.

Depletion: 0 (check each day)**Color:** Gold**WAVE UPON WAVE****Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

From my outstretched hands, waves of seawater spread in all directions. Unfixed objects and living creatures within close range are knocked about and pushed away (at least a short distance), and those far away are knocked over (depending on the circumstance). This continues for as long as I use my actions to concentrate, and—if I wish it—even when I stop concentrating, it continues until it depletes on its own.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)**Color:** Green**SEA'S VOYAGE****Level:** 10

I summon a sailing ship made of briny water, coral, shells, and living sea creatures. The ship appears regardless of whether I am close or far from the water—even if I am inside. This ship will take me, up to a dozen other people, and a considerable amount of gear or goods to anywhere in the Actuality I command. No matter where we go, the journey seems to be an ocean-going voyage, and, regardless of distance, the whole trip takes about one hour, unless I want it to be longer—I can make it take up to a week.

Color: Pale**IS ADORED BY THE SEA**

LISTENS TO THE WHISPERS

Ghosts and spirits are drawn to me. Most people—certainly non-vislae—can't even see them, but a spirit listener never goes anywhere without a retinue of apparitions. Some of these are nonhuman things that have seeped in from distant planes, and some are the lingering souls of the departed, still bearing the wounds of whatever killed them. In either case, my constant companions are not a pleasant vision to behold. Yet it is my life, and I've grown accustomed to it. In fact, I've adapted to it, and learned to profit from it. Because these unsolicited companions are filled with information, some of which lies outside the ken of mortals.

Background: Why are the spirits drawn to me?

Appearance: Although they rarely bear physical characteristics that distinguish them, spirit listeners often look a bit haggard and weary, and they disconcertingly look away as if hearing things that others cannot (because that's precisely what's going on).

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for spirit listeners.

- + The whispering spirits sometimes ask for help. (*Aid a Friend*.)
- + The whispering spirits sometimes want vengeance or justice. (*Avenge, Justice*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Somehow going a full day without hearing the whispers (even though I get my power from them).
- + The whispers tell me exactly what I need to complete a character arc.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + The whispers tell me something truly disturbing, such as describing the demise of a loved one.
- + The whispers tell me something that turns out to be untrue—why are they lying?

Aid a Friend, page 165

Avenge, page 166

Justice, page 172

THE WAY

*Divinations and
Information-Gathering
Magic, page 17*

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

MORE HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Level: 2 (no cost)

The whispers teach me. I gain +3 to my Hidden Knowledge and increase it by +1 every month henceforth. Not an action.

Color: Indigo

SUGGESTED WORDS

Level: 3

The whispers tell me what to say. I add 4 bene to my Interaction pool.

Color: Indigo

DANGEROUS SECRETS

Level: 3

The whispers suggest the best way to hurt a foe in combat. I add 4 bene to my Accuracy pool.

Color: Red

INSIDE THE OTHER

Level: 5 (+1 die)

The whispers tell me what someone within close range is thinking right now, and for as long as I do nothing but concentrate.

Color: Indigo

BEYOND BARRIERS

Level: 4

The whispers tell me what is going on in a place I cannot see. The place must be within very long range. If I spend 2 additional Sorcery, the place can be within 100 miles (160 km), but I must be at least somewhat familiar with the location (having been there before, for example).

Color: Indigo

SECRET VULNERABILITIES

Level: 6 (+1 die)

I indicate a nearby creature or object and the whispers tell me its weaknesses, its secrets, and its past. Not only do I learn the name (if any), level, and general characteristics of the creature or object, but if I interact with it in any way (hostilely or peacefully), my action is enhanced by +1 die.

Color: Indigo

TEACHING SECRETS

Level: 7 (no cost)

The whispers teach me any secret I choose, level 7 or below, immediately when I gain this ability. This is true even of secrets normally difficult to find or learn. Not an action. Teaching secrets is a one-time benefit.

Color: Indigo

SECRET WAYS

Level: 8

The whispers begin to provide me with truly valuable, widely applicable knowledge. I gain an enhancement of +2 dice on my next action, and add 2 enhancements to any pool I choose for later actions.

Color: Green

SOOTHING WHISPERS

Level: 8

I listen to the whispers for at least ten minutes and heal all my **Wounds** or **Anguish** (but not both).

Color: Green

BEST-KEPT SECRETS

Level: 10

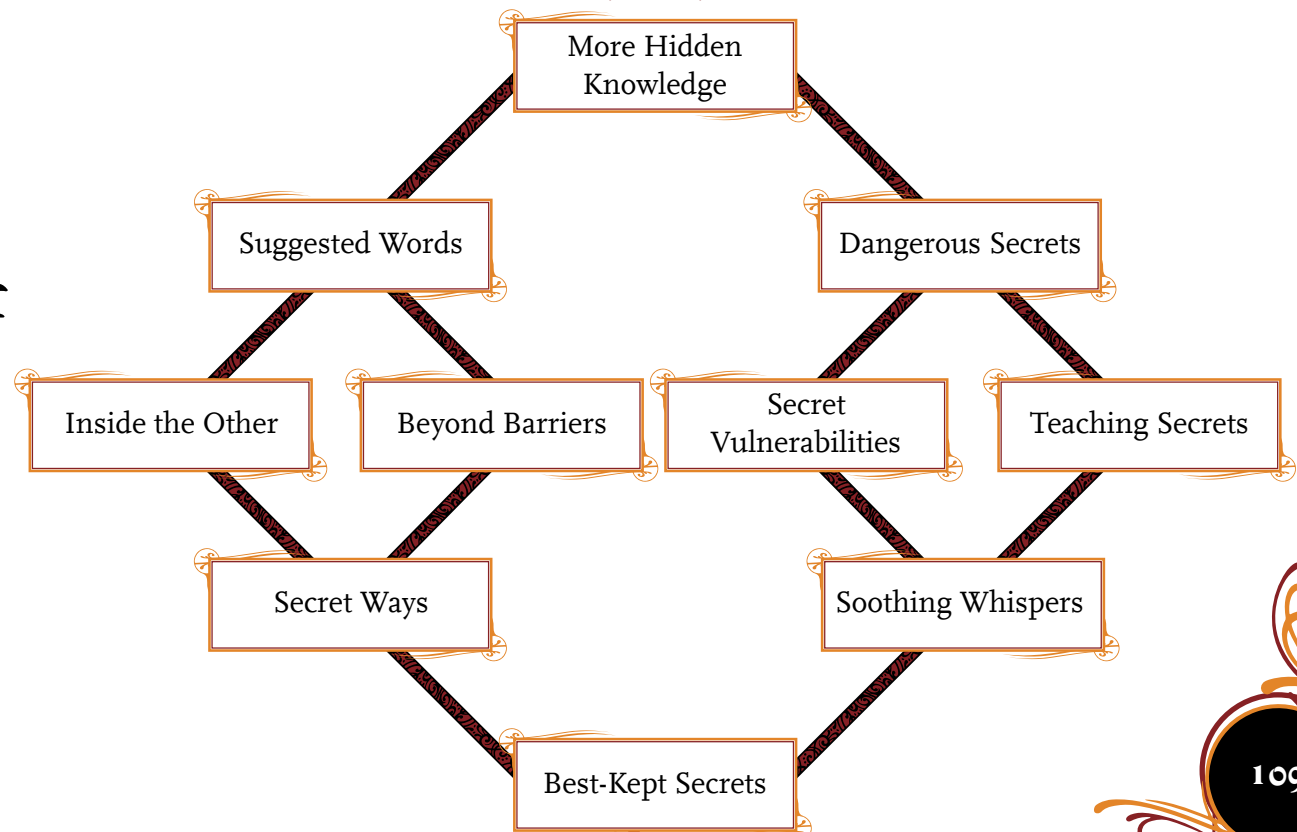
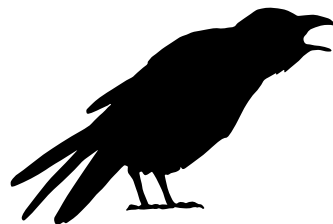
I ask the whispers a question about anything at all in the Actuality, and the next day they return with an answer.

Color: Indigo

Wound, page 23

Anguish, page 23

LISTENS TO THE WHISPERS



PROVIDES A VESSEL FOR SPIRITS

A body is just a physical vessel for a spirit. I have decided to share my vessel with other spirits in exchange for knowledge and power. I know that the spiritual realms are the truly important concerns, and that matters in the physical realm are secondary, so anything I might sacrifice is worth far less than what I might gain.

Most spirits—ghosts, demons, angels, and so on—look upon spirit vessels with a great deal of gratitude and respect. Most physical beings think spirit vessels are at least a little mad.

Background: The Cathedral of Illuminism teaches the meditative techniques required to provide a vessel for spirits. Some of the illuminated initiates have taken this knowledge and spread it throughout the Actuality.

Appearance: Spirit vessels typically wear the glowing eye symbol of the Cathedral of Illuminism as a badge, an amulet, a ring, or a tattoo. This is a sign for physical beings but also a sort of “welcome mat” for spirits.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for spiritual vessels.

- + From time to time, the Cathedral of Illuminism calls upon those who have learned from them. (Assist an Organization.)

- + Sometimes hosting a spirit raises more questions than anything else. (Solve a Mystery.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Hosting a spirit that gives me something unexpected.
- + Meeting a spirit I have hosted as a free entity.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Having a spirit abuse the control of my body, doing things I do not want them to do.
- + Calling to a spirit and gaining nothing.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

The Cathedral of Illuminism is a small organization based in the Blue, but with members in Satyrine as well.

Assist an Organization, page 166

Solve a Mystery, page 176

Spirit vessels are often approached by ghosts and spirits to perform favors for them in the physical world.

CALL UPON SPIRIT

Level: 1

I open myself up to whatever spirits might be nearby, allowing one to take control of my body and use it as it wishes for up to one minute. In return, the spirit restores my body, healing 1 Wound and enhancing my next action by +1 die.

Color: Green

SPIRIT OF THE WARRIOR

Level: 3

The spirit of a skilled warrior enters my body and helps me in a fight. I gain 3 bene in my Accuracy pool.

Color: Red

SPIRIT OF THE THIEF

Level: 3

The spirit of a master thief enters my body and guides me. I gain 3 bene in my Movement pool.

Color: Green

SPIRIT OF THE ORATOR

Level: 5

The spirit of a renowned orator enters my mind and assists with everything I say. I gain 3 enhancements to my Interaction pool.

Color: Blue

SPIRIT OF THE LEADER

Level: 5

A spirit of an experienced leader mingles with my own. During this communion, we can use an action to give suggestions, advice, or commands to up to five beings. These beings gain +1 to the next action they take.

Depletion: 0 (check with each use of the ability)

Color: Blue

SPIRIT OF THE MAGE**Level:** 6

As a spirit of a dead vislae joins with me, I gain access to one general spell of level 4 or less of my choosing.

Depletion: 0–2 (check with each use of the spell)**Color:** Indigo**SPIRIT OF THE LEGACY****Level:** 6

I am inhabited by a small portion of the Legacy, and all my defenses are **enhanced**.

Depletion: 0 (check with each use of a defensive action)**Color:** Invisible**SPIRIT BURN****Level:** 7

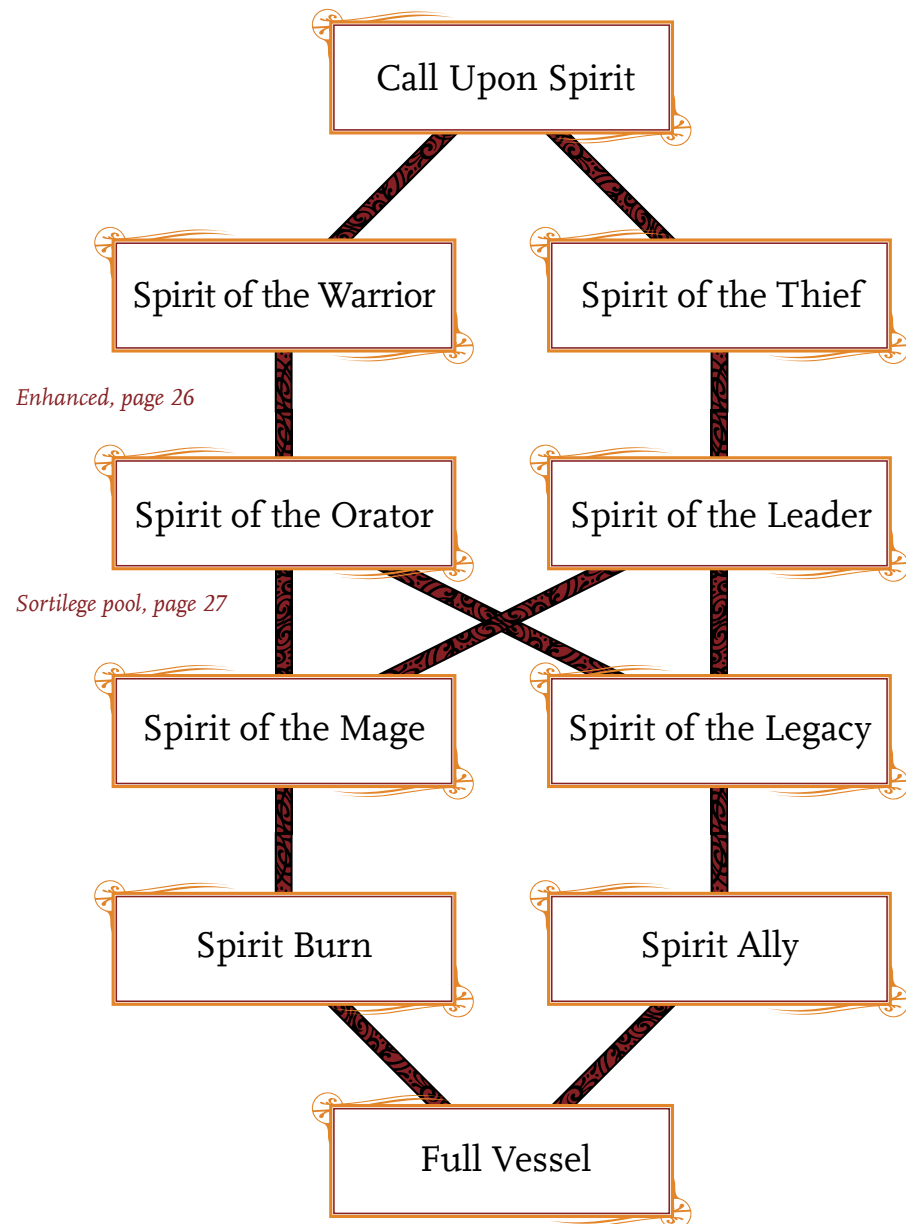
I call upon a number of nearby spirits for help and they lend me magical energy. I gain 5 additional enhancements to my **Sortilege pool**.

Color: Silver**SPIRIT ALLY****Level:** 8 (no cost)

Spiritual entities see me as an ally and will not attempt to harm me. Not an action.

Color: Blue**FULL VESSEL****Level:** 9

A number of intelligent, skilled, and knowledgeable spirits join me, all providing assistance and help. All my actions are enhanced by +2 dice.

Depletion: 0 (check with each action)**Color:** Pale**PROVIDES A VESSEL FOR SPIRITS**

REVELS IN BEAUTY

There is a saying in Shadow, “Beauty is only skin deep.” This is nonsense. Beauty lies within the essence of all things. It’s far more than an appreciation of physical attractiveness—it’s a representation of joy, love, and truth that wends its way through the universe.

As one who revels in beauty, I see beauty in (nearly) everything. I find the good in a cast-off chunk of stone and the grace in a worm crawling in the muck. As I learn to become even more in tune with such things, my perceptions become even stronger. It may seem a modest pursuit at first, but eventually I will transcend to a higher mental plane of true beauty.

People can more clearly see the beauty in one who revels in it. They find me likable, compelling, and pleasant to be around.

Background: Some study in cloistered monasteries to learn to revel in beauty, but for others it comes naturally.

Appearance: Not all who revel in beauty are physically attractive, but you’d never know it by the way people treat them. Inner beauty, as it’s called, is truly more powerful and striking than comeliness anyway.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for those who revel in beauty.

- + Those who revel in beauty often want to eradicate the ugliness of the past. (*Undo a Wrong*.)
- + Nothing is more beautiful to some than a child. (*Birth, Raise a Child*.)
- + Others find beauty in creation (*Creation, New Discovery*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + A beautiful sight I have never before beheld, such as the rising of a new sun.
- + I witness someone turn something ugly (such as a hateful action) into something beautiful.

Interaction, page 27

Perception, page 27

Undo a Wrong, page 178

Birth, page 166

Raise a Child, page 174

Creation, page 167

New Discovery, page 173

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I am deceived by beauty, and it leads me into danger.
- + I am shown some sort of ugliness that lies within me.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending **Crux** to do so.

PERSUASION

Level: 2

Beauty is compelling. I add 3 bene to my **Interaction** pool.

Color: Blue

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Level: 3

I look for beauty everywhere. I add 4 bene to my **Perception** pool.

Color: Indigo

DRAW OUT BEAUTY

Level: 3 (+1 die)

There is beauty in everyone. I make one creature that I touch incapable of making their next action a hostile one.

Color: Blue

SERENITY

Level: 5

All close creatures currently taking their ten-minute or one-hour rest can refresh two stat pools rather than just one.

Color: Green

HARMONY

Level: 5 (+1 die)

All nearby creatures (friend and foe) are incapable of making their next action a hostile one.

Color: Blue

A TERRIBLE BEAUTY**Level:** 7 (+1 die)

I make my own visage so beautiful that it is difficult to look upon without pain. All close beings suffer 1 Anguish. All near beings suffer 1 point of mental damage.

Color: Red**CAST AWAY HATE****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

I make one creature that I touch incapable of taking hostile actions until the sun next rises. However, if they are attacked during this time, the effect ends.

Color: Blue**APPEAL TO THE MASSES****Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

My words are beautiful in all ears. I speak, but all within long range hear what they want to hear. All such creatures consider me a trusted friend while I speak and for one round afterward (I don't control them during this time, but they will not treat me with hostility). During this time, I can make an appeal or attempt to persuade them to do something, and I gain +3 on the action.

Color: Grey**BANISH BEAUTY****Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

This is, in effect, a curse, except that only I can break it. I make it so that a close target can never again experience beauty. Nothing brings them joy (and they cannot earn Joy), and they cannot experience love, contentment, or happiness. There is not much immediate effect on most beings, but over time this brings on depression and perhaps eventually even suicide. Of course, a being such as a demon likely never experiences these things anyway, so this ability would have little effect on it. I can end the effect any time I choose, from any distance.

Color: Red

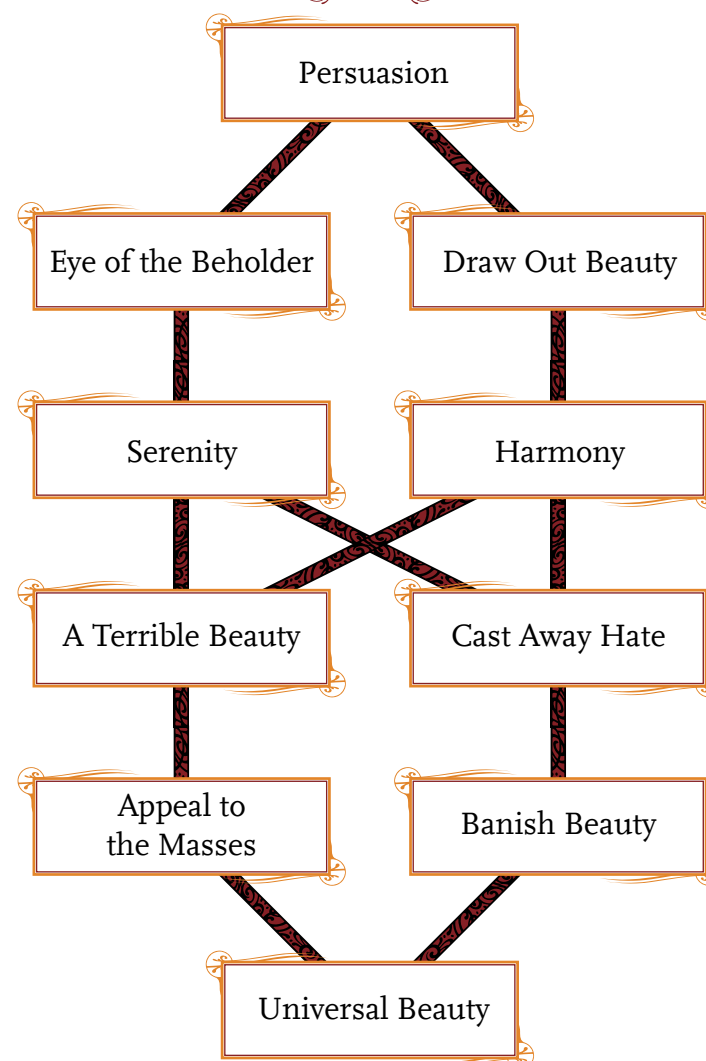
Some see Her Elegance as a sort of patron of beauty, but that's a misconception. See The Path, page 59.

UNIVERSAL BEAUTY**Level:** 9 (no cost)

I finally attain a transcendence where I see the beauty in the universe and all things to such a degree that the following things are true:

- + I get a permanent enhancement in my Interaction and Perception pools.
- + Anytime I try to affect a creature's outlook, mind, or soul, I add +1 to the attempt.
- + Anytime I earn 1 Joy, I actually earn 2 Joy.

Not an action.

Color: Silver**REVELS IN BEAUTY**

Joy, page 203

SHEPHERDS MINDS

Mind shepherds barely see the physical form of a thinking being. They're only interested in mind. The minds of others are tools to work with, clay to mold, and beasts to herd and control. Alternatively, shepherds watch over the minds of others and protect them, using their powers only toward this goal. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Mind shepherds can read minds, harm minds, rework minds, and control minds. They are dangerous and feared—rarely trusted.

Background: Being able to affect and shape the minds of others might be an inborn talent. Or it might be lore carefully taught. I need to decide whether I came upon these powers intentionally or by accident, and under what circumstances in either case.

Appearance: Mind shepherds try to be relatively unencumbered, and particularly eschew head coverings of any kind.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for mind shepherds.

- + It's easy to commit great wrongs wielding this kind of power. (*Redemption*.)
- + Mind shepherds often want to be loved and respected by the masses. (*Establishment*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + I affect the mind of a higher-level being than I have ever affected before.
- + One of my powers lasts much longer than expected.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Feedback from coming in contact with a powerful or damaged mind causes me pain.
- + My enemies find me by using my own mental energies against me.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

Sorcery, page 27

Redemption, page 175

Establishment, page 169

KNOW MIND

Level: 2 (+1 die)

I can read the thoughts of one being within close range. I know what they are thinking and what their overall mental state is. The telepathic link lasts as long as I concentrate and do nothing else.

Color: Blue

MENTAL SPEECH

Level: 4

I can speak mentally with any one being within close range. I can both send and receive the communication. If I spend 1 more *Sorcery* bene, I can increase this to long range, and if I spend 2 more, the range becomes irrelevant. The telepathic link lasts as long as I concentrate and do nothing else.

Color: Blue

JOLT MIND

Level: 3 (+1 die)

I disrupt the mental patterns of a being within short range, and they suffer mental damage in an amount equal to the level of this ability.

Color: Red

INFLUENCE MINDS

Level: 5 (+1 die)

I give a mental command for an action that can be completed in one round (such as “Flee,” “Drop your weapons,” “Listen to me,” “Let me past,” and the like), and all within short range that I want to be affected will obey.

Color: Blue

CONTROL MIND

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

I completely control the mind of another being. They do whatever I mentally tell them to do from any distance.

Depletion: 0 (check each hour)

Color: Blue

SHUT DOWN MIND**Level:** 7 (+1 die)

The target I choose within long range suffers 1 Anguish and goes catatonic until that Anguish is recovered.

Color: Red**SCRAMBLE MEMORIES****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

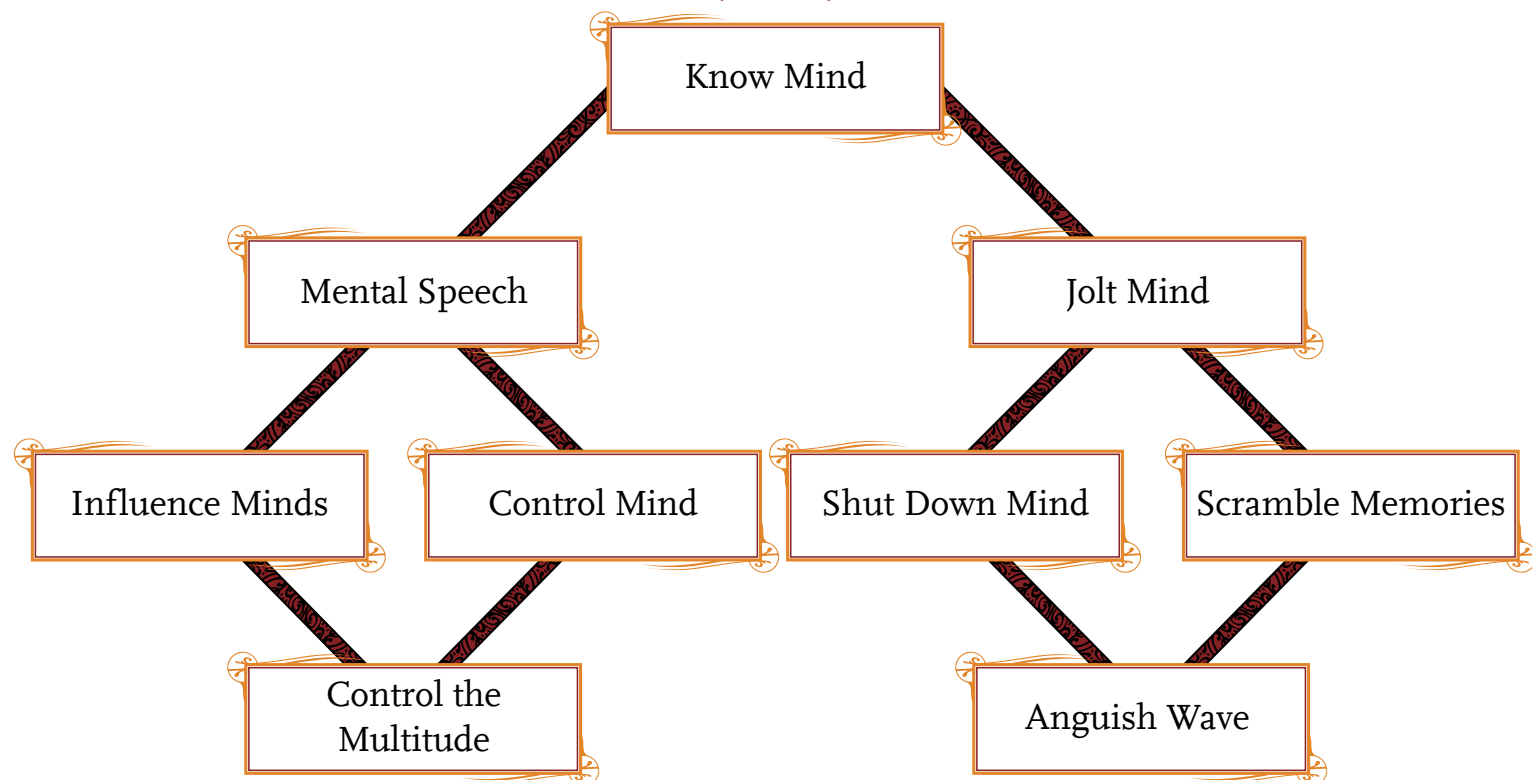
I instantly rewrite the memories of a target within close range. I take out any and all memories I don't want them to have, and insert false memories I do want them to have.

Color: Grey**CONTROL THE MULTITUDE****Level:** 10 (+2 dice)

I control the minds of up to one being per ability level. They do whatever I mentally tell them to do from any distance.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)**Color:** Blue**ANGUISH WAVE****Level:** 9 (+2 dice)

I inflict psychic damage on all beings of my choosing within short range, in an amount equal to 4 less than the level of this ability.

Color: Red**SHEPHERDS MINDS**

SINGS THE EARTHSONG

Deep within the earth, the Primal Earth Singers cant hymns to the rock and dirges to the sky. Other, mortal earth singers emulate the Primal ones, singing songs of power living within earth and stone. They use this power to make themselves mightier physically, to shape earth and stone as they wish, and to ultimately drink the earth's blood (which may actually be the blood of one of the Primal Earth Singers).

The "earth," of course, is a term that means something a little different in the Actuality than it does in *Shadow*. Earth isn't a planet. It's the ground beneath your feet—wherever your feet happen to be. If there's a sun above you, there's earth below you.

Background: The skills of the Primal Earth Singers are passed down verbally through families, so more than likely, one or both of my parents was an earth singer and taught me.

Appearance: Earth singers have a stony, angular appearance and tend to favor brown, green, and black clothing. Many people say that they have a natural loamy odor.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for earth singers.

- + Defending places sacred to the earth is a duty of an earth singer. (*Defense*.)
- + If there is a way for an earth singer to join the Primal Earth Singers, that would be the ultimate reward. (*Join an Organization*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Stone that I conjure is even harder and stronger than I expected.
- + Visiting a deep subterranean locale I have never before explored.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Stone causing me or a friend great harm, such as in a cave-in.
- + Rejection by a Primal Earth Singer.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and

THE PATH

Shadow, page 52

Defense, page 168

Join an Organization, page 171

then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

CALL TO THE EARTH

Level: 2

I sing a deep, resonant song and the earth responds, giving me strength and aid. I add 1 bene to each of my Certes pools.

Color: Gold

EARTH'S HYMN

Level: 3 (+1 die)

I sing in concert with the rumbles of the earth that only I can hear. As I do, I know the name and level of everyone touching the earth within very long range.

Color: Indigo

ARMOR OF STONE

Level: 3 (no cost)

My flesh becomes more stonelike, and henceforth I have +1 Armor. Not an action.

Color: Invisible

FISTS OF STONE

Level: 4

My melee attacks inflict damage equal to the level of this ability because my hands and arms take on the strength of stone.

Depletion: 0–1 (check at the end of each combat encounter)

Color: Red

SHAPING STONE

Level: 5

I reshape stone I touch into a form I wish. A rock on the ground becomes a stone box with a hinged lid. A marble statue becomes a ladder. I can affect an amount of stone that is about equal to my size.

I can also use this ability to destroy a single stone object of about my size and weight, or put a hole in a stone wall large enough for me to pass through.

Color: Gold

PASSING THROUGH STONE**Level:** 7

I can pass through stone as if it were not there.

Likewise, stone passes through me, so a cave-in causes me little worry.

Depletion: 0 (check each hour)**Color:** Green**UPHEAVAL****Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

I cause a medium area of the ground to buck and heave. All within the area suffer damage equal to the level of this ability minus 4. Buildings crumble. Walls topple. Creatures likely fall down, and might be in danger of further damage from collapsing structures.

Color: Red**LIVING EARTH****Level:** 9 (+2 dice)

The earth responds to my urging song to move like a thing alive. Massive hands reach up from the ground and grasp my foes, a column of rock rises beneath my feet to carry me up to a long distance, or a crevasse opens, tearing apart a structure or dumping any and all down into it. Essentially, the earth, within a large area around me, is mine to command. Each round, I can create a different effect within that area, the results of which might inflict damage equal to 5 lower than the level of this ability to any or all in the area.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)**Color:** Gold**THE EARTH'S SECRET NAME****Level:** 9 (no cost)

I learn the earth's secret name. With this knowledge, I can never be harmed or inconvenienced by earth or stone. Rough terrain or even a very steep slope is like a smooth sidewalk. An avalanche coming down a mountainside means nothing to me. Not an action.

Color: Indigo

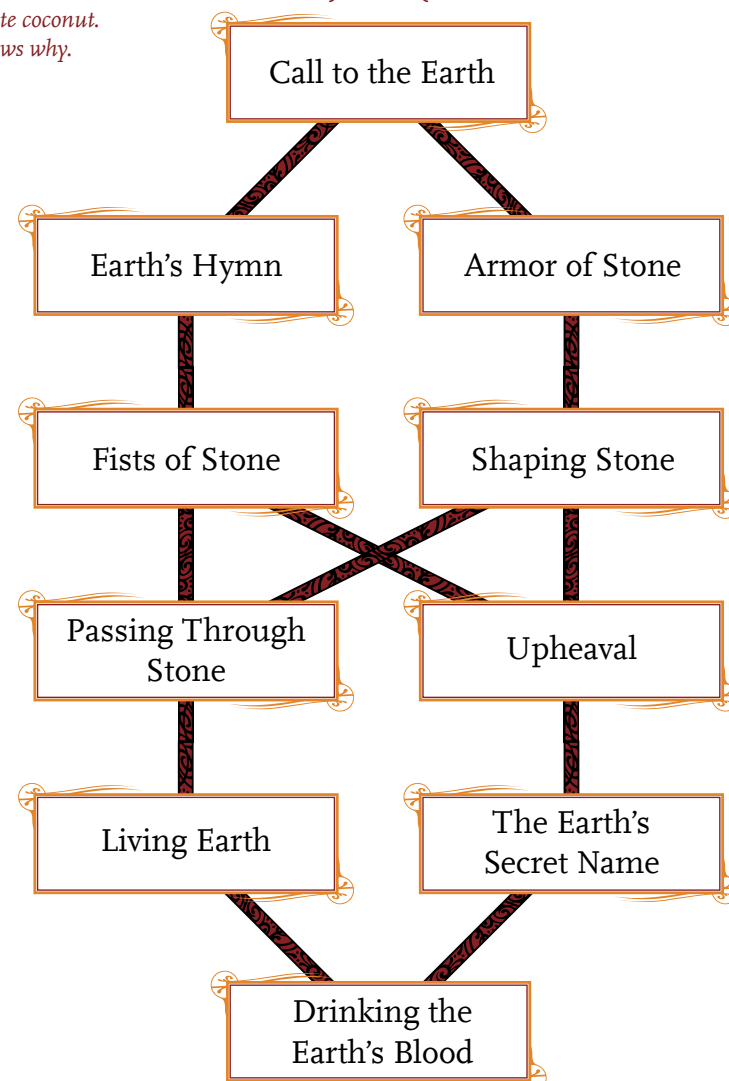
THE WAY
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Magic, page 17

DRINKING THE EARTH'S BLOOD**Level:** 10

The earth at my feet disgorges a font of thick, hot liquid that resembles a mixture of loam and fresh blood. I use an action drinking this fluid and have a vision pertaining to any topic I choose, and I gain significant knowledge in what I see. The only restriction is that the vision must pertain to something on or in the earth. If I then take any action related to what I see, I gain a +1 die enhancement to that action.

Color: Indigo**SINGS THE EARTHSONG**

*Most vislae hate coconut.
No one knows why.*



SPEAKS WITH THE MOON

Moon is mother. Mistress. Lover. Friend. She is always worthy of respect and admiration. Is she not beautiful? Is she not steadfast?

The moon is subtle, a whisper to the sun's shout. She is a delicate but complex piano piece to the sun's orchestral grandiosity. This is not to cast aspersions upon the sun, or suns—because who would do such a thing? The moon does not compete with the sun. She is not the sun's rival. But it falls upon me, as one who speaks with the moon, to point out that she is a quite different thing altogether.

There's always much talk of the different suns in the Actuality, but what about the moon? Unlike the suns, the moon never changes. She rules over the night wherever the sun does not shine (except, of course, in the Dark). Thus, the moon compels those of us who listen to her soft voice, usually called moonchildren, to exist as creatures of the night.

I operate better at night, wielding the moon's own light and energy like it was my own. I revere the moon, and I know her to be a being of grace, beauty, quiet, and mystery.

Background: Moonchildren often come about because a special moon-focused ritual was performed on them when they were newly born. Why did my parents (or someone) want me to be a moonchild?

Appearance: Moonchildren tend to favor silver jewelry and pale-colored clothing.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for moonchildren.

- + Finding out more about the ritual that created a moonchild is vital to one's peace of mind. (*Mysterious Background*.)
- + Moonchildren always want to find out all they can about the moon. (*Learn*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Using subtlety and quiet action rather than violence or drama to complete a character arc's climax.
- + In a quiet moment, the moon personally tells me something important.

Perception, page 27

Movement, page 26

Mysterious Background, page 173

Learn, page 172

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Spending more than forty-eight hours in a place with no access to the moon.
- + The moon goes silent, no matter how much I beg.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

BEST AT NIGHT

Level: 2 (no cost)

I gain +1 to any action I undertake at night. Not an action.

Color: Gold

NIGHT VISIONS

Level: 3 (no cost)

Not only do I see as well at night as I do during the day, but I also gain 2 bene to my *Perception* pool when the sun sets. Not an action.

Color: Indigo

STALKING THE NIGHT

Level: 3 (no cost)

I am faster and more graceful at night. I know how to use the shadows to my advantage when I want to be unseen. I gain 3 bene to my *Movement* pool when the sun sets. Not an action.

Color: Green

WORDS FROM THE MISTRESS

Level: 6

I spend one minute in mental communion with the moon (it must be in the sky for me to do so). When I'm done, I can add 3 enhancements to any of my pools, due to the wisdom I have learned.

Color: Gold

MOONLIGHT DANCING**Level:** 5

I and one ally per level of this ability can fly through the air while the moon is above us. We move at the same speed as we would if we were running.

Color: Green**MOON'S INSIGHT****Level:** 7

If the moon is shining upon something, I can know about it. All I have to do is ask. If a thing or person I name is in the moonlight, I know the distance and direction from me, even if it is in another world.

Color: Indigo**MOONLIGHT'S PROTECTION****Level:** 8 (no cost)

I clothe myself in protective moonlight. While the sun is set, I gain +2 Armor and all my defensive rolls are enhanced by +1 die. Not an action.

Color: Invisible

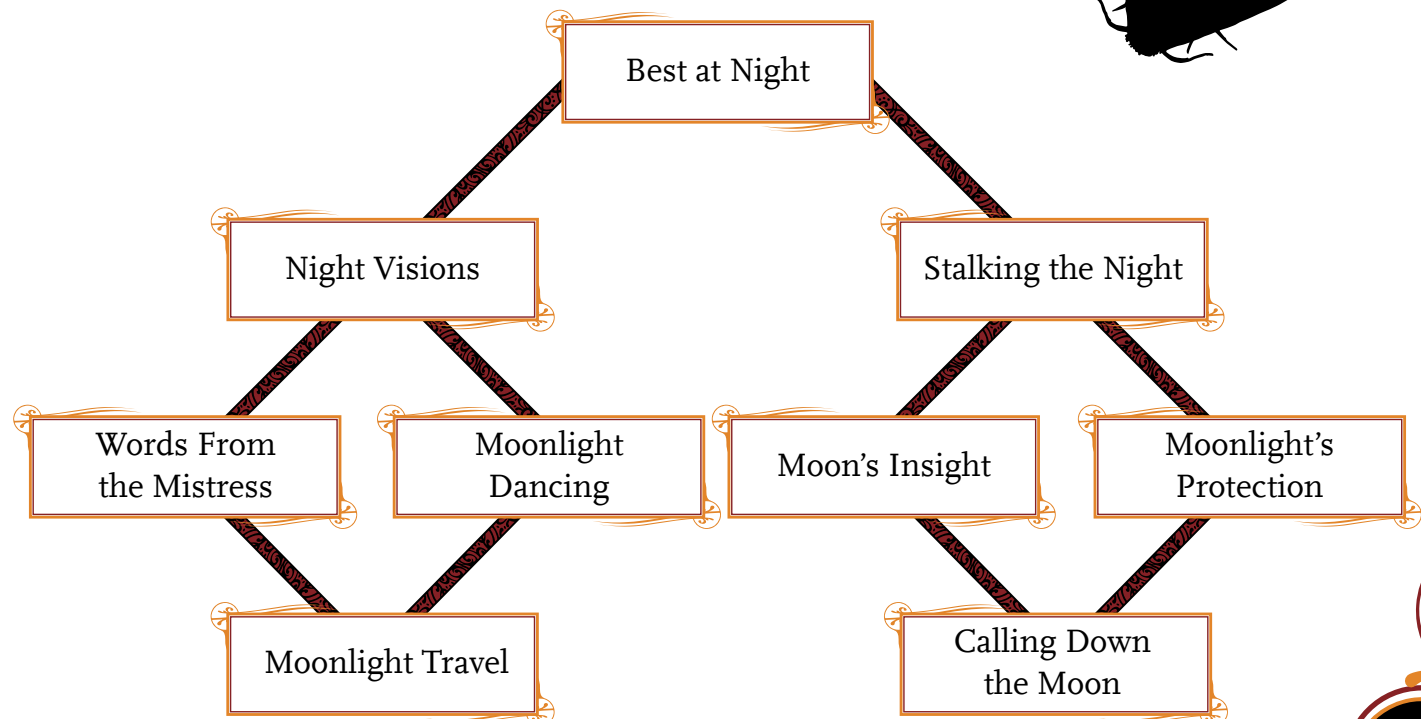
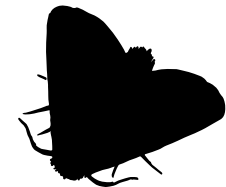
Time zones are a Shadow thing. In the Actuality, it is always the same time, everywhere. Except when it isn't—but that has nothing to do with time zones.

MOONLIGHT TRAVEL**Level:** 7

I can instantly travel to a location any distance away as long as the moon is shining upon me and the spot where I want to be.

Color: Pale**CALLING DOWN THE MOON****Level:** 9

I summon a being that is a manifestation of the moon's nature and power. It is a being 3 levels lower than the level of this ability, but it gains +2 levels to its stealth and Perception actions. It performs one action I ask of it that it can complete within a few rounds.

Color: Pale**SPEAKS WITH THE MOON**

SPLINTERS INTO FRAGMENTS

Splinters are people who can break apart their physical forms in dramatic ways. They literally shatter like glass into multiple shards and then reform, usually in an instant. Most of the time, there is a sound like shattering glass when they splinter like this.

Splintering does not hurt. It is, however, a sensation that splinters cannot adequately describe to non-splinters. While it's not pleasant, most come to accept and eventually enjoy it.

Splinters have a reputation for being insane and are called "the shattered ones" by some, but this is (usually) an unfair categorization.

Background: All splinters tend to come from the same bloodline. It is likely that they are all related, albeit usually distantly.

Appearance: Splinters, when they splinter, briefly resemble a mass of shattered, dark blue glass shards. They tend to favor clothing that is this same shade of dark blue. Many also dye their hair and take on other elements to showcase this midnight blue color.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for splinters.

- + Splintering leads to physical corruption of form. It's simply a fact of life for a splinter. (**Cleanse**.)
- + Since a splinter already looks like glass, why not actually become glass? (**Transformation**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + When I reassemble after splintering, I find a new way to assemble myself and gain 1 additional point to my Physicality pool permanently.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I cannot find or reassemble all my splintered shards, and I suffer 1 Wound.
- + Someone steals one of my fragments, and I suffer a scourge in all actions until I can regain it.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

DEFENSIVE SPLINTERING

Level: 2 (no cost)

When I am attacked, I splinter into many pieces and then reform instantly. While I am splintered, some attacks pass right through me. I gain +1 to all Dodge defense actions. This is not an action in and of itself.

Color: Invisible

Cleanse, page 167

Transformation, page 178

TWO

Level: 3

I splinter into many fragments, which instantly reassemble into two versions of me. I'm in control of both. They are both me. Each version can take an action each round, but each suffers a -3 penalty to all actions, as each is only half of me. Further, while splintered, I do not have access to my belongings, abilities gained from my order, my spells, and so on. I have only my skills and secrets.

Depletion: 0-1 (check each round)

Color: Gold

REDUCTION

Level: 3

I splinter into many fragments, only one of which is significant.

The rest fade away. The remaining fragment takes on the form of me, but is only 4 inches (10 cm) tall. This version of me has all my stats, skills, spells, and so on, with the following modifications: my Physicality pool gains 5 vex, and my Movement pool gains 3 bene. However, in a given round, I can move only about 3 feet (1 m). I can slip into small spaces, hide, and so on, as my new size would suggest.

Depletion: 0 (check each hour)

Color: Gold

MANY

Level: 6

I splinter into many fragments, which instantly reassemble into a number of versions of me equal to the level of this effect. I'm in control of all of them. Each version of me can take an action each round, but each suffers a -3 penalty to all actions, as each is only a portion of me. Further, while splintered, I do not have access to my belongings, abilities gained from my order, my spells, and so on. I have only my skills and secrets.

Depletion: 0-1 (check each round)

Color: Gold

GROWTH

Level: 5

I splinter into many fragments and immediately reassemble, but when I do, I am 12 feet (4 m) tall. This version of me has all my stats, skills, spells, and so on, with the following modifications: my Physicality pool gains 5 bene, my Accuracy pool gains 2 bene, and my Movement pool gains 3 vex. I can move a short distance in a round and still take an action.

Depletion: 0 (check each hour)

Color: Gold

REASSEMBLE ELSEWHERE

Level: 7

I splinter into many fragments and immediately reassemble up to 10 miles (16 km) away. I don't need to know where I am going. Even if there are barriers in the way, they don't hinder me, so I can reassemble on the other side of a locked door. If I try to reassemble somewhere that's not possible (like within solid rock), I don't go anywhere and I lose my next turn, disoriented and stunned.

Color: Pale

EXPLOSION OF SPLINTERS

Level: 7 (+1 die)

I splinter into many fragments in a powerful explosion, and then immediately reassemble. In doing so, my splinters are like shards of metal and inflict damage equal to 3 less than the level of this ability to all close to me. I am, of course, unharmed by this.

Color: Red

SHATTERED BODY

Level: 8

The next time I suffer damage, even 1 point, I reactively splinter into many fragments and then reform, restoring any Injuries and Wounds I suffered. Once I activate this power, the reactive splintering that may occur afterward is not an action. Essentially, I negate the next Wound I suffer.

Depletion: 0 (check each time the ability is activated)

Color: Green

SHATTERED MIND

Level: 8

I splinter my mind into many fragments, although my body remains intact and in place. My mind fragments instantly spread anywhere in the Actuality, and spend one round in a random body in a place of my choosing—one place per fragment—as long as there is a being's mind that I can inhabit. I have only enough time to observe what is going on in that brief moment and—should I choose—say up to six words. I have a number of mind fragments equal to the level of this ability.

Color: Blue

SHATTERED SOUL

Level: 10 (no cost)

I splinter my soul into nine fragments, keeping one and scattering eight throughout the Actuality. Should I die, one of those eight fragments comes to my body and heals it to full function. If I die again, the same thing happens, until I have exhausted all nine soul fragments, at which point I truly die. Then my soul reforms, and I lose this power.

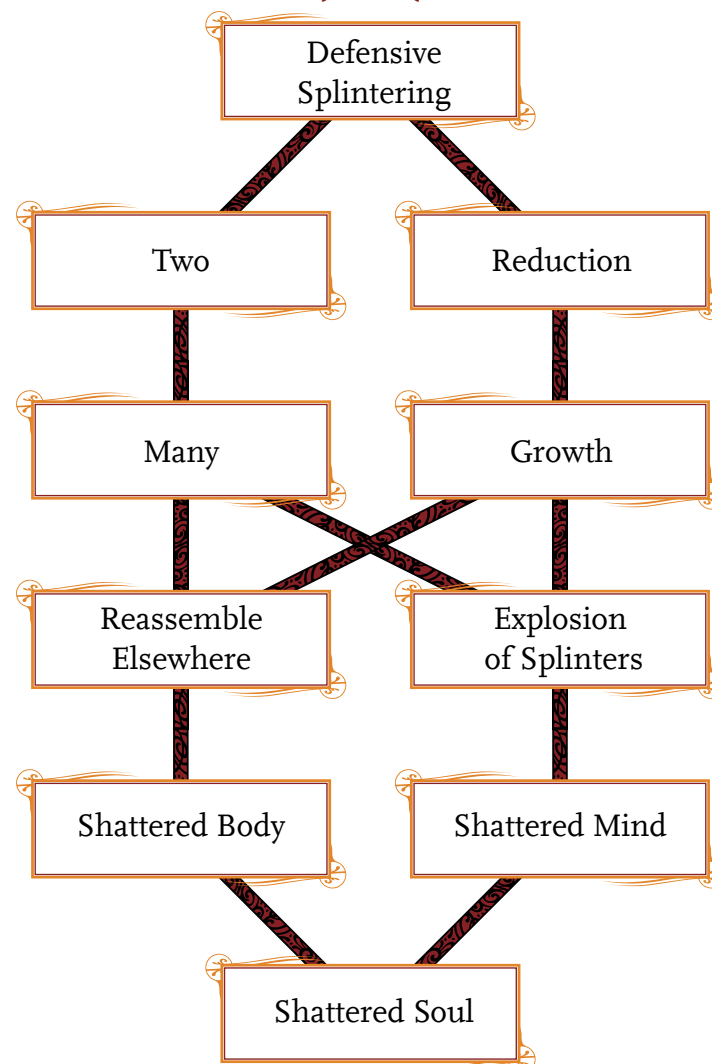
Once I do this, I cannot be affected by secrets or magical practices that require my **secret soul** name. I cannot access my **Soul Guardian** or any secret soul affiliation.

Color: Pale

Secret soul, page 139

Soul Guardian, page 140

SPLINTERS INTO FRAGMENTS



TRAVELS AS A SPIRIT

Bodies have their uses, but they are not *us*. Only fools identify themselves by their physical form. Bodies are merely conveyances for our true selves—our spirits. We astral travelers can leave our bodies in an astral form, or—as it is sometimes called—our spiritform. Spiritform can't affect or be affected by anything material. This means that we're safe from physical attack, and can move through material barriers, objects, and people. It also means that we can't attack, cast spells, or use abilities that affect the material world. We can't carry, move, or disturb physical objects.

Being away from one's body for long periods can be dangerous. If I am away from my body for more than one full day, I take 1 point of damage on the first day after that, 2 points of damage on the second, and so on until my physical body has withered and died.

Background: Many who command these powers studied in meditation and quiet solitude for years to perfect them.

Appearance: Astral travelers typically wear comfortable clothing because their bodies often sit motionless for long periods. Many have strangely pale, translucent eyes that go dark while their spiritform is away.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for astral travelers.

- + Traveling as a spiritform is perhaps the best way to explore new realms. (Explore.)
- + In spiritform, it is likely one will witness great wrongs and injustices. (Avenge, Justice, Undo a Wrong.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Using astral travel to help complete a character arc's climax.
- + My astral senses reveal a vital piece of information about the unseen world above and beyond what they normally tell me.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Encountering an unexpected spiritual creature when my spiritform leaves my body.
- + The first time my body is attacked or harmed while my spiritform is away.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

ASTRAL SPY

Level: 2

I can send my spiritform off from my physical body for one round. During that time, I can move up to a very far distance, passing

through solid matter, and look around. If I want to, at the end of that round I can use this power again to remain in astral form, at a further cost of Sorcery. I can't take any other actions as an astral spy. My spiritform can't affect or be affected by anything material. I can't cast spells or use abilities that affect the material world. My physical form is motionless and utterly defenseless.

For each additional point of Sorcery I spend, I can take one magical item (ephemera or object of power) with me. It continues to function as long as it obeys the same rules that apply to me—no affecting the material world.

Color: Pale

ASTRAL SENSES

Level: 2

I can sense when spirits, astral travelers, and similarly out-of-phase beings or objects are nearby.

Depletion: Ends when the sun next rises or sets

Color: Indigo

ASTRAL DEFENSES

Level: 3

While my spiritform has left my physical form, my physical form has 3 additional Armor and my spiritform adds +1 die to all defensive actions.

Color: Invisible

ASTRAL EXPLORER

Level: 5

I can send my spiritform off from my physical body. During that time, I can move up to a very long distance in one round. My spiritform can't affect or be affected by anything material. I can't cast spells or use abilities that affect the material world, but other spells and abilities usually work. My physical form is motionless and utterly defenseless.

This ability lasts as long as I wish. To end it, I must return to my physical body, which might take time if I have traveled far.

For each additional point of Sorcery I spend, I can take one magical item (ephemera or object of power) with me. It continues to function as long as it obeys the same rules that apply to me—no affecting the material world.

Color: Pale

To an outside observer, it would be very difficult to tell if a meditating vislae was traveling as a spirit or exploring the Noösphere.

ASTRAL ATTACK**Level:** 5 (+1 die)

My spiritform can make an instantaneous attack in one of three ways. I can project rays of astral violence up to long range that affect spirits or similarly out-of-phase beings or objects, inflicting damage equal to the level of this ability. I can also touch living material creatures and inflict damage equal to the level of this ability by disrupting their physical forms. Last, I can exert pressure—as if I were physical—on a physical object, so I could open a door, knock over a lamp, and so on.

Color: Red**SPIRITPROOF****Level:** 6

I make a small area impossible for spirits, astral travelers, and similarly out-of-phase beings or objects to enter.

Color: Invisible**SEIZE SPIRIT****Level:** 6 (+1 die)

I can touch a solid being and separate their spiritform from their physical form. If this is done against their will, they can return to their body in one round. Otherwise, it is as though they were using the Astral Explorer ability.

Color: Pale**SUMMON BODY****Level:** 7

While in my spiritform (thanks to Astral Spy or Astral Explorer), I can teleport my physical body (and all my possessions) to my spirit.

Color: Pale**SEEPING DEEPER****Level:** 9 (+2 dice if attempting to enter a dream)

Since the Noösphere and the deeper levels of dreams are connected, my spiritform can travel into either. When I activate this ability, I must choose to travel to the Noösphere or into the dream of someone nearby.

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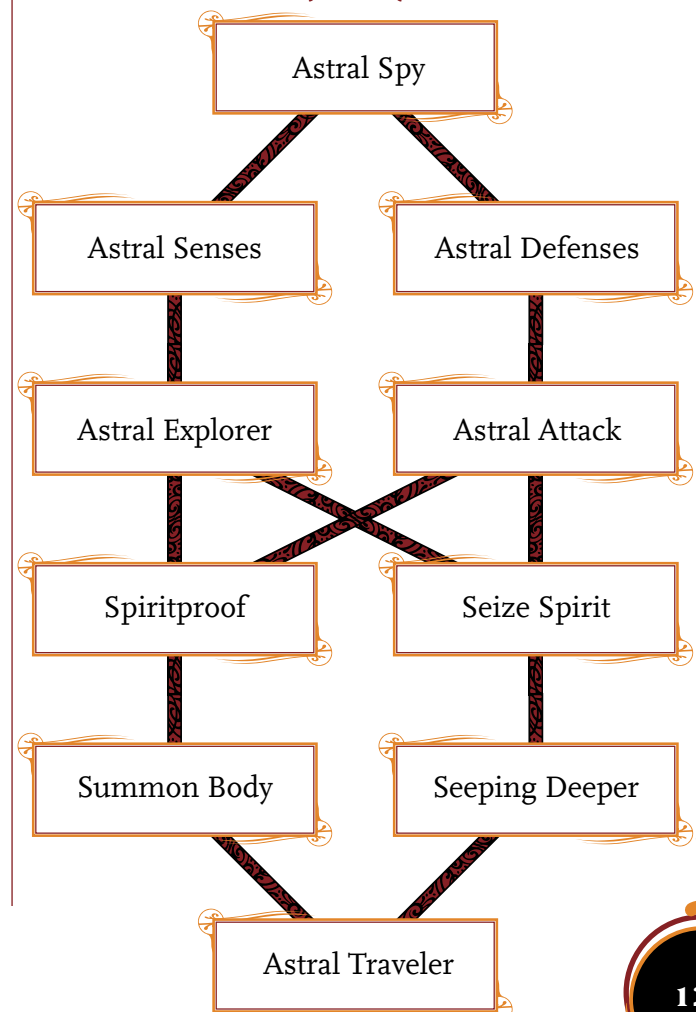
THE PATH
Noösphere, page 14

Deeper levels of dream are
called the Deeps of Sleep.
See The Path, page 24.

If I choose the Noösphere, I can delve into the collective memories of all the minds there and gain an answer to one question. If I choose the deep dream, I can view a specific memory from that person, up to ten minutes long.

Color: Indigo**ASTRAL TRAVELER****Level:** 9

While in my spiritform (thanks to Astral Spy or Astral Explorer), I can travel as a spirit to any location that I am at least passingly familiar with, regardless of distance, instantly. I can even travel to other worlds using this ability.

Color: Pale**TRAVELS AS A SPIRIT**

URNS TALES INTO REALITY

Wouldn't it be better if life was a story? If things in the real world worked like they did in books?

Then again, *don't they*? There is a fine line between truth and fiction. Talespinners know how to bend the laws of reality to make fiction and fable become real.

What is life, but a story? So how can stories be any less real than life? I see no significant difference, and my deep understanding of story allows me to bring that which other people call fiction into the so-called real world.

Some of my best friends are fictional.

Background: Talespinners have a childlike quality, and most gained their abilities when they were very young—too young to realize that what they were doing wasn't normal. Rather than having been taught to bring stories to life, they were never taught that they *couldn't* do it.

Appearance: Talespinners often have a lot of books of stories with them, and they're always looking for more.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for talespinners.

- + Learning new tales is constantly at the forefront of all talespinner motivations (**Learn**.)
- + The **Troubadours of the Ancient Path** is just one organization of storytellers and entertainers with information and resources of real use to a talespinner. (**Join an Organization**.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Hearing a new, truly epic tale.
- + Creating my own truly epic tale.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Finding that something taken from story is broken or useless when I need it.
- + Discovering that someone else knows the story better than I.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

Notorious is a rare book on magic, specifically magic that has to do with harming the souls of others.

When calling an object from metaphor, the metaphor in question can be something that the player makes up on the spot.

Learn, page 172

Join an Organization, page 171

THE PATH

Troubadours of the Ancient Path, page 114

ENTERTAIN

Level: 1

I use stories, poetry, and song to entertain a group.

After thirty minutes, PCs willing to listen gain 1 bene to a pool of their choice. NPCs are heartened and happier. In addition, NPCs are now favorably disposed toward me, and I gain +1 to any attempt to interact with them if I do so relatively soon afterward.

Color: Blue

LEARN FROM TALES

Level: 2

I apply the lessons I have learned from stories to help me in real life. With this ability, I gain 3 bene and place them in any of my pools, each representing an idea I got from a story that can help me with an action.

Color: Indigo

CALL OBJECT FROM METAPHOR

Level: 4

I think of a metaphor (or a simile or similar construction) that pertains to the situation at hand and also refers to an object or substance. For example, in a fight I might say, "sharp as a sword," and a sword appears in my hand. "Slow as molasses" could make molasses spread out on the floor beneath someone's feet. "You're pretty as a picture" makes a portrait of the person I'm referring to appear on the wall. If I can hold the object I call forth in one hand, the object is permanent. Otherwise, it must appear within short range and what I create exists only until the sun sets.

Color: Silver

CONFLICTING TALES

Level: 4 (+1 die if used on another)

Recalling that sometimes there are different versions of a single tale, I vanish and reappear up to a very long distance away, safely.

Alternatively, I cause a creature I touch to vanish and reappear a very long distance away, but I

must be able to see where they reappear, and it must be in a place where they are in no immediate danger (I can't send them up into the air or deep underwater where they can't breathe, for example).

Color: Pale

CALL OBJECT FROM STORY

Level: 6

I call an inanimate object or structure of level 4 or less from a story that I know. It must be able to fit within a small area. If the object is nonmagical, it is permanent. If it is magical, it remains for only one round.

Color: Silver

WEAVING THE TALE

Level: 6

I change circumstance around me so that my "story" goes more in the direction I wish. My next action and the next action of all my allies within long range are enhanced by +1 die. At the same time, up to four minor events occur that are favorable to me: ropes breaking or not breaking, NPCs slipping and falling, doors closing, people being misheard, and so on.

Color: Grey

CALL CREATURE FROM STORY

Level: 7

I call a living creature from a story that I know. The creature is 3 levels lower than the level of this ability. The creature obeys simple commands that I give it, but it is not a "real" creature. It has no special knowledge of its own, no opinions to share, and no free will. If it ventures out of my sight, it ceases to exist.

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises or sets

Color: Silver

DEPARTURE FROM REALITY

Level: 7

I affect one being within long range so that their perceptions are now under my control. Everything they see, hear, touch, taste, and smell is what I want it to be.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Grey

CALL WEATHER FROM STORY

Level: 8

I change the weather to the weather from a story. The change is instantaneous, so it can go from a hot, dry day to a blizzard in a moment.

Depletion: Ends automatically when the sun next rises or sets

Color: Gold

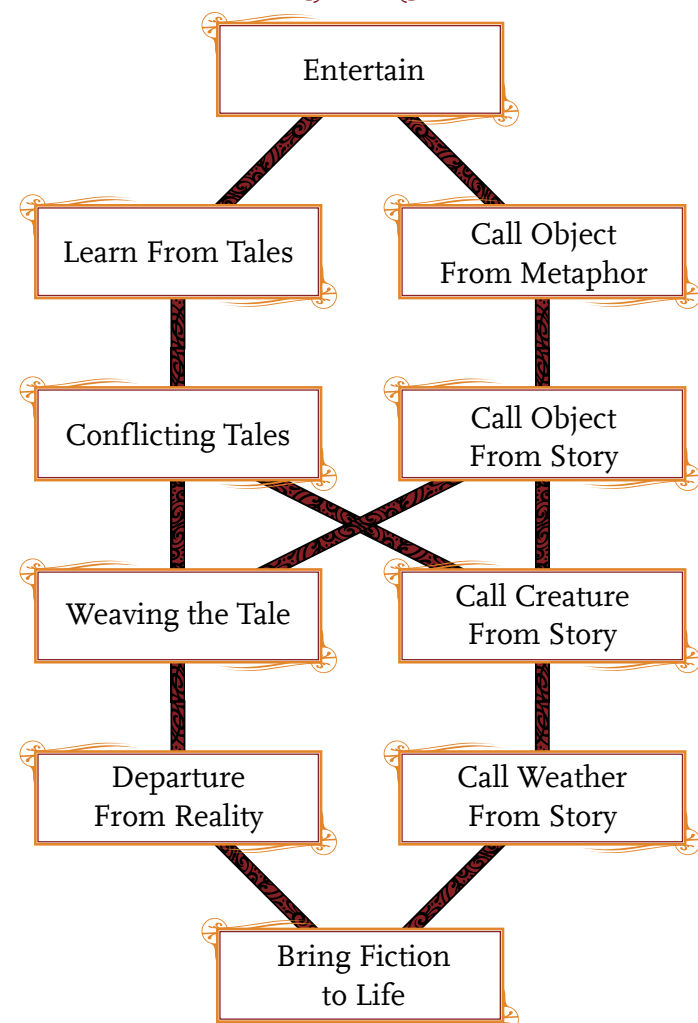
BRING FICTION TO LIFE

Level: 9

I take a fabled or fictional location, object, or creature of up to level 9 and add it to the world. I don't know where it's been added, but I know that it exists somewhere.

Color: Silver

URNS TALES INTO REALITY



UNDERSTANDS THE WORDS

Words and names are power. Just try to exercise power without them.

Often simply called linguists, we who understand the words know that on some level, there is no difference between a thing and the words that name or describe that thing. We know that spells themselves are, simply, words (and more important, the concepts the words embody) made manifest.

Linguists are typically very scholarly and knowledgeable rather than particularly physical characters.

Background: Linguists have trained extensively, studying for years to learn the skills that underlie this strange and complex set of abilities. I should choose where I learned this lore.

Appearance: Linguists often wear jewelry or clothing bearing words of significance to them. Their voices have an ethereal quality, as if echoing into unseen realms.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for linguists.

- + A deeper and deeper understanding of all things is vital to a linguist. (*Learn.*)
- + A linguist must always be looking for the secret names of things. (*Uncover a Secret.*)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Mastering a new language with complete fluency.
- + Discovering the existence of a language I'd never heard of before.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me despair.

- + I misspeak or mispronounce a word and the ability's results are wildly (and not positively) altered.
- + The meaning of a word changes.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

UNDERSTANDING

Level: 1 (+1 die)

I touch a creature or object and gain a bit of information about it—level, common name, nature, age, and so on. I don't control what information I get, but I can use this ability multiple times to get more information if I choose.

Color: Indigo

Learn, page 172

Uncover a Secret, page 178

MASTERY OF WORDS

Level: 2

I understand how words affect those who hear them. I add 3 bene to my Interaction pool.

Color: Blue

WORDS BECOME TRUTH

Level: 4 (+1 die)

I write a noun on an object (probably a piece of paper, but perhaps something else) and to all who are close to me when I do, the object looks, feels, tastes, and smells like what I've written on it. Thus, if I write "wolf" on a piece of paper, those close to me perceive that paper as a wolf. Although this is basically just an illusion, it is a potent one as it exists within the mind of the victim. However, because it is in their mind, I have no control over the specifics or what happens after it is created.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Grey

WORDS OF EMOTION

Level: 4

I speak a variety of loaded words in such a way that they manipulate and modify the emotional state of all close people. I add 3 enhancements to my Interaction pool.

Color: Blue

WORDS OF CONFUSION

Level: 6 (+1 die)

I speak a variety of seemingly meaningful words in such a way that all close people are briefly distracted and confused. They lose their next action.

Color: Grey

CHANGE THE NAME

Level: 7 (+1 die)

I write the name of an object on that object, and then change one letter, add a letter, or subtract a letter, changing the name into a new word that is the name of a different object. The object then transforms into the new object. The name of the new object must be a noun, but it can be a proper noun or a common noun. Thus, I can take a pen and turn it into a pin. A wheel becomes a heel. A pear becomes a spear. Both the initial object and the resulting object must be no larger than about 5 feet (1.5 m) in any dimension. I have no control over

the exact parameters of the resulting object, but it will not be magical. So a magic book turns into a nonmagic boot. When the effect ends, the original object is restored entirely.

Depletion: 0 (check each day)

Color: Gold

WORDS OF NOTHINGNESS

Level: 6 (+1 die)

A single being within close range suffers 1 Anguish and is reduced to utter catatonia upon hearing a great many contradictory words from me until that Anguish is healed.

Color: Red

TRANSFORM FROM WORDS

Level: 7

I speak the common name of a creature, object, or structure and then begin to describe it, verbally, as completely as I can. When I am done, these words take on the physical form of what I have described. The result is a general—not specific—example of the creature or object (in other words, I can make a human, but I cannot make my friend Johan). This takes at least one minute, although the more complex the creature or object, the more time I must spend, up to fifteen minutes. Obviously, to succeed, I must be incredibly familiar with what I am describing.

The resulting creature or object is permanent, must fit within a medium area, and is no more than 3 levels lower than the level of this ability. If I make a living creature, it has no initial affinity or animosity toward me.

Color: Gold

TRANSFORM INTO WORDS

Level: 9 (+2 dice)

I permanently transform a creature or object into the words that name and describe it, which either are audible as I speak them or are visible as I write them on the ground or floor where the target used to be. Reduced to nothing but words, the target is, for all intents and purposes, gone

Change the Name invites player cleverness, but the GM decides the final result. So a cart that was once a card can be any sort of cart the GM desires. Sometimes, a fair bit of creative interpretation from both the player and the GM is needed.

Every good writer sprinkles silver dust on the first page when starting a new book.

forever. (The ability Transform From Words could potentially bring it back, but very likely only as a non-specific version of itself.)

Color: Red

USE THE NAME

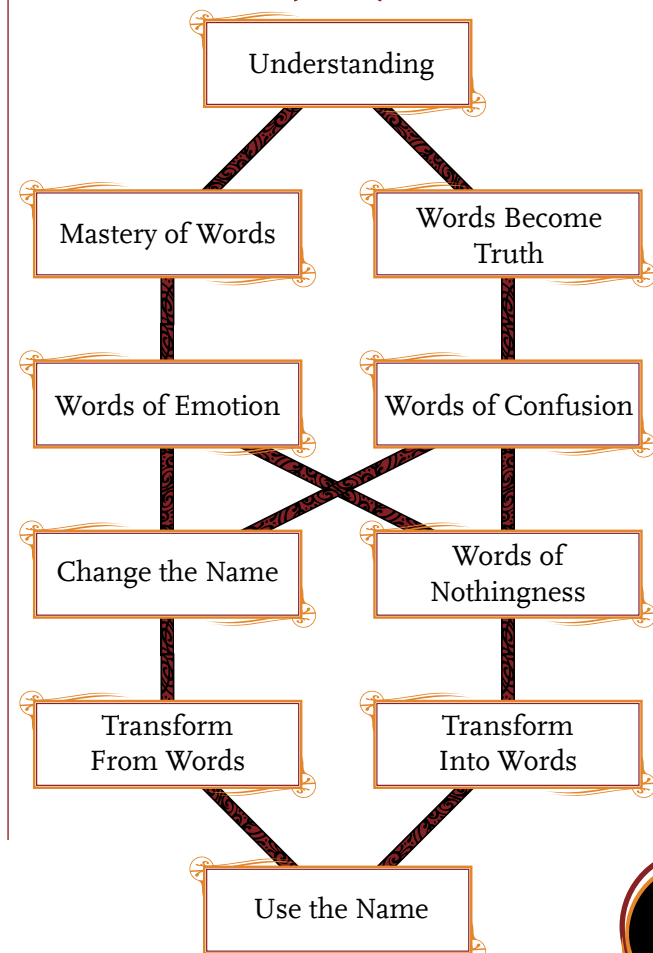
Level: 10 (+2 dice)

If I know the secret name of a being, I control them utterly. They do exactly as I bid them. I can destroy them with a word. I can kill them, or bring them back from death.

Alternatively, I can use this ability to change my own secret name or that of a willing being (although I have to know their original secret name to change it). This latter use requires a full day of meditation.

Color: Blue

UNDERSTANDS THE WORDS



WALKS THE PATH OF SUNS

You're smart. You don't need to have me stress how the Path of Suns holds an utterly vital significance to the very foundations of the Actuality. How the primary currents of magic itself flow through the Path like water through a clear channel.

Nevertheless, some people understand the significance of the Path even more deeply. Pathwalkers are special vislae who truly understand the significance of the Path of Suns. We understand that it is a map of reality as well as a map of the human soul. As within, so without.

I am wanderlust incarnate. I want to see literally everything. And if that seems impossible to you—if anything seems impossible to you—then you don't understand the power of the Path of Suns as much as you think you do.

Each sun offers a special gift to a Pathwalker. We embrace each sun's nature and attempt to be true to its soul. We take our name very seriously and literally walk the Path of Suns as we are able. Thus, we are travelers and explorers. We can be your guide if you wish, but you must be ready, for we will take you to places you've never dreamed.

Background: The talents of a Pathwalker come from study and sheer force of will. The question isn't where did the Pathwalker acquire their talents, but where did they get their drive and their wanderlust? It's likely that most Pathwalkers are extremely well traveled, even if they haven't yet walked the entire path.

Appearance: When a Pathwalker attains a new ability in this forte, they usually fashion an amulet or find another prominent way—perhaps a tattoo?—to show the symbol of the sun related to the new gift. Likewise, they bear a second symbol on themselves to show respect to the sun under which they currently stand.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for Pathwalkers.

- + Pathwalkers are consummate explorers. (Explore.)
- + Each sun holds many secrets, and research is certain to reveal them. (Learn.)

THE PATH

Path of Suns, page 35

Build, page 167

THE WAY

Divinations and
Information-Gathering
Magic, page 17

Explore, page 170

Learn, page 172

- + Some Pathwalkers have taken it upon themselves to build a monument of some kind in all the realms of all the suns. (Build.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Traveling to the realm of a new sun for the first time.
- + Interacting with a sun's guardian for the first time.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Being confined (imprisoned, for example) in a small space for more than a week.
- + Being cut off from one or more suns.
- + Having the guardian of a sun confront me in a negative way or bar access to the sun.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

SILVER: CREATION

Level: 2

With a flash of silvery light, I create one simple, inanimate object that I can hold in my hands, like a weapon, a tool, or an item of clothing.

Depletion: Disappears when the sun next sets

Color: Silver

GREEN: FOSTER LIFE

Level: 3

As my hands glow green with life, I restore 1 Wound on a being that I touch.

Color: Green

BLUE: DREAM

Level: 4

When next I sleep, I dream about a topic of my choosing, and learn at least one new fact on that topic.

Color: Blue

INDIGO: THE TRUTH**Level:** 5 (+1 die)

I see through illusions, I see things **invisible** and hidden, and I sense when I hear a lie.

Depletion: 0–4 (check each hour)**Color:** Indigo**GREY: THE ILLUSION****Level:** 5 (+1 die)

I shape perceptions of myself. This can take three forms, all of which I can call upon, one at a time, while I use this ability.

First, I can blend into my surroundings so much that I am **invisible**.

Second, I can make myself look like any object or being that I have ever seen.

Third, I can make myself look like a more attractive and formidable version of me, increasing any attempt at persuasion or intimidation by +1.

Depletion: 0–2 (check each hour)**Color:** Grey**PALE: CHEAT DEATH****Level:** 5 (no cost)

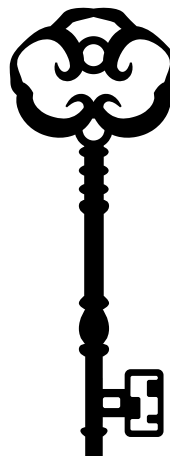
When I die, in the round following my death, I become a **ghost** with full awareness and control, and my spiritual form floats beside the spot where I died.

Color: Pale**RED: DESTROY****Level:** 6 (+1 die)

With an arcing bolt of red energy, I strike a faraway target, inflicting damage equal to the level of this ability on them and half that much damage on everything close to them.

Color: Red**GOLD: TRAVEL THE PATH****Level:** 7

I can travel the realm of any sun I choose. The specific destination must be one that I have visited before or have had described to me in detail. Otherwise, the destination is random. If I wish, I can bring additional people with me at a cost of 2 additional Sorcery per person.

Color: Gold**THE PATH***Invisible Sun, page 62***THE PATH***PC ghost, page 21***INVISIBLE: FEEL THE CURRENTS****Level:** 8 (no cost)

By calling upon the power flowing from the **Invisible Sun**, I can cast any spell of level 5 or below that I am aware of, but the Sorcery cost is doubled. Not an action in and of itself.

Color: **Invisible****WALKS THE PATH OF SUNS**

Silver: Creation

Green: Foster Life

Blue: Dream

Indigo: The Truth

Grey: The Illusion

Pale: Cheat Death

Red: Destroy

Gold:
Travel the PathInvisible:
Feel the Currents

WANDERS IN DELIRIUM

Life is nothing but a dream. Cause and effect are illusions. Nothing really matters.

I wander about the world, but I am not a part of the world. It is too strange and too distant and too other. I have long since stopped trying to assign meaning or make sense of anything.

But still I can enjoy existence, even if it is a farce. I can love. I can laugh. I can experience the wonder of the dream that I walk through. It doesn't need meaning to be entertaining or pleasant. I like it this way.

My delirium protects me. My madness shelters me from those who might do me harm. Other people of the world cannot deal with direct contact with my mind or even my presence, but that's fine. What does it really matter, anyway?

Background: Dreamwanderers get that way through substance abuse, extraordinary experiences, or the onset of madness.

Appearance: Dreamwanderers typically dress and comport themselves very strangely, even for vislae. Outlandish, mismatched clothing, horrific and strange colors, and odd accessories are just the beginning. As their power grows, other people can actually see reality around a dreamwanderer shimmer and churn in impossible ways. Odd noises come from nowhere. Flashes of light come and go. Something just slithered by my leg . . .

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for dreamwanderers.

- + Dreamwanderers may be incoherent at times, but friendship and family can bring clarity. (*Aid a Friend.*)
- + Obligation is a potent force that steers through the delirium. (*Repay a Debt.*)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + I get a moment of true clarity and like what I see.
- + I find someone else like me, who rejects conventional reality altogether.
- + That thing in the sky that no one else sees comes back and tells me a secret.

*Science is just magic
misunderstood.*

Aid a Friend, page 165

Repay a Debt, page 175

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + I get a moment of true clarity and don't like what I see.
- + My resistance to mental control fails me and I don't know why.
- + I lose that thing I can't remember the name of.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

PSYCHIC PROTECTION

Level: 2 (no cost)

My mind is difficult to connect with. I always add +1 to my resistance to mental effects. Not an action.

Color: Invisible

NONSENSE

Level: 2 (+1 die)

I confuse others when I speak. All close beings that can hear and understand me are confused, suffering a -1 penalty on all their next actions.

Color: Grey

DELIRIOUS VISIONS

Level: 3

Although I frequently have delusions and visions of strange events that come unbidden, I can sometimes find the presence of mind to pay attention and remember something of importance to me. I learn a random fact or two, but they are likely unrelated to any matter at hand—though they might prove useful later.

Color: Indigo

ESCAPE

Level: 5

I escape bonds and shackles. I get past locked doors that confine me (those that keep me in, not keep me out). There is no discernible explanation for how. No one ever sees me do it. It's almost as though I don't realize that I shouldn't be able to

do it. I can't help anyone else get free or get past a barrier using this ability. Each bond, shackle, or door requires a separate use of this ability.
Color: Gold

PSYCHIC FEEDBACK

Level: 5 (no cost) (+1 die)

My mind is a strange place. Should any unwelcome being attempt to connect with me psychically or attack me with any mental effect, regardless of intent, I add +1 to my resistance and—whether they succeed or not—the being suffers 5 points of mental damage and loses their next action.
 Not an action.

Color: Red

TOUCH OF DELIRIUM

Level: 6 (+1 die)

I can convey some of my delirium to a being that I touch. The being can take no actions as long as the effect lasts, unless they are attacked, at which point they are restored to normal.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Blue

UNTOUCHABLE MIND

Level: 7 (no cost)

I am immune to effects that would control or read my mind regardless of the level. Not an action.

Color: Invisible

THROWN TO THE MAZE

Level: 8 (+2 dice)

A close being is transported to a misty realm of madness—winding corridors, strange images, terrifying sounds, and so on. They may, in fact, be trapped within my own mind. They cannot escape, but nothing can affect them there either. When the effect ends, they reappear next to me, cannot take an action for one round, and have suffered mental damage equal to the level of this ability.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Gold

THE WAY
*Divinations and
 Information-Gathering
 Magic, page 17*

INSPIRATION IN MADNESS

Level: 8

I take an action to think about a question and come up with the answer.

Color: Indigo

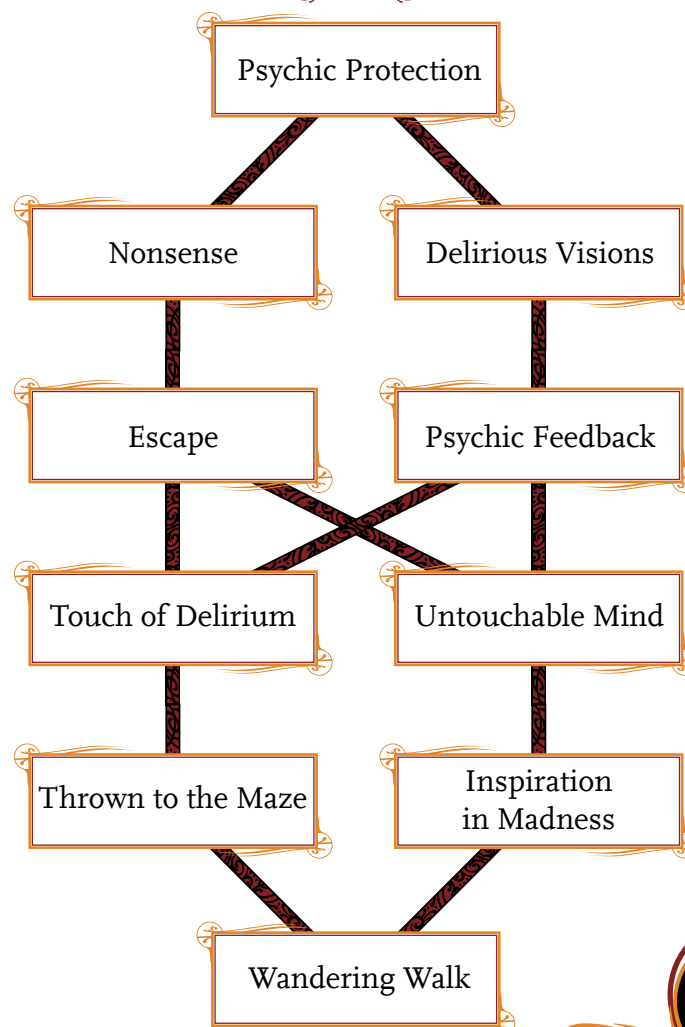
WANDERING WALK

Level: 9

I become essentially incorporeal and move where I wish. I cannot affect the world around me, nor can I be affected. This walk lasts as long as I desire, even continuing while I sleep if I so choose. I could travel literally for days without worry of threats, barriers, or interruption.

Color: Pale

WANDERS IN DELIRIUM



WARPS TIME AND SPACE

No power is greater than mine, as my power shapes existence itself.

Warp masters manipulate time and space. I see concepts like time and distance not as absolutes, but as mediums in which to work. I can make space where none existed, or foreshorten space so that I can move vast distances instantly. I can slow down and even stop the flow of time. With my abilities, I can make the fundamental forces of the universe dance at my whim.

Background: The ability to warp time and space is complex, and requires years of study and practice. Most warp masters work as apprentices for other warp masters to learn these powers, getting formal schooling and rigorous testing throughout that time.

Appearance: Warp masters tend to wear flamboyant clothing or have some other showy aspect to their appearance, simply because the kind of people drawn to these abilities are often grand, larger-than-life personalities anyway.

As their power grows, the space immediately around a warp master bends toward them as their very presence alters the flow of space and time.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for warp masters.

- ✦ The pupil must, at some point, become the teacher. (*Instruction*.)
- ✦ Warp masters of the past have begun some rather grandiose plans. Those of the present might want to continue where they left off. (*Finish a Great Work*.)
- ✦ The need for recognition of genius and power runs deep in most warp masters. (*Establishment*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- ✦ Finding that an ability of mine takes me farther or stops time longer than I had anticipated.
- ✦ Taking on an apprentice.
- ✦ Using the power of time and space to help complete a character arc's climax.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- ✦ Discovering that some beings are immune to my abilities.
- ✦ Fluctuations in spacetime make my powers unreliable.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

NO SPACE

Level: 2

I make a container that is bigger on the inside. Regardless of the container, the inside is now approximately a cube 5 feet (1.5 m) to a side. The limit of what can be put in it is likely determined

Instruction, page 171

Finish a Great Work, page 170

Establishment, page 169

by the size of the opening. The container lasts until the sun next rises, but at any time before that happens, I can spend 2 Sorcery to extend the effect another day.

Color: Gold

EXTRA MOMENT

Level: 3

I use an action to set this ability up and then, anytime before the next sunrise, I can take an extra action on my turn. In effect, I am “saving” the action to use later. I can have only one extra moment “saved” at a time.

Color: Silver

LONG STEP

Level: 4

I move a very long distance instantaneously.

Color: Pale

TIME TO PONDER

Level: 5

I mentally step outside of time. While outside of time, I cannot affect anything nor move, but I can look around 360 degrees from where I am. Mostly, I can think about whatever I wish and rest my mind. I can also use any (or all) of my rest actions to restore any Qualia pool, but then they are used as if I had taken that time to rest that day.

Color: Invisible

FROZEN IN TIME

Level: 5 (+1 die)

A target I touch is frozen in time. They cannot act at all—even mentally—but they cannot be harmed or affected, either, as they are outside the normal flow of time.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)

Color: Gold

DIVERTED ANGLE

Level: 5

I warp space so that, for a moment, a straight line is no longer straight, but angled off in a direction I wish it to go. With this power, I can send a running or charging figure in a direction they did not intend, make a falling object “fall” off to the side, deflect an incoming ranged attack, and so on.

Color: Green

DISMISSAL**Level:** 8 (+2 dice)

I instantaneously send a being either to a place I have been before (somewhere I have spent a full day) or to their own home, wherever that may be. The place where I send someone can be confining (like a jail cell, or at the center of a mazelike cave complex), but it cannot be automatically, inherently damaging, like deep underwater, miles high above the ground, or in a pool of lava. I can use this ability on myself.

Color: Pale**REVERSAL****Level:** 9

I reverse the flow of time for three rounds, which affects the entire world except for me. Actions are undone, wounds heal, spell effects disappear, and so on. Time is reset to where it stood three rounds earlier. Even dead creatures who died during those three rounds are alive again. However, nothing for me is undone. My wounds do not heal. Spells cast on me remain in effect, assuming that they would not have ended during the three “backward” rounds.

Once the reversal stops, I am the only one who remembers what happened in the now-future three rounds, and I can try to prevent the same things from happening if I wish (although there is no guarantee of success).

While the flow of time is reversed for those three rounds, I can try to affect the world as it moves backward, but it is very difficult. Every action I take suffers a penalty of -6. Anything I do happens from my perspective, so if a foe moves backward out of the room and closes the door (because in the normal flow they opened the door and came in), and I then bar the door, the door remains barred when time starts moving normally again. Likewise, if I harm someone or something as time moves backward, they are harmed when time resumes. Some things I might want to do during the reversal are meaningless, however. It does no good to jostle the hand of someone who is trying to shoot a pistol during those three rounds because when time resumes, they haven't even shot it yet.

It is impossible to use time effects on top of each other, so Reversal and Stop, multiple Stops, and the like cannot be used together.

Color: Gold

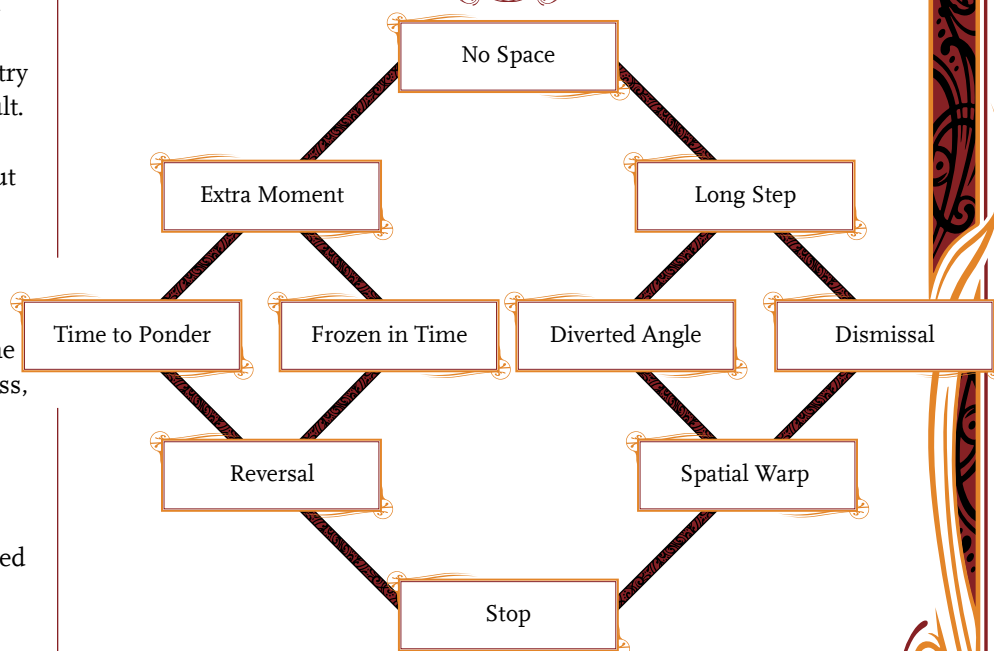
Reversal is a difficult ability to adjudicate, especially if the character tries to affect the world as it moves backward. If a PC has this ability, you'll want to pay close attention to what happens in a particular round in case it suddenly has to be replayed backward.

SPATIAL WARP**Level:** 10

I create a doorway to anywhere in the Actuality. The doorway stays open and I (and anyone else) can pass through it in either direction.

Color: Pale**STOP****Level:** 10

Time practically stops (it moves with infinitesimal slowness) except for me and anyone close to me whom I choose. We can affect the world around us. We don't know exactly how much “free” time we have, but we can do anything during that time that we could normally do. Some things are much easier—hopping atop a moving train is like hopping atop a stopped train, foes have no chance to avoid physical attacks, and so on. It is impossible to use time effects on top of each other, so Reversal and Stop, multiple Stops, and the like cannot be used together.

Depletion: 0 (check each round)**Color:** Gold**WARPS TIME AND SPACE**

WEAVES STEALTH WITH SORCERY

Magic is for beguiling, fooling, and tricking. I use it to cover my tracks and distract those who have things I want. It becomes easier for me to take those things.

There are many ways to use magic to aid in subterfuge, stealth, and beguilement, but stealth sorcerers first and foremost focus on the most straightforward ways. Our careful movements and stealthy actions are literally laced with magic to make us better thieves.

Background: There are a few guilds and societies that train stealth sorcerers, most of which require a few years of service in return.

Appearance: Stealth sorcerers wear light clothing that aids in mobility, often in dark colors to help with stealth.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for stealth sorcerers.

- + Stealing things is what this is all about, after all. (*Theft*.)
- + Sometimes, a stealth sorcerer goes too far with their abilities. But you can always try to come back from the brink. (*Redemption*.)
- + The old guild or society calls in its debts at the worst possible time. (*Repay a Debt, Assist an Organization*.)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Directly using an ability granted by this forte to steal a treasure worth more than I have ever stolen before.
- + Infiltrating a place and finding a treasure that is far more valuable than I expected.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + The first time I encounter someone who can magically resist my abilities.
- + The first time I am jailed for my activities.

Forté Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

Movement, page 26

Interaction, page 27

Theft, page 177

Redemption, page 175

Repay a Debt, page 175

Assist an Organization, page 166

MYSTIC THIEF

Level: 2 (no cost)

My features are blurred, the sounds I make muffled.

I add +1 to all sneaking actions. Not an action in and of itself.

Color: Grey

DEFT AND SILENT FEET

Level: 3

I gain 3 bene to my **Movement** pool. My magic guides my steps.

Color: Green

QUICK THINKING, FAST TALKING

Level: 3

I gain 3 bene to my **Interaction** pool as I use sorcery to lie, distract, and talk my way out of dangerous situations.

Color: Grey

SEE THROUGH WALLS

Level: 5

I touch a barrier like a door or a wall and can see what's on the other side as if that's where I am standing. As long as I concentrate, I can maintain this effect.

Color: Indigo

FORGETFULNESS

Level: 6 (+1 die)

A close being that I choose forgets everything they experienced in the last five minutes.

Color: Blue

WALK THROUGH WALLS

Level: 7

If I take three rounds to do so, I can pass through a door, wall, or similar barrier up to 6 inches (15 cm) thick.

Color: Gold

INVISIBILITY**Level:** 7

I am no longer visible, although I still make sound and have an odor.

Depletion: 0 (check each round in which I take an action of any kind other than moving)

Color: Invisible**VANISH****Level:** 8

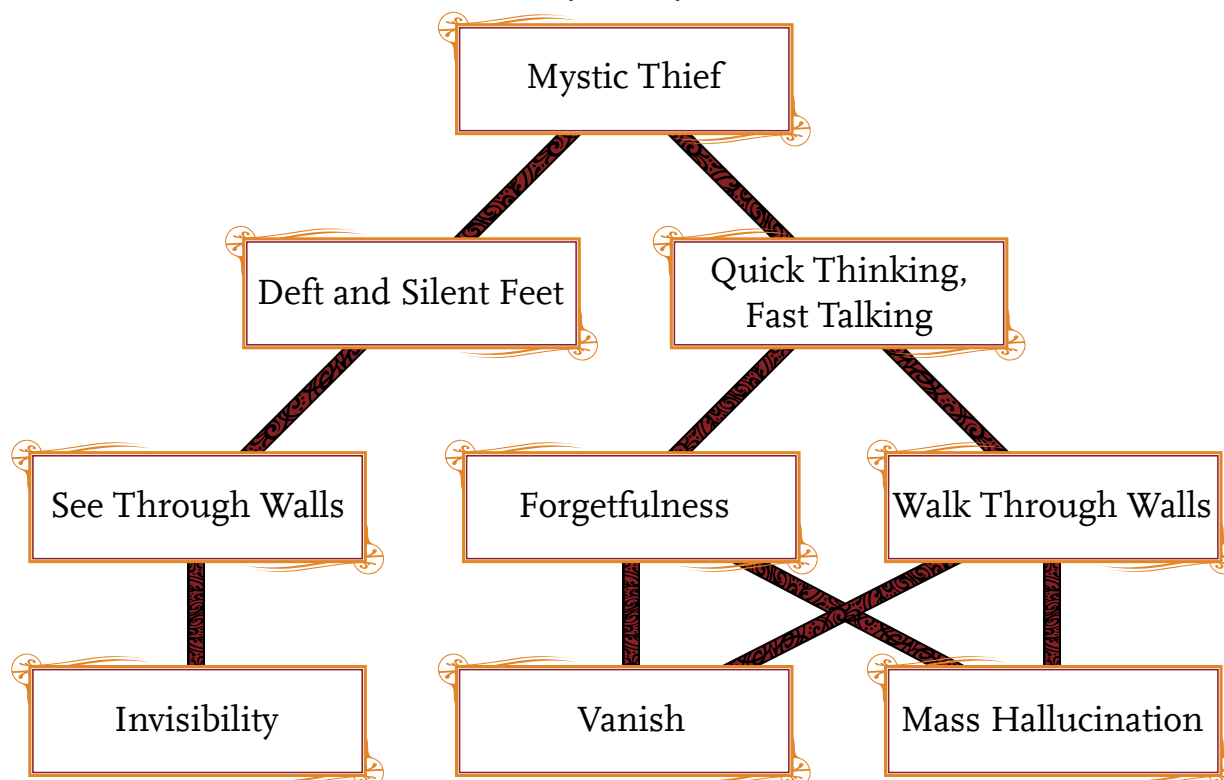
I disappear in a puff of smoke and reappear in my home. I can take additional beings with me, but each such “passenger” costs 2 additional Sorcery.

Color: Pale

A “week spot” is a location that, no matter how you travel there—walking, flying, or even teleporting—it takes a week to arrive (and another to leave). They occur on their own, but some vislae have learned how to create them.

MASS HALLUCINATION**Level:** 9 (+2 dice)

All beings within a very large area (that I am also within) see and hear what I want them to see and hear, and they don’t see or hear anything else (like me walking out with the chest full of magecoins). I must decide what I want them to experience when I start the effect—I cannot change it later or react to the actions of the targets. As long as they remain in the area, they experience the sights and sounds that I have decided, ending only if I am no longer in the area *and* the hallucination has been proven false. For example, if I decide to make it seem like floodwaters are quickly filling the ballroom, those that remain in the ballroom after I am gone—upon finally realizing that they are not drowning—recognize that none of it is real.

Color: Blue**WEAVES STEALTH WITH SORCERY**

WRITHES AND SQUIRMS

The ways of the world are strange indeed. By signing a pact in blood with a mysterious entity called the Forgotten Mother, some people take on the identity of a so-called “tentacled one.”

Little is known of the Forgotten Mother, but it is said that she is a being of pestilence, mutation, and corruption, yet eternally spawning new life—the embodiment of the contradictory intersection of cancer and birth.

To some the Forgotten Mother might sound like a demon, but the truth is far more complicated. She is a protector of the innocent, and hates to see violence or death fall upon the undeserving. Those who revere her revere life. Ever-changing, ever-mutating, ever-squirming life.

Tentacled ones not only can turn some or all of their bodies into writhing tendrils, but also can use these tendrils to interface with other creatures’ minds and even seep through space.

Background: One cannot enter into a pact with the Forgotten Mother without delving deep into some of the strangest, darkest corners of the world.

Appearance: We have a very distinctive appearance and are proud of our nature. Our limbs writhe and squirm, and even when we are not using our abilities, our bodies suggest our true nature.

Character Arcs: The following character arc ideas are particularly appropriate for tentacled ones.

- + Studying the sacraments and sanctities of the Forgotten Mother is never easy but always fruitful. (*Learn.*)
- + People sometimes jail other tentacled ones, which cannot be tolerated. (*Rescue.*)
- + Birth is a blessing of the Forgotten Mother, and it should be a blessing of her faithful as well. (*Birth.*)

Path to Joy: The following events may bring me Joy.

- + Learning more about the revered Forgotten Mother.
- + Protecting an innocent.

Path to Despair: The following events are likely to cause me Despair.

- + Having a tentacle severed.

Magic makes the conceptual literal.

Learn, page 172

Rescue, page 175

Birth, page 166

- + Watching an innocent be killed.

Forte Abilities: I have access to the following abilities, as long as I start with the first one and then select more, following the path indicated and spending Crux to do so.

TENTACLE HAND

Level: 1 (no cost)

My hand becomes a tentacle when I wish it. It can stretch so that my overall reach is twice as far as normal. The grip is extremely strong, granting me +1 to climbing actions or other actions involving holding onto something. Not an action.

Color: Gold

TENTACLE TONGUE

Level: 3 (+1 die)

My tongue is a tentacle and stretches to an astonishing short range. Each round, either my tongue can grab a creature or object and pull it toward me, or it can crush a creature or object it already holds, dealing damage equal to the level of this ability. The tentacle tongue has my normal strength when it comes to holding or pulling things.

Color: Red

INTERFACE

Level: 3

I can touch another being with one of my tentacles and establish contact with them. We can communicate telepathically and I gain +1 to any interaction I have during this communication.

Color: Blue

ENGULF

Level: 5 (+1 die)

Enough of my body turns into squirming, stretching tendrils to engulf someone or something my size or smaller. Someone engulfed cannot see, hear, speak, or take actions other than to try to break free. I can use an action to inflict damage equal to the level of this ability. This ability ends when I wish it, or when the engulfed creature breaks free.

Color: Red

SQUIRMING FORM**Level:** 6

My entire body becomes a writhing mass of tentacles, tendrils, and snakes. As such, I can fit through spaces only 2 inches (5 cm) wide, and my Dodge and stealth actions are enhanced by +1 die. I can keep this form as long as I like, but I gain 1 **scourge** in my Interaction pool that does not go away until I take a "normal form." Those not like me are disconcerted by the smell and the muffled squelches, hisses, and screams when I move.

Color: Gold**PROBE****Level:** 7 (+1 die)

I use a tentacle to touch another creature and in so doing learn their name, level, and any other fact I wish to know. Further, I can hold the creature insensate for as long as I wish (but I can do nothing else during this time).

Color: Indigo**SEEP THROUGH SPACE****Level:** 7

My body becomes so many slippery tentacles that I am almost liquid as I slip through the folds of space to travel anywhere in this world, or to a random location on another world.

Color: Pale**WRITHING MASS****Level:** 8

I grow to three times my normal size, but I am all tentacles, so I can move through any opening I could normally pass through. I add 3 bene each to my Accuracy pool, my Movement pool, and my Physicality pool. I can grab up to three objects in a single action within long range with my tendrils, or, alternatively, I can make three melee attacks as an action against one, two, or three opponents. If I do the latter, I inflict damage equal to 2 less than this ability's level.

Depletion: Ends when the sun next rises or sets**Color:** Red**INFECTION****Level:** 8 (+1 die)

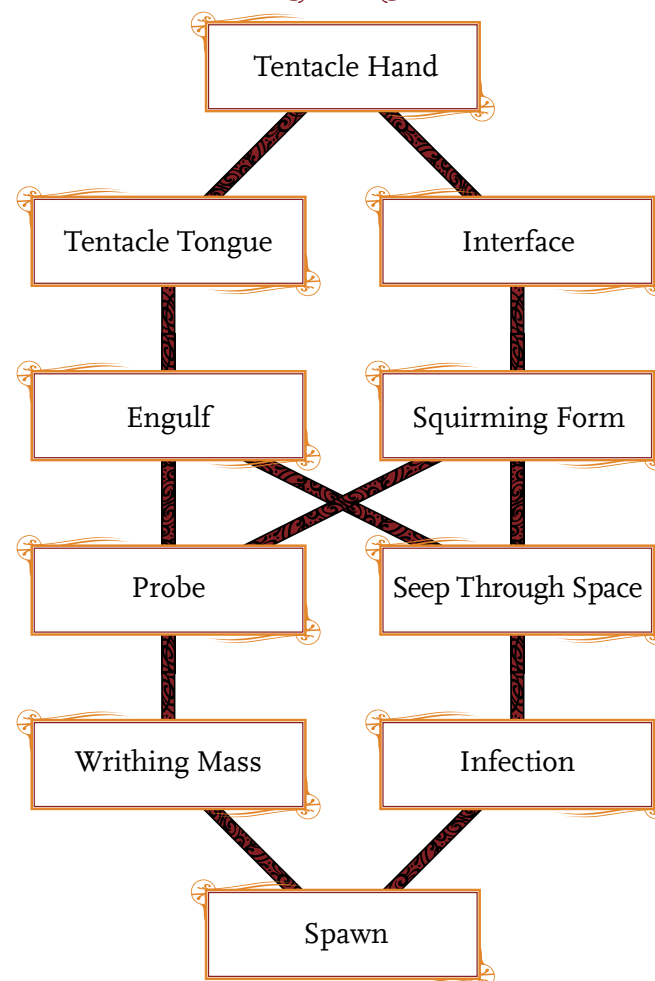
Anytime I touch another being with a tentacle, I can choose to infect them with a rotting disease that acts as a scourge on all their pools (if a PC) or a -1 penalty to their level that cannot be

Scourge, page 29

removed without the help of magic. Over the course of days, this becomes 2 scourges or -2 to their level, and so on until the scourges equal the number of Wounds they can suffer before dying, at which point they wither and die.

Color: Red**SPAWN****Level:** 10

Taking one hour, I loose a mass of my tentacles and tendrils, which become a separate entity. This entity is 5 levels below the level of this ability, is itself a mass of squirming tendrils, and remains under my control. Doing this not only costs me Sorcery but also inflicts 2 Wounds. If I ever form more than two spawn at a time, they are likely to turn on me.

Color: Silver**WRITHES AND SQUIRMS**



SOUL (KA)

We said we were done with character creation. We lied. But you see, what we speak of now is secret. We speak of the character's soul, and there are aspects to each vislae's soul that they do not reveal, even to their close friends. At least, not at first.

The fourth step of character creation is your soul. Sometimes, people call it the “secret soul.” You can use either term. “Secret soul” stresses the secretive nature of it, but implies that there are parts of your soul, or another soul, that are not secret, and that's not actually the case.

Your soul is personal, with its own (secret) name. Thus, each vislae has not only a conventional name but also a secret name—the name of their soul. Each soul has a connection, however, to certain souls of other people. Thirteen different soul “allegiances” are thought to exist. As the soul is something unique to mortals, 13 is the number of mortality. Collectively, the thirteen soul allegiances are called the Magisterium. They are the Silver Star, the Watcher, the Child, the Lady, the Flame, the Doctor, the Old Man, the Eye, the Blade, the Abyss, the Hammer, the Whisper, and the Dancer.

Each has its own positive and negative aspects. For example, the Old Man exemplifies wisdom and respect, but also weakness and forgetfulness. The secret soul known as the Child is innocence and purity, but also naïveté and ignorance. The positive aspect of the Lady is luck, and the negative aspect is . . . luck. These aspects speak to your inner nature in ways that you decide, and you can reveal this nature or not, as you choose. It's yet another building block you can use to shape and develop your character.



Your secret soul association provides a special connection to others with the same secret soul, but only if that knowledge is revealed—and it's best to keep it secret, as it can also be used against you. The more someone knows about your soul, the easier it is to use spells and other magic to affect you. For those who want to pursue it, however, each of the secret souls in the Magisterium has a hidden meeting place in Satyrine, and has a hierarchy like a secret society. Each holds spells of which only they have knowledge. But looking for them is difficult and puts your own soul identity at risk, so be wary.

THE MAGISTERIUM

Wardens and leaders oversee each of the conceptual thirteen soul allegiances. These beings, collectively, are also called the **Magisterium**. So the Magisterium oversees the Magisterium. They dwell, each in secret, in Satyrine, although rumor has it that they meet in a sort of council to discuss topics of great import. Each has a network of agents allied to them and to each other. In other words, the choice of a soul leads to potential membership in a secret society. However, to find the Magisterium and your soul's brethren, you have to reveal your secret soul, and most people are loath to do so. So the vast majority of vislae never seek out the Magisterium or the organization that they technically belong to.

SECRET SOUL POWERS

Your soul grants you special advantages (and potential disadvantages). However, most of them only rarely come into play.

Each soul has a Soul Guardian. The Soul Guardian is a spiritual entity—a conceptualized force rather than a simple entity. Closer to a god (or perhaps demigod) than a being. The Soul Guardians are different than the Magisterium, and yet they are also not. That is to say, the Magisterium is made up of mortals. However, each member of the Magisterium may host the spirit of the Guardian of the soul it represents. Thus, each representative

There is no place in the character tome to record soul information. It's a secret! Write it down somewhere only you can see. Put it in an envelope. Keep it secret.

THE PATH

The Magisterium, page 77

THE WAY

Truename secret, page 93

Invoke the Name secret, page 89

of a soul in the Magisterium is in part also the Guardian, until they are not. When a representative dies or is somehow displaced, the Guardian joins with the new representative in a manner not fully explained or understood by most—and the very existence of each representative, let alone their identity, is already one of the best-kept secrets in Satyrine.

Soul Guardian: Characters can call upon their Soul Guardian when they are in their time of greatest need. If they do, they gain the Soul Guardian's gift. The cost for invoking this power is 1 Crux. It also reveals to all nearby the character's secret soul allegiance.

Death Curse: Upon their death, a vislae can speak a death curse, powered by their secret soul. This is an open-ended curse, detailed by the vislae at the moment of death, with an effect equal to the highest-level spell or effect they have access to.

For example, a level 5 death curse might be, "I curse he who put the poison in my wine to burn with Hell's own flames." The culprit who poisoned the vislae suffers 5 points of damage as flames burst around them.

Speaking a death curse can loose parts of the character's soul into the world, which can be dangerous. If a vislae uses their death curse, an interested party might learn their secret soul allegiance. The vislae gains 1 Despair. If the interested party already knows the allegiance, they learn the vislae's secret name.

Secret Name: Each vislae's soul has an individual name. Many think of their soul's name as their **truename**, but others simply call it their soul name or their magical name. Regardless, knowledge of your soul's name is dangerous, and it can be used against you. However, if someone knows your secret soul name, that fact also grants you a bit of power over them. You always gain a +1 bonus to any magical action (forte ability, spell, ritual, and so on) made against someone who you have revealed your name to, or who has discovered it on their own. There is, then, a delicate and dangerous aspect to revealing your secret soul name as well as to discovering those of your enemies.

Extremely powerful vislae have learned how to make it so that people *speaking* their soul's name grants them even greater power and abilities.

SOUL ALLEGIANCES

Each Soul Guardian has a personality, a symbol, and a gift.

The thirteen soul allegiances are:

- + The Silver Star
- + The Watcher
- + The Child
- + The Lady
- + The Flame
- + The Doctor
- + The Old Man
- + The Eye
- + The Blade
- + The Abyss
- + The Hammer
- + The Whisper
- + The Dancer

THE SILVER STAR

Sometimes called the Shining Star, this soul offers protection, but also focuses on mystery and the unknown. It is the solace of isolation, quiet, and calm.

Symbol/Image: The Silver Star is represented with seven points.

Gift: The character's *defenses* all gain +3 until the sun next sets, and they are instantly transported home if they wish it.

THE WATCHER

Distant and aloof, the Watcher possesses vast knowledge and clear logic, and values little else.

Symbol/Image: A tower with a single window atop a distant hill represents the Watcher.

Gift: The character's *Intellect* pool is refreshed and gains 3 bene, and the character knows the answer to any one question.

THE WAY

Speak My Name secret, page 92

Refreshed, page 29

Joy, page 203

THE CHILD

The Child represents purity and yet also naiveté. The Child respects play and joy, but struggles with—or ignores—responsibility.

Symbol/Image: The Child is depicted at different ages, but almost always with a toy or a small dog.

Gift: The character's pools are all *refreshed* and they gain 1 *Joy*.



Despite the name, the Silver Star has nothing to do with the Silver Sun.

THE GATE

Defense, page 29

Intellect, page 27

THE LADY

Neither young nor old, beautiful nor ugly, kind nor cruel, the Lady is capricious and embraces change, bestowing blessings one day and calamity the next.

Symbol/Image: The Lady is often depicted faceless, holding or standing next to a wheel.

Gift: The character gains +3 on all actions until the sun next sets, but suffers -1 on all actions the following day.

THE FLAME

The Flame grants life-giving warmth, but it also destroys. It must be wielded carefully, but with skill its use is limitless.

Symbol/Image: It is typically represented by a solitary lit candle.

Gift: The character is shrouded in flames that inflict 5 points of damage to any close foe and reset one pool of any close ally. The flames last until the sun next sets, but any one character can be affected by them only once.

THE DOCTOR

Knowledge—and more important, the application of that knowledge—is the purview of the Doctor. The Doctor has many secrets but is unafraid to reveal them when the time is right.

Symbol/Image: A masked androgynous figure, usually in a cloak with a black valise, represents the Doctor.

Gift: The character gains +2 on all actions until the sun next sets.

THE OLD MAN

Cantankerous and set in his ways, the Old Man trods the well-worn path. The Old Man rejects change and chance.

Symbol/Image: A wooden cane is the Old Man's symbol.

Gift: Any challenge for the character that is reduced to 3 or less becomes 0. This lasts until the sun next sets.

The Doctor is also a Sooth card. Coincidence?

Challenge, page 22

THE EYE

Often confused with the Watcher, the Eye sees what it sees unintentionally. In Shadow, the saying goes that the eye is the window to the soul, and that applies here. The Eye is more about the thoughts, impressions, and sensations of the soul than what is actually seen. It is the impact on the viewer rather than what is viewed. Rather than being interested in knowledge for its own sake, the Eye values experience and understanding. Introspective, it sees inward as well as out.

Symbol/Image: The Eye is often stylized in many forms.

Gift: The character vanishes until the sun next sets, having retreated into their own soul. When they reappear, it is wherever they wish.

THE BLADE

The Blade is swift and full of action and initiative. It acts with precision, skill, and sometimes even intuition. The Blade is so sharp and so precise that it can cut to heal as well as harm. It never inflicts unintentional harm.

Symbol/Image: The Blade is depicted in silver, its keen edge glistening.

Gift: The character gains +3 to attacks and deals +3 damage until the sun next sets.

THE ABYSS

The Abyss knows no bounds. Its depths are limitless and ultimately beyond understanding.

Symbol/Image: Its symbol is a swirling hole of utter darkness.

Gift: One NPC that the character touches is consumed utterly and forever.

THE HAMMER

The Hammer is strong, stalwart, and powerful, but entirely without subtlety. It is mightier than the Blade, but also messier, more brutal, and far less precise.

Symbol/Image: The Hammer is a stout, often bloody, weapon.



THE DEATHLESS TRIUMVIRATE

Gift: The character makes a single attack against all close foes that is automatically successful and inflicts 3 Wounds.

THE WHISPER

The Whisper is soft and quiet, but persuasive. It speaks directly into one's heart. One's soul. Whatever it says becomes truth.

Symbol/Image: The Whisper is often shown as a set of stylized lips.

Gift: The character's **Interaction** pool is refreshed and gains 3 bene, and the next thing the character says is believed by one person they are speaking to, no matter what.

It's said that within the realm of each sun is a special mirror that represents the pure color of that sun. Without the mirror, the sun could change.

Interaction, page 27

THE DANCER

The Dancer is grace and movement. It is the creation of beauty and art, and the appreciation of the same.

Symbol/Image: The Dancer is depicted as a perfectly formed androgynous figure of grace and beauty.

Gift: The character becomes untouchable until the sun next sets. They cannot be harmed or affected by anything, nor can they affect anything. They can, however, move at incredible speeds, moving 100 miles (160 km) in the blink of an eye, or almost anywhere in the world before the effect ends.



FOUNDATION (LA)

A fine vislae fellow who's had
Dizzy spells since he was a lad
Drinks potions for salvation
From potent incantation
Now his spells are cured and he's sad.

Foundation is the bedrock upon which your character is built. It involves character personality, background, home, family, connections, and knowledge of secrets in the world. It is the nurture aspect of your character (while all the other parts—heart, order, forte, and secret soul—are the nature).

Although there are no mechanics for determining your backstory, the choices you make about your character's foundation—your house, your connections, and so on—certainly help inform what that backstory is. In other words, your backstory is an emergent aspect of all the choices you make. A character with a large house and connections to the wealthy and influential people in Satyrine obviously has a very different background than one who has a hidden lair near a refuse heap and has connections to criminals and underworld figures. Use the foundation you choose to inform your backstory, and then develop it as much as you desire, so that the choices you make—from not only your foundation, but also your order, your heart, your forte, and even your secret soul—all create an emergent character history. This will be developed even more fully when you choose your first **character arc**.

Record your foundation in your character tome, as well as information about your house, your connections, your time in Shadow, and whatever else seems pertinent.

GMs will want to note significant details from each character's background, house, and more in The Guiding Hand. These are the building blocks of stories in the narrative.

Character arcs, page 162

THINKING ABOUT PERSONALITY

Your foundation has helped to shape who you are today. All your past experiences have contributed to who you are. While you already have been thinking about personality in terms of heart and the other aspects of your character, now is the time to weave in your background and finalize the kind of character you are.

Obviously, personality is not a game mechanic. While consistency is important, personalities change over time because experiences continue to shape you. It's not just the past experiences that do that, but the present ones as well. Seeing your character change (and hopefully grow) over the course of play is an important part of **Invisible Sun**. That's part of what the character arc system is all about. Personality will help you choose the right character arcs for you, and guide your whole career.

THE EIGHT FOUNDATIONS

Choosing your foundation is the fifth step of character creation.

Foundation is expressed as an adjective. It doesn't describe the character as a whole, but rather their background and current circumstances. Past and present. It's possible that the circumstances of a character can change, but the foundation still describes their origins and background, no matter what happens in the future.

Foundations number eight, and eight is the number of new beginnings, as you are faced with recovering your past while you build a future. The different foundations are:

- + Established
- + Itinerant
- + Connected
- + Eremetic
- + Mendicant
- + Iconoclastic
- + Stalwart
- + Bizarre

Each foundation offers the following important characteristics:

Income: This is a monetary amount that the character earns each week. This income is from investments, royalties, past dealings, inheritance, financial support of others, or minor ongoing tasks. In other words, this income is not from current employment or pursuits. This amount is a net profit above and beyond the bare minimum needed to survive, so one can assume the vislae has no bills other than what comes up in play. That means that if a vislae stays home and reads all week, eating very simply, they have no food expenses. If they want better-quality food or if they go out to dinner with friends at some point, that cost is extra.

Initial Savings: This is the amount of **money** the character has at the start of the narrative.

Hidden Knowledge: This is the starting value for this statistic.

House: When deciding what sort of house the character has, these are the general categories available.

Connections: This is how many levels of **connections** the character has. These levels can be divided into multiple connections or applied to one.

Initial Motivations: These are general suggestions for the background and current circumstances for the character.

Character Arcs: These are possible starting character arcs, or arcs the player might consider later.

Augments are ways to improve your house. Each is normally the result of learning a "house secret" as described in The Way, page 84.

ESTABLISHED

You have a home of your own and are connected to others. This is the most common foundation among vislae.

Income: 50 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 100 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 10

House: Prominent, large, or unique; level 3

Connections: 2 levels

Special: One house augment (level 3 or lower)

Initial Motivations: You have reached a point in life where you can perhaps relax, just a bit. You have a good home, you are known and at least relatively respected, and you have enough income to support a modest lifestyle. Appearances and reputation are important to you, and you probably entertain guests

Money, page 181



Hidden Knowledge, page 30

Connections, page 156

on a regular basis, attend parties and functions, and so forth to maintain or improve your position.

Character Arcs: *Establishment, Join an Organization, Romance*

ITINERANT

You have no permanent domicile, but you do have connections to others in Satyrine (or beyond).

Income: 40 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 120 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 15

House: None

Connections: 2 levels

Special: You start with 1 level in the disguising, surviving, or sneaking skill; you start with a free secret or spell of level 2 or lower.

Initial Motivations: You don't have a permanent home, but that means that, likewise, you don't have a lot of upkeep expenses to worry about. You live in hotels, in flophouses, with family or friends, or roughing it on the streets or in the wilderness, depending on where you are. Things like houses and permanency probably aren't important to you. Secrets, magical lore, and similar pursuits take precedence. You just don't see the value in settling down. Still, you know the value of social functions and connections.

Character Arcs: *Mysterious Background, Redemption, Theft, Undo a Wrong, Uncover a Secret*

CONNECTED

You have ties to one or more significant people or groups in Satyrine (or beyond).

Income: 50 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 80 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 12

House: Small, average, prominent, large, or unique; level 2

Connections: Depends on house. Small grants 5 levels, average grants 4 levels, and all others grant 3 levels.

Initial Motivations: You have friends and contacts everywhere. You've got a house and the financial

Establishment, page 169

Join an Organization, page 171

Romance, page 176

Mysterious Background, page 173

Redemption, page 175

Theft, page 177

Undo a Wrong, page 178

Uncover a Secret, page 178

Develop a Bond, page 169

Establishment, page 169

Join an Organization, page 171

Repay a Debt, page 175

DICHOTOMIES

It's helpful to think of personality in terms of dichotomies and which side of a particular divide you happen to fall on. These represent what's important to you and will help guide your choices in life.

Choose from a list of dichotomies to help define your character. There are no right or wrong answers. There is no final score or results to tally. These are just concepts to think about when developing the core and the finer points of your character's outlook, ideals, and overall personality.

Wealth or Fame
Friends or Family
Power or Control
Introvert or Extrovert
Order or Chaos
Freedom or Safety
Society or the Individual
Generosity or Greed
Moral code or Instinct
Ego or Id
Nature or Nurture
Thought or Action
Instinct or Knowledge
Charity or Self-sufficiency
Home or the Road
Contentment or Challenge

means to keep you going, but more important, you know know—and are known by—people of importance. To get to where you are (and to stay there), you likely spend time in social pursuits: parties, gatherings, meetings, and so on. You also very likely entertain guests in your home on a regular basis. You're either an extrovert or an exhausted introvert.

Character Arcs: *Develop a Bond, Establishment, Join an Organization, Repay a Debt*

EREMITIC

You are aloof and have few ties to others.

Income: 60 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 150 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 15

House: Large, hidden, or unique; level 4

Connections: None

Initial Motivations: You are a hermit. You have a nice home and a decent amount of money—your essentials are covered. This is wonderful, because you have your own personal pursuits to focus on. You spend a lot of time alone, but you may still have friends. You don't, however, have connections to large groups and might be relatively unknown to most people (and if so, you probably like it that way).

Character Arcs: Build, Creation, Justice, Solve a Mystery, Train a Creature, Uncover a Secret

MENDICANT

You have no permanent domicile and few or no connections to others.

Income: None

Initial Savings: 10 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 20

House: None

Connections: None

Special: You start with 1 level in the disguise, survival, or stealth skill; you start with a free secret or spell of level 3 or lower.

Initial Motivations: You have little in the way of possessions, but that's probably because you put no value in them. You are a loner, or at least not connected to any major groups—you may still have close friends. Knowledge, self-improvement, and personal goals are what drive you. You probably don't care what others think or believe. You live on the streets or on the road, with family or friends, or perhaps some combination thereof. You own what you can carry, and probably don't know where your next meal is coming from, but that's fine with you. Your mind is on loftier concepts.

Character Arcs: Defeat a Foe, Growth, Learn, Revenge, Solve a Mystery, Theft, Uncover a Secret

THE PATH

Church of Midnight,
page 111

Court of Nous, page 44

Satyrine, page 64

Deathless Triumvirate,
page 65

Build, page 167

Creation, page 167

Justice, page 172

Solve a Mystery, page 176

Train a Creature, page 177

Uncover a Secret, page 178

Avenge, page 166

Finish a Great Work,
page 170

Rescue, page 175

Undo a Wrong, page 178

Some mendicant characters might be in that state unwillingly. They may be living on the streets due to some unfortunate incident (or poor decisions) in their past. Perhaps this gives them the drive to establish themselves once again. A mendicant character also could be an impoverished pariah who would like to redeem themselves.

Defeat a Foe, page 168

Growth, page 171

Learn, page 172

Revenge, page 176

Theft, page 177

Defense, page 168

Instruction, page 171

Join an Organization,
page 171

Repay a Debt, page 175

ICONOCLASTIC

You work against or seek to bring down one or more significant organizations.

Income: 50 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 100 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 12

House: Small, average, hidden, or unique; level 3

Connections: Depends on house. Small grants 2 levels, average grants 1 level, and all others grant none.

Initial Motivations: Although you have some comforts and maybe some connections, your main drive is destroying or overthrowing a major group, organization, or class, like the Church of Midnight, the Court of Nous, the upper classes of Satyrine, or the Deathless Triumvirate. This might be an endeavor that you take on alone, or you might work with others—either a subversive group with the same goal as you or the organization's chief rival. Whomever it is that you oppose, they likely wronged you in some way, although perhaps your stance is merely ideological.

Character Arcs: Avenge, Defeat a Foe, Finish a Great Work, Justice, Rescue, Revenge, Undo a Wrong

STALWART

You are a devoted ally and supporter of one specific organization.

Income: 50 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 100 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 10

House: Small, average, unique; level 3

Connections: Depends on house. Small grants 2 levels, and others grant 1 level.

Special: 3 levels of connection to group supported

Initial Motivations: You have a strong connection to a particular organization or group and spend a great deal of time or energy focused on them. Perhaps you are a devout member of a religion or a devoted defender of a cause, an order, or a class of people. You have modest means, but it's enough to take care of the essentials while you focus on more important things.

Character Arcs: Defense, Finish a Great Work, Instruction, Join an Organization, Justice, Repay a Debt

BIZARRE

You have a reputation for being strange and having a very strange house (at least, that's what people say), so you have no connections.

Income: 30 crystal orbs

Initial Savings: 70 crystal orbs

Hidden Knowledge: 10

House: Prominent or unique; level 4

Connections: None

Special: One house augment (level 4 or lower)

Initial Motivations: You're weird, you live in a weird place, and you don't care who knows it. Which is good, because everyone knows it. Your reputation for oddness precedes you, to the point where you can hear people whispering behind your back or see them step to one side as you walk down the street. You have very modest means and aren't great at saving.

Character Arcs: Creation, Growth, Finish a Great Work, *Mysterious Background*, *Transformation*

VISLAE HOUSES

A vislae's house is an extension of themselves. Vislae houses are always magical. Always strange. Always harboring secrets. Always.

What each house contains is usually up to each vislae, but most have a small library (or at least a large bookcase), a work area for rituals or experiments, and quarters for any associated creatures or beings, such as a familiar, that might be present. Many vislae are collectors or even hoarders, and their homes become strange museum-like collections or menageries.

Houses are assumed to be furnished, but quite modestly, with little beyond the average. Vislae should spend some of their savings to buy extra or quality furnishings.

When first determining the specifics of a character's house, start with their foundation, which will determine the type of house. The type might suggest its size, its location, or both. Next, determine the starting peculiarity. This is the *known* strangeness about the house: it's haunted,

it's collapsing but still standing, it's cursed, or it has some other unique aspect that makes it clear that this is no ordinary building. (Meanwhile, the GM can concoct as-yet-undiscovered strangeness about the house.)

AUGMENTS

When players advance their characters, they can advance their house instead with augments. These are also known as house secrets. They work just like character secrets, have their own levels, and are gained by spending Acumen (1 Acumen per level).

Players can also increase the level of their house by 1 for the price of 1 Crux. Level suggests not only the general potency of the house (and its doors, walls, and so on) but also what augments can be applied to it. In general, a house must be at least the same level as an augment it might have.

Vislae houses at character creation have modest *furnishings* and appointments appropriate to their nature. A large house in a nice neighborhood will have nice furnishings appropriate to the rooms of the house. A hidden house in a junkyard will have serviceable furnishings mostly made out of refuse. Additional furnishings—anything specific, particular, or luxurious—must be purchased.

House furnishings,
page 186

Mysterious Background,
page 173

Transformation, page 178

A GM can ask that all the characters have houses of different types, if possible.

Vislae house types include:

- + Small
- + Average
- + Large
- + Prominent
- + Unique
- + Hidden

All vislae houses have at least one secret room in addition to those listed. (Additional secret rooms can be obtained by players as augments, or placed by GMs as additional peculiarities.) Secret room sizes depend on the size of the house. For example, small houses have very small secret rooms—more a compartment than a room, really—while large houses have large secret rooms and perhaps two different secret passages that connect to it.



THE PATH

Narrow Sannyasa River,
page 92

Almost all vislae have houses, but some vislae are houses. Sometimes places gain a soul and sometimes that soul has a touch of magic about them. A house with emotions and desires, and the power to act upon them.



SMALL

This is a very small house (on average, three small rooms). It can also be an apartment or a flat, or a single room in a large house owned by someone else.

Augments: A small house can have up to five augments.

Example: Daendra lives in a small, rickety shack literally hanging over the edge of the Narrow Sannyasa River. Its main floor consists of a single room and an attached kitchen. Daendra's bedroom is in a tiny loft above them both.

Example: Liu-Bak keeps a room in the manor house of Lady Gyellis. He takes his meals with her a few times a week, her modest library is at his disposal, and her servants answer to his needs within reason, but the amount of living space he has is very limited.

Example: Chril lives in a large old house, sharing it with four other vislae. She has her own room and shares a greatroom, a kitchen, and a large storeroom.

AVERAGE

This is a typical house with five or six rooms. It could also be a large apartment, or perhaps a suite in a large house owned by someone else, but these would be exceptions to the rule. Average houses sometimes have yards or gardens of modest size.

Augments: An average house can have up to seven augments.

Example: Josef lives in a nondescript house in the middle of the street.

LARGE

This is a sprawling manor or a high, multileveled tower. It probably has at least ten to twelve rooms. Large houses usually have yards or gardens, often with a wall or fence, and perhaps even an outbuilding or two.

Augments: A large house can have up to eight augments.

Example: Menthla inherited a large house and the surrounding walled estate when her parents died. The house has six bedrooms, a study, a dining hall, a parlor, a large kitchen, and a variety of storerooms and miscellaneous chambers.

PROMINENT

A prominent house isn't particularly large or fancy, but it is known. This might have to do with its appearance or perhaps its important or prominent location. It could also be that the house has a history of significance. It is in all other respects like an average house.

Augments: A prominent house can have up to seven augments.

Example: Yarcy's house is located on the corner of Hullen and Bannock streets, at the edge of the busy Lovelast Square.

Example: Echale lives in the infamous Spectrum House, where Baron DeHalik was murdered by the *Unseen Children*. His ghost still haunts the house, and vislae visit from time to time (welcome and unwelcome) to commune with his spirit.

UNIQUE

As the name implies, unique houses aren't like other homes. There is no "typical" unique house—that's the point. However, they are usually fairly small, with only three to five rooms at most. Essentially, they are houses that seem like anything but—a half-sunken ship in the harbor, the top of a clock tower, or the shell of an enormous snail.

Augments: A unique house can have up to six augments.

THE PATH

Rhol, page 29

THE PATH

Fartown, page 98

Your house is a part of your character. Like your forte or your order, you can "advance" and "upgrade" your house with secrets and magic. Do not neglect your house—it will be a part of your stories.

THE PATH

Unseen Children, page 116

Example: Sistentin makes his home within the head of a titanic statue of *Rhol* that rises high above Bookmaven Street. His home is very small, but it offers a unique perspective as well as an interesting location.

Example: Lownan's home is forever held aloft by a massive hot air balloon that permanently floats over a firehouse in *Fartown*. He has a rope ladder that he can raise and lower to gain access.

Example: Graun the Knife's home lies within an extradimensional space accessed at the end of an alleyway. It's not large, but it's also not laid out in a way that makes Euclidean sense—each room, in fact, is its own tiny dimension.

HIDDEN

A hidden house is located somewhere that most people would not expect someone to take residence, such as in a ruin, a sewer, a cave, or in the back of a business. Due to their obfuscated nature, hidden houses are typically small, with just three or four small rooms.

Augments: A hidden house can have up to five augments.

Example: Une Ombra lives in a set of hidden rooms accessed through a secret doorway in the back of a fish and chip shop in *Fartown*. The rooms are located behind and underneath the shop, and she and the shopkeeper have an understanding.

HOUSE PECULIARITIES

Every house has a peculiarity (actually, it probably has more than one, but you start the narrative knowing about only one). You can choose any of

Every vislae house should be unique. Players and GMs should work together to create a house with its own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies. If the house has particularly onerous drawbacks, the GM can bestow a compensating benefit.

Look at the sample houses provided for examples.

the following for your house's peculiarity and then develop the details to flesh it out. Expect that the GM will use this peculiarity as fodder for a story or two at some point, although they're not required to do so.

PECULIAR LOCATION

- + Atop a burial
- + Ritual site
- + Religious site
- + Historically significant location
- + Moves

PECULIAR DIFFICULTY

- + Disputed ownership
- + Difficult landlord
- + Squatters
- + Frequently burgled
- + Cursed

PECULIAR SHAPE/CONDITION

- + Teetering
- + Leaky (even in fine weather)
- + Drafty (even in fine weather)
- + Condemned
- + Growing
- + Improving
- + Always cluttered, no matter what
- + Inexplicably noisy

PECULIAR BUILDING MATERIALS

- + Entrance is something else (an open book, a mirror)
- + Structure is mainly glass
- + Structure is mainly mirrors
- + Structure is mainly ice
- + Structure is mainly mist
- + Structure is mainly living trees
- + Structure is mainly bones
- + Structure is mainly dead insects
- + House appearance changes, depending on visitor
- + House appearance changes, based on dreams of owner the previous night
- + Windows show random locales

THE PATH

Grigs, page 129

Elderbrin, page 123

Truespider, page 145

Roachgoblins, page 132

*The First Session,
page 194*

Players are encouraged to sketch the general layout of their home for visualization purposes.

- + Doors sometimes lead elsewhere
- + Slowly liquefying
- + Slowly disintegrating
- + Slowly moving out of phase
- + Slowly disappearing into another dimension
- + Slowly teleporting somewhere else

INFESTATION/HAUNTING

- + Ghosts
- + Grigs
- + Demonic entity
- + Sentience
- + Luck
- + Elderbrin vagabond
- + Truespider
- + Spiders
- + Ants
- + Termites
- + Roachgoblins
- + Inexplicable odor

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

During the first game session, all players will collaborate to develop the neighborhood the vislae's house is in, nearby points of interest, and so on. See [The First Session](#) for more information.

SAMPLE HOUSES

Players can choose one of the following ready-made houses if they wish. Some houses have a special benefit to compensate for extreme difficulties.

RAT'S HOUSE (HIDDEN)

The rat's house is in the sewers beneath the city. To reach it, one must climb down through a particular hinged sewer grate, the location of which is known only to the owner, and the grate can be locked. The "house" is really a few damp, dank underground chambers, but it offers a true hideaway.

CROOKED HOUSE (AVERAGE)

The crooked house appears to be askew in some way. Not necessarily run-down, but originally built with some sort of quirk or flaw. It leans precariously and looks like it should be condemned, despite the fact that it is quite sturdy. Still, its shape earns it gentle mockery from time to time.

Special Benefit: The crooked house has not one but two secret rooms known to the owner.

HOUSE ON THE ROCK (PROMINENT)

Sturdy and strong, built on a firm foundation, the house on the rock is in many ways the opposite of the crooked house, at least by outward appearance. It is well known by people throughout the city as a landmark and is praised for its beautiful exterior.

The interior of the house is a cluttered hoard of all manner of strange decor, bric-a-brac, and various oddments. No matter what steps are taken, the house remains a cluttered, disorganized mess. It takes literally twice as long to find anything in the house, and at least once, something really significant is lost for good.

Special Benefit: If you take a day to search the house, you can find a random object of importance or value you didn't know was there.

GHOST HOUSE (LARGE)

The ghost house is haunted by a plethora of spirits that moan and wail at inconvenient times, move things about subtly, and leave strange symbols etched on the walls and furnishings that are gone the next day. The ghosts speak to those who dream in the house, whisper to those who sit in the house quietly, and suggest subconscious thoughts with their symbols.

The chaotic suggestions of the ghosts have caused the various owners to build seemingly meaningless rooms, staircases to nowhere, and corridors that turn back on themselves. It's more maze than house. Many of the purposeless rooms stand empty.

Special Benefit: The owner of the house can ask the spirits a question and, about half the time, get an answer in his dreams the following night if he

sleeps in the house. Often, however, the dreams are confused and strange—rarely is the answer straightforward.

THE SHIFTING HOUSE (UNIQUE)

Bigger on the inside than the outside, the shifting house's layout is always in flux. From the outside, the house appears to be very small—more like a storage shed in size. Inside, the house is of average size, and seems even larger because the rooms shuffle and shift.



SHADOW SKILLS AND MEMENTOS

Most vislae spent time in *Shadow*. When they returned to the Actuality, they brought something back with them. Thus, all vislae retain a Shadow skill and a Shadow memento.

SHADOW SKILL

Everyone starts with a Shadow skill. A Shadow skill is something learned in Shadow, within the bonds of one's false life. A vislae who lived as a firefighter might retain one of the physical skills she had—climbing, perhaps, or breaking through barriers. A vislae who had a boating hobby might retain the ability to sail. One who worked as an accountant could keep a skill in mathematics.

This **level 2 skill** can be anything that could be learned in Shadow, from sailing to cabinetry. It can simply be a profession, like “sous chef” or “accountant” (although a focused skill is better than a broad skill). “Criminal” is likely too broad, but “stealth” or “lying” is fine. Something with very little application in the Actuality, like “computer science,” is probably not a good choice. But ultimately, the decision is yours.

SHADOW MEMENTO

Once ensconced back in the Actuality, most vislae call to them an object from their false life that had meaning to them. This might be something purely sentimental, like a photo, or something with practical value, like an automobile or a weapon. The idea, mostly, is for the memento to be something that helps establish the character's personality, like a stereo or a coffee maker—an object that says something about who they were and who they remain. Vislae trapped for so long in Shadow can't help but be shaped by it. Even once back in the Actuality, with memories and knowledge of the true world returning, they still retain a bit of their false life.

All vislae returned to the Actuality with one object taken from Shadow. Regardless of what it is, the object works just fine in the Actuality. If

THE PATH

Shadow, page 52

Skill level, page 31

Two characters should never have the same quirk.

it's something that shouldn't work there, like a television (no one's broadcasting) or a smartphone (there's no signal and no satellites), it still works. The television gets channels from Shadow and the smartphone can access Shadow's internet. However—and this is a big however—in the Actuality, things that would have meaning only in Shadow are seen as the obvious and downright absurd deceptions that they truly are. A television show, even a news program or a documentary, appears fake, silly, and vapid. Information gained on a smartphone is meaningless. Texts and phone calls are mostly nonsense.

QUIRKS

Vislae are odd and varied creatures. The magic within them manifests in strange ways. Most call these quirks. Quirks are neither advantages nor disadvantages, and if they occur at random times, you never have control over them. They're just unique aspects that mark a vislae. You should choose one from the following list of quirks or use these as examples to make up your own.

- + If I'm not touching gold with my bare skin, I get jittery.
- + Green plants that I touch turn blue for a brief moment.
- + Everyone says, upon meeting me, that I remind them of someone, but they can never think of who.
- + I can unfailingly sense the sexual orientation of anyone I see.
- + Magical potions give me hiccups for a few minutes.
- + The touch of stone on my bare skin gives me hives.
- + I seem to have swapped the concepts of sober and intoxicated. I must imbibe to stay sober, and intoxication is my normal state.
- + Food flavor to me seems related to color more than anything else. All green foods taste more or less the same, all white foods seem similar, and so on.

- + In my dreams each night, I see the same woman, but I have no idea if she's real.
- + Once every few days, I see the previous minute of my life transposed over the present minute (so I see both at once).
- + No matter where I go, there's always a frog, a moth, or a beetle nearby, usually noticeable by me.
- + I have such amazing dreams that I can't wait to go to sleep each night.
- + I am allergic to 3:57 p.m. I always sneeze at that time.
- + I can't talk to all animals, or even all rats, but I can talk to one particular rat. His name is Samuel.
- + Small metal objects cling to me as if my whole body were slightly magnetic.
- + I'm incapable of saying the word "vislae."
- + My hair grows at ten times the normal rate, forcing me to go to the barber (or take some similar step) every four to five days.
- + There's always a bit of sand in my pocket.
- + Alcohol has no effect on me, but magical potions and the like give me a bit of a buzz.
- + I can smell silver as though it were as potent as garlic.
- + The temperature of any room I am in is a bit lower than normal.
- + If I crack open an egg, it always has a double yolk.
- + Clothing I wear slowly turns purple over time, no matter what color it was to begin with.
- + Goats and butterflies are always terrified of me.
- + I am fluent in a language I learned in a dream, but I've never found anyone else who can speak it.
- + My reflection in mirrors is always slightly off in different ways—a button, a cowlick of hair, a mole, or something else slightly out of place.
- + If I wish it, I can give someone the exact location of my house simply by touching them.
- + I read printed books and other text twice as fast as normal, but read handwriting twice as slowly.

Not everything people (even vislae) say about vislae is true. It's all far stranger.

If you die and return to life, your quirk might change, or you might get a second quirk.

- + I'm always a little bit cold if the sun is not up.
- + When I kiss, I always give a tiny electric shock.
- + My tears are like quicksilver, but harmless.
- + If I'm outside, the wind near me blows a bit more strongly when I laugh.
- + Dogs love me, unless they are trained to be attack dogs.
- + My shadow flits and moves in small ways when it really shouldn't.
- + My pupils bear the symbol of the Indigo Sun.
- + Every once in a while, I accidentally have someone else's dreams.
- + My hair is silver. Not just in color, but literally very thin strands of metal.
- + Every few days, I hear snippets of dialogue spoken years ago by people likely now dead.
- + At midnight each night, I cease to exist for about four seconds.
- + When I touch wood, I get a brief vision of the tree that it came from.
- + Minor fires, such as candle flames, don't hurt me. In fact, they feel nice. Fires greater than that burn me normally.
- + I can selectively turn down the volume of any loud noise I hear (only for me), although I can't silence it.
- + If someone says the word "fungus," I burst into tears.
- + If I clean something, it appears cleaner and newer than anyone else could likely make it.
- + Every other day or so, I leave a single prominent footprint where I walk, as though it's been scorched onto the ground.
- + Cats seem agitated by the sound of my voice.
- + My hair is always wild, as if affected by an electric current, no matter what I do (short of shaving it all off).
- + I inherently know the language of a particular form of earthworm. Unfortunately, they rarely have anything to say.
- + Radios get staticky around me.
- + People swear that, from far away, I look like two people, not one.

CONNECTIONS

Connections show the relationships that a character has with groups, organizations, and classes of people in the world.

Connections are like skills. They have a level and are thus rated on a scale of 0 to 4. They are purchased like narrative skills, so the cost is 2 Acumen per level.

They are not as broadly applicable as skills, but in specific situations they are likely better than skills. They always add to your venture when taking on an appropriate challenge related to that group. This includes any sort of interaction, such as persuasion, deception, intimidation, or gaining favors. In certain cases, other actions—those depending on having information, insight, and friendly relationships with a group—may also benefit.

Further, for certain actions, the GM might require a prerequisite of a certain level of connection to even try it. For example, if you want to read an ancient text important to the Church of Midnight, you might need at least Connection 2 to ask for permission to view it. Not any random person off the street, no matter how persuasive, will succeed.

LIST OF CONNECTIONS

The following are potential groups that you might be connected with.

SATYRINE CLASSES

- + Criminals
- + High society
- + Nobility
- + Military
- + Entertainers
- + Merchant class
- + Tradespeople and crafters
- + Lower class
- + Homeless
- + The Intelligentsia

SPECIFIC SATYRINE GROUPS

- + Watchers
- + Vatican Order

THE PATH

Vatican Order, page 118

The Handasah,
page 111

Order of Honed Thought,
page 118

Spearhead of the
Unknowable, page 119

Emotion Mills
Consortium, page 118

Chalmara Sodality,
page 85

The Abnormous, page 117

Knights of the Name,
page 116

The Ov, page 116

Xan Weir, page 115

Troubadours of the
Ancient Path, page 114

The Third Hand,
page 113

Cahdedron, page 112

The Dreamery, page 45

Court of Nous, page 44

Ratgoblins, page 131

Angels, page 28

Lacuna, page 30

The Dead, page 112

- + The Handasah
- + Church of Midnight
- + Order of Honed Thought
- + Spearhead of the Unknowable
- + Emotion Mills Consortium
- + Chalmara Sodality
- + The Abnormous
- + Knights of the Name
- + Unseen Children
- + The Ov
- + Xan Weir
- + Troubadours of the Ancient Path
- + The Third Hand
- + Cahdedron
- + The Dreamery
- + Court of Nous
- + Order of the Vance
- + Order of Weavers
- + Order of Makers
- + Order of Goetics

CREATURES AND BEINGS

- + Vermin (including roachgoblins and ratgoblins)
- + Spiders (and truespiders)
- + Ants
- + Devils
- + Angels
- + Elderbrin
- + Lacuna
- + The Dead

THE SUNS

- + Residents of the Pale
- + The Dark
- + Residents of the Red
- + Residents of the Green
- + Residents of the Blue
- + Residents of Silver
- + Residents of Gold

VARIOUS

- + Specific religion
- + Specific organization
- + Residents of a specific half-world or other locale

NPC BONDS

Bonds seem like connections at first blush, but they work much differently. First and foremost, bonds indicate relationships with individuals, not groups. Second, they don't work like skills. Instead, each has a benefit and a drawback. They are less mechanical and more story-based. NPC bonds grant benefits that amount to information or favors, depending on the identity of the NPC. They also have drawbacks, which amount to the fact that the NPC probably wants something from the PC as a part of the relationship.

A character can have from zero to three NPC bonds when the game begins. Thereafter, they cost 1 Acumen each.

ASSOCIATE

While the PC and the NPC aren't friends, they know each other well and have likely worked or studied together. The associate is in the same circles as the PC—the same order, the same guild, the same group, or something similar.

Benefit: The associate can provide the PC with information, rumors, insights, or answers to questions about the past or present of the organization they both share. For example, a fellow Vancian can provide the latest gossip about the order or share a relevant story about the order's past when asked.

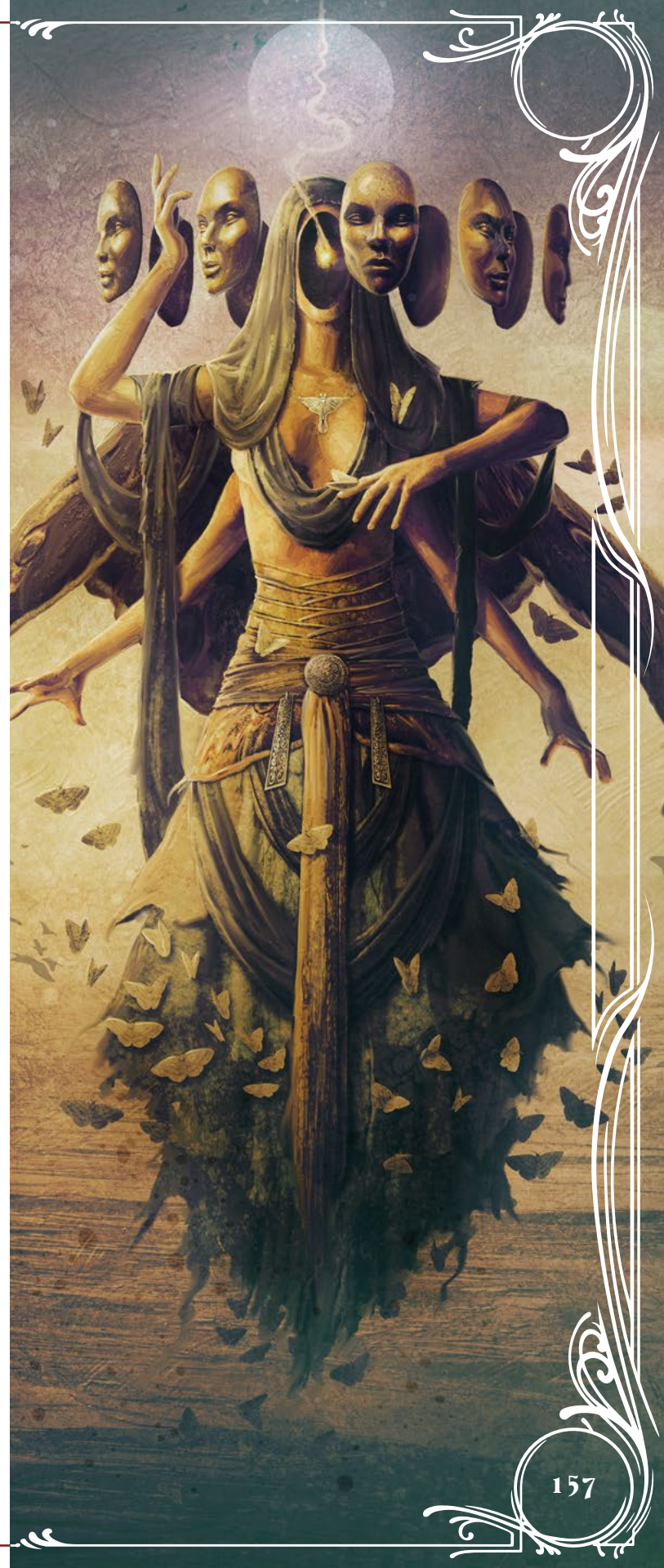
Drawback: Associates want as much as they give. In other words, the associate may press the PC for information or opinions. Also, at least once during the PC's career, the associate will call in favors from the PC and ask for a task or mission to be done, probably in the service of the organization they both belong to.

CONTACT

The PC knows an NPC in an important or vital position in the hierarchy of some other group, circle, or class. The PC and NPC are not friends—in fact, they likely hardly know each other—but for whatever reason, the contact is willing to provide information or services.

*For information on PC bonds, see *The First Session*, page 194.*

Associate complication:
The associate gets drummed out of the organization or society they shared with the PC. Or the associate gains a position above the PC, and begins relying more heavily on the PC to carry out tasks and duties.



Benefit: A contact can use their position to provide information or even a favor. A contact might provide the current password to get into a secure area or ensure that a PC's request is passed up the hierarchy to the right place. The contact won't utterly betray their organization. All of this requires direct communication with the contact, and, often, the contact wants to keep their relationship with the PC a secret. No one wants to be seen as an informant. This usually involves some level of subterfuge or subtlety. Failure to do so probably results in the loss of the contact.

Drawback: The contact always wants something in return. Favors or information need to be paid for with money, information, or return favors. At least once during the PC's career, the contact will call in favors from the PC and ask for a task or mission to be done, probably in the service of their organization.

Contact complication:

The contact turns out to be feeding the PC false information for some reason.

Some friendships are one-way due to circumstances. A PC might have a friend they aided greatly in the past, who now gives favors and asks nothing in return. In this case, the constant stream of favors is minor, like a small discount at a store.

Despair, page 203

Friend complication: *The friend gets in a real jam and needs a large loan or serious help immediately.*

FRIEND

It's always good to have friends.

Benefit: Aside from companionship, friends can share information, offer discounts, grant special treatment, or look the other way at the right time. The benefit depends on the position, occupation, and other specifics of the friend—everyone's different. A friend might even put themselves in danger to help, but would a real friend ask them to do so?

Drawback: Friends sometimes need your help at the most inopportune times. They are needier than associates or contacts. Failure to give as much as you get in a friendship results in the loss of the friendship.

Loss of a friend results in 1 **Despair**.

OLD FRIEND

The PC and the NPC have been out of contact for quite some time, but back in the day they were quite close. This might be a buddy from the military, a school chum, an old boyfriend, a past mentor, or an old friend of the family.



LACUNA

The old friend is likely to be in a position of influence or value far from the PC's current normal circles (otherwise, they wouldn't be an "old" friend). There is no ongoing relationship.

Benefit: Old friends are usually good for one really sizable favor and then that's it. This might be a major secret, a free gift, or direct aid in a dangerous situation. To gain this favor, the PC must reestablish contact with the old friend and spend some time reforging the bond.

Drawback: Contacting an old friend can stir up old issues, sometimes with a new twist. For example, the old friend shares a way to repay an old debt, reveals that an old truth isn't true at all, or threatens to spill one of the PC's old secrets.

Loss of an old friend, or sometimes simply reconnecting with an old friend, results in 1 Despair.

LOVER

Romance can be wonderful. It can be terrible. It can be both things at the same time. One of the deepest, most rewarding, and most demanding relationships is that of a lover. A lover can be a spouse, someone in a casual relationship, or anything in between. The romance can be new or long established. The lover might live with the PC.

Benefit: Aside from affection, love, and companionship, a lover can offer real secrets, large benefits, or big favors. The benefits are often deeper or more substantial than those gained from a friend. If a friend would give you a discount at their restaurant, for example, a lover might give you free meals.

Drawback: Lovers often expect more than friends. They expect time and attention. They expect favors and secrets. At least once during the PC's career, the lover will ask for a very big favor, probably in the form of a major task or mission to be completed. Lovers can feel neglected or jealous. They can be tempted to find a different lover. Or lovers can just grow apart.

Loss of a lover results in 2 Despair.

Old friend complication: *Contact with the old friend draws the attention of an old enemy, who then causes trouble for the PC.*

Relative complication: *A foe of the PC uses their family member against them. Putting the relative in danger (and then blackmailing the PC) is the obvious way, but using the family member to distract the PC or even just to get revenge isn't beyond a truly nefarious foe.*

Players may want to use the Romance character arc to start a bond with a lover. See page 176.

Lover complication: *The PC's lover is in mortal danger and if the PC doesn't save them, the lover will surely die.*

"I had a dream so potent that when I tried to write it down after I awoke, the paper burst into flames."

RELATIVE

Most everyone has relatives, usually many relatives, so this bond specifically refers to one who has a close relationship with the PC and is in a position to offer something valuable.

Benefit: Sometimes a relative offers a character a place to live, or just a place to hide. Most often, however, relatives offer benefits similar to those granted by friends or lovers.

Drawback: Although relatives rarely want payment or anything of the sort in return for their help, most expect time and attention. At least once during the PC's career, the relative will call on family ties to ask for a very big favor from the PC, probably in the form of a major task or mission to be completed.

Loss of a relative results in 2 Despair.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Although technically characters are not finished until you go through the process of the first session, there are a few things you will want to determine before you get to that stage.

NAME

Your character needs a name. Some PCs retain their Shadow name, while most abandon it for the more colorful name they had before. Still others adopt a whole new post-Shadow name.

Although we're all familiar with Shadow names, Actuality names are usually more involved and grandiose, but have no cultural or regional meanings. This is because in the Actuality, people are called what they want to be called. You are not named by your parents with a label befitting your heritage (or rather, you are, but that is your child name). When you achieve adulthood, you choose whatever name you wish, based on whatever sounds appealing to you.

A few people choose to retain some kind of family name, but even these were made up by someone in the past based on what sounded interesting, so again—no limitations.

APPEARANCE

Appearance is significant to most vislae. Eventually, you might want to go to one of Satyrine's magical changerries, which offer elaborate (and expensive) processes that can drastically alter your appearance, sometimes defying logic. Changerries can alter your face or your hair, but they can also replace your head and neck with a shining starburst. They can give you multiple arms or spiderlike legs. There are no limits in the changerries for those with enough to spend.

Until then, however, your character can appear as you wish, but you start as a relatively normal-looking human (although that, of course, still offers many billions of combinations, as we see every day when we walk down the street). Your clothing can be simple or flamboyant. The styles in Satyrine in regard to clothing, jewelry, hair, and body art go way, way past anything you'll see in Shadow.

Be imaginative.

THE PATH

Indigo, page 46

Other Peoples, page 12

LANGUAGES

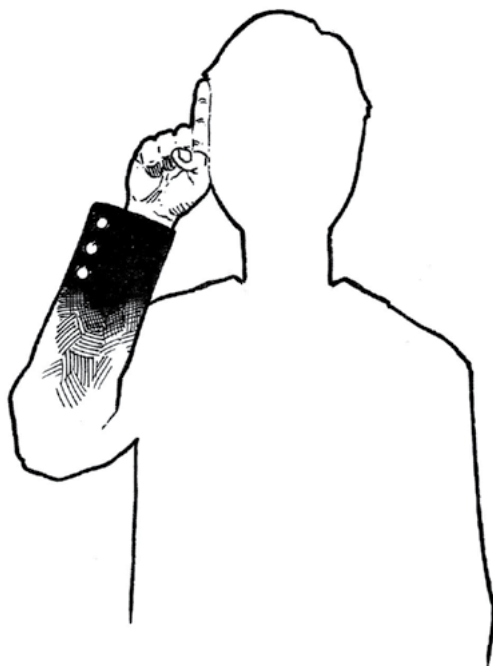
Each sun has its own inherent language. All characters begin knowing how to speak the language of **Indigo**. The vast majority of the time, this is what PCs will be speaking. Further, elderbrin and some **other peoples** have their own language, so using such options for variant PCs grants a fluency in that language. Last, all vislae speak a secret language, sometimes known as the **Invisible Tongue**. It's most useful in communicating mystical concepts, and it makes heavy use of specific gestures as well as spoken words.

Languages from Shadow are fleeting and forgotten quickly (unless chosen as a Shadow skill). Only if you are pulled back into Shadow do they come back to you.

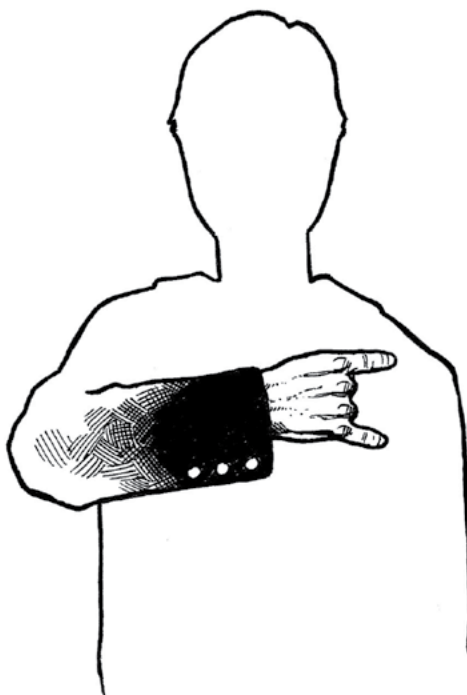
SKILLS

You have your skills from your heart, and perhaps your order or foundation as well. You'll be able to get more as you advance by spending Acumen. All you need to know right now is that each level adds +1 to the related action.

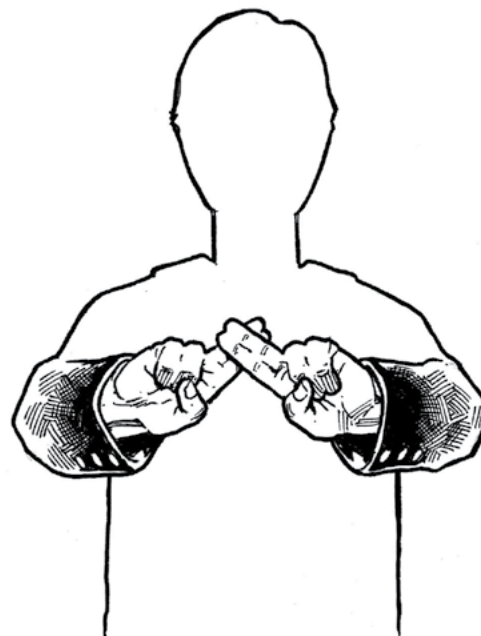
Respect



Secret



Danger



GAMEMASTERING FOUNDATIONS

When players begin to design their houses, some will want to add really fantastical aspects. And that's a good thing. You want to encourage player creativity. Sometimes, you'll have to measure a player desire at the beginning of the game versus a house augment that should come from learning a secret later. When in doubt, if what the player wants is entirely flavorful and they don't get a direct benefit from it (even a story benefit), you should probably allow it. For example, if a player wants to have windows that show random scenes of their neighborhood, you might think that's too much like the augment Window to Elsewhere. However, that augment gives the player a lot more control and latitude than a window that randomly shows scenes of the local area, so you might allow it, assuming it fits the rest of the story of the house.

Characters' foundations are some of the best narrative tools a GM will have to work with. Character houses, connections, NPC bonds, and more very likely provide enough fodder for the entire narrative if desired.

Some players will focus heavily on their house—how it's decorated, how it's appointed, and so on. A break-in, an infestation, or a haunting will be an interesting turn of events for any character, but for one focused on their house, it will be even more dramatic.

More than other genres and other games, *Invisible Sun* is a game that should provide interested players with as much room as they want to talk about the mundanities of life—because in the surreal world of the Actuality, the mundane is anything but. If the entrance to a PC's house is hidden within a particular book in a bookshop, and that bookshop is run by the PC's father, it's worth spending table time (or Development Mode time) not only on the character's relationship with their father but also on how their father feels about other vislae traipsing through the shop to visit the PC. What if they stop and browse the books or thumb through the gossip magazines first? If they get the "Hey, this isn't a library" speech every time, that's a fun recurring character moment for everyone.

Likewise, if a character doesn't have a house, talking through where they spend their time between the main action of each session is an interesting digression. What does a Maker's workshop look like? Do they keep it neat and tidy, or is it utter chaos? In the first session, the group will determine what a PC's neighbors are like, but what are the ongoing interactions like? Do they change, evolve, or escalate? And what are those strange lights coming from the neighbor's house one night?

Connections are useful tools for the PCs, but they work both ways. Someone highly connected to the Vancian Order, for example, is far more likely to get caught up in order politics or drama. In other words, a PC can call on their connections, but their connections can call on them as well. If there's been a murder in the order's compound, someone with a strong connection to the group might be called in to help investigate.

The same is true of NPC bonds, of course, but that's even more overt, built right into the mechanics.

Don't forget about deliveries that come to vislae houses. When a character advances to a higher degree, they're likely to get cards and even gifts from family and friends. When an NPC contact or friend needs to communicate with a vislae (perhaps to get help, to offer assistance, or for something else entirely), they do so at the vislae's house. Even if the narrative takes the PCs throughout the Path of Suns, their houses remain centerpieces of their ongoing stories.



CHARACTER ARCS (VER)

Character arcs and story arcs are central to *Invisible Sun* because they are how the game invests itself in stories and character depth and development. They are the main ways that the game remains character focused. Rather than following a quest given to you by an NPC, with character arcs, you decide what you do, and why.

Choosing your first character arc is the sixth step of character creation. Even after you finish the arc, you'll undoubtedly have (at least one) more, so it remains an important part of your defining essence, represented by all six fingers of the Testament of Suns.

You choose an arc for your character, and as the character progresses through the story points of the arc, they earn Acumen (and possibly Joy or Despair) to reflect that progress. Because character arcs are frameworks in which to build an individual character's stories, they are very general. It's up to the players and the GM to make the details fit.

As you move through the various steps in the arc, from the opening to the climax and the resolution, you earn Acumen rewards. At the end of a session, as each player goes through their **character summary**, they describe how actions that happened in the session equate to the completion of a step (or possibly more than one step) in their character arc. If everyone agrees, the character gets their **Acumen** reward, as detailed in that arc.

Within the arc, most of the time a step is probably optional, depending on the situation—although it's hard to envision most arcs without some kind of opening, climax, or resolution. Steps other than the opening, the climax, and the resolution can be done in any order.



Acumen, page 22

Character arcs should always take at least weeks in game time, and no more than two steps in an arc should be accomplished in a game session or side scene (and most of the time, it should be one step, if any). If neither of these two things is true, then it's not really a character arc. You can't, for example, use the Creation arc to guide you through something you can make in an hour or two.

Bonded characters can share character arcs. In other words, two close friends can set out to undo the same wrong, train the same creature, or solve the same mystery.

STORY ARCS

Story arcs are like character arcs, but they almost always involve multiple characters. These are the stories that drive the central narrative that the group will play. A character arc becomes a story arc when multiple PCs join in on things. If they do, they can all reap the rewards of progressing the arc.

Sometimes, story arcs aren't just character arcs with multiple characters. They are larger than character arcs. It wouldn't be wrong to think of them as "major arcs" while character arcs are "minor." A story arc might encompass multiple character arcs within it. If, for example, a story arc involves defeating a cabal of vislae kidnapping and sacrificing people to sell their souls to demons, this story arc might involve a **Solve a Mystery** arc (why did our friend disappear?), a **Rescue** arc (to get them back from the cabal's clutches) and then a **Revenge** arc (after the friend is killed by the cabal).

Either kind of story arc can be initiated by the GM as part of the larger story going on in the narrative. This can be a combination of individual character arcs woven into a larger story, or a number of arcs undertaken by some or all of the characters.

BEGINNING A NEW ARC

At character creation, you can choose one character arc for your character. Players have the option to not choose one at the beginning, but it's probably

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THE GATE

*Using Character Arcs to
Build a Story Arc,
page 57*

Instruction, page 171

Solve a Mystery, page 176

Rescue, page 175

Revenge, page 176

*GMs will find that the
notebook titled The
Guiding Hand provides
a great deal of help in
managing all the arcs
involved in a narrative.*

a good idea to do so. First and foremost, it is a character-defining factor. If you begin the narrative out to find the woman who killed your brother, that says a lot about you: you've got a brother, he was likely close to you, he had been in at least one dangerous situation, and you are probably motivated by anger and hate, at least somewhat.

Once play begins, players can still take on a new arc whenever they wish. However, most arcs have a beginning investment in Acumen that must be paid, reflecting the character's devotion to the goal. The character will earn this investment back (probably many times over) if the arc is completed.

Character arcs are always player-driven. A GM cannot force one on a character. That said, the events in the narrative often present story arc opportunities and inspire character arcs for characters. It's certainly in the GM's purview to suggest possible arcs related to the events going on. For example, if the GM presents an encounter in which an NPC wishes to learn from the PC, it might make sense to suggest taking the **Instruction** arc. Whether or not the PC takes on the student, the player doesn't have to adopt the Instruction arc unless they want to.

All arcs have the following parts, called story points:

Cost: This is a cost, usually of 2 Acumen, to start the arc if it is not the character's first arc, which is chosen at character creation.

Opening: This sets the stage for the rest of the arc. It involves some action, although that might just be the PC agreeing to do the task or undertake the mission. It usually has a reward of 1 Acumen.

Step(s): This is the action required to move toward the climax. In story terms, this is the movement through the bulk of the arc. It's the journey. The rising tension. Although there might be just one step, there might also be many, depending on the story told. Each usually has a reward of 1-2 Acumen.

Climax: This is the finale—the point at which the PC likely succeeds or fails at what they've set out to do. Reaching this point earns a reward of 3 Acumen, but there's more, depending on whether the PC is successful. Not every arc ends with victory.

If the character is successful, they earn 1 Joy. If they fail, they earn 1 Despair. If a character fails the climax, they very likely ignore the resolution.

Resolution: This is the wrap-up or denouement. It's a time for the character to reflect on what happened, tie up any loose ends, and figure out what happens next. When things are more or less resolved, the character earns 1 Acumen.

CHARACTER ARC MODELS

The following are general guidelines for common character arcs that you can choose for your character. If you and the GM want to make a new one, it should be fairly easy after looking through these models.

AID A FRIEND

Someone needs your help.

When a PC friend takes a character arc, you can select this arc to help them with whatever their arc is (if appropriate). The steps and climax depend entirely on their chosen arc. If the friend is an NPC, the steps and climax are lifted from another arc appropriate to whatever they seek to do.

If you have a **bond** with the friend you are helping, this may increase the Acumen earned with each story point by 1.

It's difficult, but possible, to aid a friend with an arc even if that friend is unwilling to accept (or is ignorant of) your help.

The majority of the cost, story points, and rewards for a character with this arc are the same as those described in the original character arc.

Cost: Agreeing to Help. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Answering the Call. 1 Acumen reward. Offering to help (or responding to a request for help).

Step(s) and Climax: Depends on the friend's arc. Acumen, Joy, and Despair rewards are the same for you as for the friend.

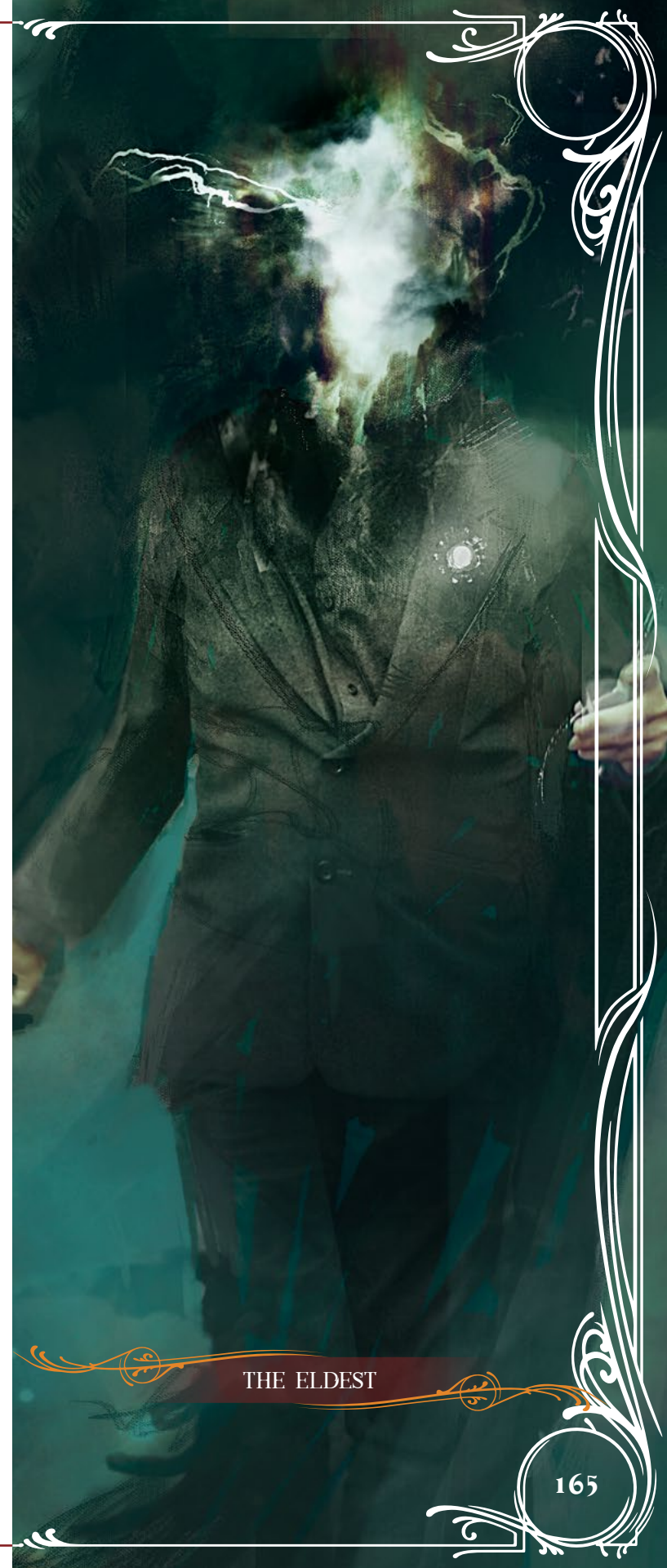
Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You speak with your friend and learn if they are satisfied. Together, you share what you've learned (if anything) and where you will go from here.

Every carpenter owns four hammers: a silver one for starting a new project, a red one for destroying or changing a project, a gold one for starting over, and an iron hammer for all the work in between.

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You should not have two or more of the same arc at the same time. For example, you should not have two different arcs to aid two different friends.



THE ELDEST

ASSIST AN ORGANIZATION

You set out to accomplish something that will further an organization. You're probably allied with them or they are rewarding you for your help in some fashion.

Cost: Saying Yes. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Responding to the Call. 1 Acumen reward. You work out all the details of what's expected of you, and what rewards (if any) you might get. You also get the specifics of what's required to join and advance.

Step: Sizing up the Task. 2 Acumen reward. This requires some action. A reconnaissance mission. An investigation.

Step(s): Undertaking the Task. 2 Acumen reward. Because this arc can vary so widely based on the task involved, there might be multiple steps like this one.

Climax: Completing the Task. 3 Acumen reward. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. Collecting your reward (if any) and conferring with the people in the organization that you spoke to. Perhaps getting access to higher-ranking people in the organization. You can choose to have your **connection** to the organization increase by 1 level rather than take the Acumen reward.

AVENGE

Someone close to you or important to you in some way has been wronged. The most overt "avenge" arc would be to avenge someone's death. Avenging is different than revenge, as revenge is personal—you are the wronged party. But in the Avenge character arc, you are avenging a wrong done to someone else.

Cost: Vow. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Declaration. 1 Acumen reward. You publicly declare that you are going to avenge the victim(s). This is optional.

Step(s): Tracking the Guilty. 1 Acumen reward. You track down the guilty party. This might not be physically finding them if you already know where

GMs might wish to limit players to a maximum of three arcs at a time just to keep things from getting too complicated.

Silence is the canvas.

Connections, page 156

they are. Instead, it might be discovering a way to get at them if they are distant, difficult to reach, or well protected. This step might be repeated multiple times, if applicable.

Step: Finding the Guilty. 2 Acumen reward. You finally find the guilty party, or find a path or make a plan to reach them. Now all that's left is to confront them.

Climax: Confrontation. 3 Acumen reward. You confront the guilty party. This might be a public accusation and demonstration of guilt, a trial, or an attack to kill, wound, or apprehend them—whatever you choose to be appropriate. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You resolve the outcome and the ramifications of the confrontation and decide what to do next.

BIRTH

You are becoming a parent.

The Birth character arc assumes you already have a partner or a surrogate. If you want your character to find a romantic partner or spouse, you can use the Romance arc.

Cost: Decision. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Impregnation. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Finding a Caretaker. 1 Acumen reward. This might be a physician, midwife, doula, or similar person. This is optional.

Step: Complication. 2 Acumen reward. A complication arises that threatens the pregnancy, the mother, or both.

Step: Preparation. 1 Acumen reward. You prepare a place for the delivery as well as a safe place for the infant to live once born.

Climax: Delivery. 3 Acumen reward. The baby is born. If the child survives, you also gain 1 Joy. If not, you gain 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You get the baby to the place you have prepared and settle in, deciding what to do next.

BUILD

You are going to build a physical structure—a house, a fortress, a workshop, a defensive wall, and so on. This arc would also cover renovating an existing structure or substantially adding to one. Of course, this doesn't have to be physical construction. You might build it with spells or other magic, or this might be an arc to create a magical structure in a distant, mystical half-world.

Cost: The Idea. You pay a cost of 1 Acumen.

Opening: Make a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. This almost certainly involves literally drawing up blueprints or plans.

Step(s): Find a Site. 1 Acumen reward. This might be extremely straightforward—a simple examination of the site—or it might be an entire exploratory adventure. (If the latter, it might involve multiple such steps.)

Step(s): Gather Materials. 1 Acumen reward. Depending on what you are building and what it is made out of, this could involve multiple steps. There probably are substantial costs involved as well.

Step(s): Construction. 1 Acumen reward. Depending on what you are building, this could involve multiple steps. It might also take a considerable amount of time and work.

Climax: Completion. 3 Acumen reward. The structure is finished. A successful construction results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You put the structure to its desired use and see if it holds up.

CLEANSE

Someone or something has been contaminated, probably by foul magic, and you want to rid them of such influences. This might be a curse, a possession, an infestation, or something else.

Cost: Becoming Aware of the Need. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Analyzing the Threat. 1 Acumen reward. You determine the nature of the contamination.

Players and GMs can work together to recast any character arc to fit whatever is appropriate for a specific character.

Step: Find the Solution. 2 Acumen reward. Almost every contamination has its own particular solution, and this likely involves research and consultation.

Step: Getting Ready. 1 Acumen reward. The solution probably involves materials, spells, or other things that you must gather and prepare.

Climax: The Cleansing. 3 Acumen reward. You confront the contamination. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on the events that have transpired and what effects they might have on the future. How can you keep this from happening again?

CREATION

You want to make something. This might be a magic item, a painting, a novel, or a useful tool. This arc isn't for Makers, who have their own rules for creating items. It assumes something even more involved.

Cost: The Idea. You pay a cost of 1 Acumen.

Opening: Make a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. You figure out what you need, what you're going to do, and how you're going to do it.

Step(s): Gather Materials. 1 Acumen reward. Depending on what you are creating and what it is made out of, this could involve multiple steps. There probably are substantial costs involved as well.

Step(s): Progress. 2 Acumen reward. Depending on what you are creating, this could involve multiple steps. It might also take a considerable amount of time and work.

Climax: Completion. 3 Acumen reward. It's finished! Is it what you wanted? Does it work? Success results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You think about what you have learned from the process and use or enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Characters should not have multiple versions of the same arc at the same time. For example, you shouldn't defend two places or be pledged to defeat two foes at once, at least not as two different arcs.

DEFEAT A FOE

Someone stands in your way or is threatening you. You must overcome the challenge they represent. Defeat doesn't always mean kill or even fight. Defeating a foe could mean beating them in a chess match or in competition for a desired mentor.

Cost: Recognizing the Foe. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Sizing up the Competition. 1 Acumen reward. This requires some action. A reconnaissance mission. An investigation.

Step: Investigation. 2 Acumen reward. This requires some action. A reconnaissance mission. An investigation.

Step(s): Diving In. 2 Acumen reward. You travel toward your opponent, overcome their lackeys, or take steps to reach them so you can confront them. This step can take many forms, and there might be more than one such step. This step is always active.

Climax: Confrontation. 3 Acumen reward. The contest, challenge, fight, or confrontation occurs. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on what you've learned and what the consequences of your actions might be.

DEFENSE

A person, place, or thing is threatened, and you want to protect it.

Cost: Establish the Threat. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Analyze the Situation. 1 Acumen reward. What are you defending, and what threats are involved?

Step: Account for Your Resources. 1 Acumen reward. How are you going to defend?

Step(s): Fend Off Danger. 2 Acumen reward. The forces threatening what you are protecting probably make an initial threat that you'll have to defeat. It's not the main threat, though. There might be multiple such initial threats.

Climax: Protect. 3 Acumen reward. The true threat reveals itself and you confront it. A successful

resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. A time for reflection on everything that occurred, and an assessment of the person, place, or thing's safety going forward.

DEVELOP A BOND

You want to get closer to another character. This might be to make a friend, find a mentor, or establish a contact in a position of power. It might be to turn a friend into a much closer friend. The character might be an NPC or a PC. In the case of an NPC, the end result might be an **NPC bond**, and in the case of a PC it's a **PC bond**.

Cost: Putting Yourself Out There. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Getting to Know You. 1 Acumen reward. You learn what you can about the other character.

Step: Initial Attempt. 1 Acumen reward. You attempt to make contact. This might involve sending messages or gifts through a courier, using an intermediary, or just going up and saying hello, depending on the situation.

Step(s): Building a Relationship. 2 Acumen reward. There might be many such steps as you develop the relationship.

Climax: Bond. 3 Acumen reward. You succeed or fail at forging the bond. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You enjoy the fruits of your new relationship.

ENTERPRISE

You want to create and run a business or start an organization. Maybe you're a Maker who wants to sell your creations. Maybe you like baking and you want to start a catering service. Or maybe you want to start a secret society or found a new school of magic. You'll almost certainly have to make new connections, find (and somehow pay for) a location, and deal with all manner of administrative duties.

Cost: The Founding of an Idea. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

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Opening: Drawing up a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. What's your goal, and how are you going to achieve it?

Step: Account for Your Resources. 1 Acumen reward. How much financing does the enterprise need compared to what you've got? If you need more, how will you get it? How many people other than yourself are needed to begin, and how many will you need to sustain things once they are up and running?

Step: Finding a Location. 1 Acumen reward. You probably need a place to run your enterprise—a store, a workshop, a base of operations, and so on. You find a location and look into what it will take to buy or rent it.

Step(s): Building the Enterprise. 1 Acumen reward. You procure the needed equipment or personnel. You make the connections and deals to get things started. You obtain important permits or other legal documents. You test new products. You actually start the business. Each of these developments (and likely others) can be counted as one step, so there will be many steps.

Climax: Profit and Loss. 3 Acumen reward. You determine whether your enterprise will take off and carry on into the future, or fall apart before it gets a chance to blossom. This occurs in a single dramatic moment—your first major client, your organization's first big meeting or mission, or whatever else is appropriate. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. A time for reflection on everything that occurred, and how you're going to move forward.

ESTABLISHMENT

You want to prove yourself as someone of importance. This can take many forms—socially, within your order, financially, or even romantically.

Cost: The Need for Proof. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Assessment. 1 Acumen reward. You assess yourself as well as who you need to prove yourself to.

Step(s): Appearances Matter. 1 Acumen reward. You improve your look. Enhance your wardrobe. Spruce up your house. Whatever it takes to get attention from the right people. There might be many such steps.

Step(s): Self-Aggrandizement. 1 Acumen reward. You need to get the word out to get people talking about you. There might be many such steps.

Climax: Grabbing Attention. 3 Acumen reward. You do something big, like host a party for influential people or produce a play that you wrote. You make a big splash (1 Joy) or a big crash (1 Despair).

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on what you did and where you go from here.

EXPLORE

Something out there is unknown and you want to explore its secrets. This is most likely an area of wilderness, a region of one of the less-explored suns, a newly discovered half-world, or even the Dark itself.

Cost: The Undertaking. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Make a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. Not only do you draw up a plan for your exploration, but if appropriate, you also make a formal declaration to relevant parties of what you're going to do.

Step(s): Gather Resources. 1 Acumen reward. You get the supplies, vehicles, and help you need. Depending on where you are going and what is required, this could involve multiple steps. There probably are substantial costs involved as well.

Step(s): Travel. 1 Acumen reward. You go where you wish to explore. There might be many such steps, depending on how long it takes to get there.

Step(s): Exploration. 1 Acumen reward. This is the meat of the arc, but it's probably a series of small moves and minor victories. There might be many such steps.

Climax: Conquest. 2 Acumen reward. You make the big discovery or truly master the area. You might not have explored every inch of the place, but if you are successful, you can claim to be done. A

The Eater of Dreams dwells in the Depths of Sleep, feeding upon the thoughts and memories you have loosed while you slumber.

successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You return home and possibly share your findings.

FALL FROM GRACE

This is an odd character arc in that it's (presumably) not something that a character would want. It is something that a player selects on a meta level for the character because it makes for an interesting story. It also sets up the potential for future arcs, such as Redemption. It's important that this involve actions you take. For example, you fall into substance abuse. You treat people badly. You make mistakes that endanger others. In other words, the fall isn't orchestrated by someone else—it's all your own doing.

Cost: The Initial Misstep. You pay a cost of 1 Acumen.

Opening: The Descent. 1 Acumen reward. Things go bad.

Step(s): Further Descent. 1 Acumen reward. Things get worse. Depending on the situation, this might involve many steps.

Step: Lashing Out. 1 Acumen reward. You treat others poorly as you descend.

Climax: Rock Bottom. 3 Acumen reward. There is no Joy reward possibility. Only 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You wallow in your own misery.

FINISH A GREAT WORK

Something that was begun in the past must now be completed. This might involve destroying an artifact of the Dark, finishing the construction of a monument, or uncovering a lost temple forgotten to the ages.

Cost: Taking on the Responsibility. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Assessing the Past. 1 Acumen reward. You look at what has come before and where it still needs to go. This almost certainly involves some real research.

Step: Conceive a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. You make a plan on how to move forward.

Step(s): Progress. 1 Acumen reward. You make significant progress or overcome a barrier to completion. This may involve multiple such steps.

Climax: Completion. 2 Acumen reward. This involves the big finish to the past work. A successful finale results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on what you did and where you go from here.

GROWTH

Willingly or unwillingly, you are going to change. This is another “meta” arc. It’s less about a goal and more about character development. While it’s possible that the growth involved is intentional, in most people’s lives and stories, it is emergent. A character might become less selfish, braver, a better leader, or experience some other form of growth.

Cost: No One’s Perfect. You pay a cost of 1 Acumen.

Opening: The Beginning. 1 Acumen reward. Change usually begins slowly, in a small, almost imperceptible way.

Step(s): Change. 1 Acumen reward. Growth involves many small steps.

Step: Overcoming an Obstacle. 2 Acumen reward. The temptation to resort to your old ways is always present.

Climax: Self-Evident Change. 3 Acumen reward. This is a dramatic about-face. This is the moment where you do something the “old you” would never have done, and it has a profound effect on you and those around you. A successful resolution of this moment results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair. Either way, growth is possible.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You recognize the change in yourself and move forward.

INSTRUCTION

You teach a pupil. You have knowledge on a topic and are willing to share. This can be a skill, an area of lore, a spell or spells, or the general use of magic. This is usually a fairly long-term arc. Sometimes teaching a pupil is a side matter, and sometimes the pupil takes on more of an apprentice role and

The Dead fear the living.

In the very rare case that a character who belongs to one order (or no order) wishes to join a different order, the Join an Organization arc would be a good place to start.

spends a great deal of time with you, traveling with you and perhaps even living in your house (or you living in theirs).

Cost: Taking on a Pupil. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Getting to Know Them. 1 Acumen reward. You assess your pupil’s strengths and weaknesses and try to get an idea of what they need to learn and how you can teach it to them.

Step(s): The Lessons. 1 Acumen reward. Teaching is often a slow, gradual process.

Step: Breakdown. 2 Acumen reward. Many times, a student needs to have a moment of crisis to really learn something. Maybe they get dejected, or maybe they rebel against your teaching techniques.

Climax: Graduation. 3 Acumen reward. This is when you recognize that the pupil has learned what they need. It usually comes at a dramatic moment. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You and the pupil say your goodbyes, and you look toward the future.

JOIN AN ORGANIZATION

You want to join an organization. This likely is not an order, since vislae start the game already belonging to an order if they wish it. Vislae often join other organizations as well, however, and this arc is a great way to portray that.

Cost: The Decision to Join. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Getting the Details. 1 Acumen reward. You learn all you can about the organization and how one becomes a member.

Step(s): Making a Contact. 1 Acumen reward. Friends on the inside are always important.

Step(s): Performing a Deed. 2 Acumen reward. The organization might want to test your worth, or this might be a ceremony you must take part in. It might include paying some sort of dues or fee. Or all of these things.

Climax: Proving Your Worth. 2 Acumen reward. This is the point at which you attempt to show the organization that they would be better off with you

as a member. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You consider your efforts and assess what your membership gets you.

JUSTICE

You try to right a wrong or bring a wrongdoer to justice.

Cost: Vow. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Declaration. 1 Acumen reward. You publicly declare that you are going to bring justice in this situation. This is optional.

Step(s): Tracking the Guilty. 1 Acumen reward. You track down the guilty party, assuming there is one. This might not be physically finding them if you already know where they are. Instead, it might be discovering a way to get at them if they are distant, difficult to reach, or well protected. This step might be repeated multiple times, if applicable.

Step: Helping the Victim. 2 Acumen reward. Righting a wrong does not always involve confronting a wrongdoer. Part of it might be about helping those who were wronged.

Climax: Confrontation. 3 Acumen reward. You confront the guilty party. This might be a public accusation and demonstration of guilt, a trial, or an attack to kill, wound, or apprehend them—whatever you choose to be appropriate. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You resolve the outcome and ramifications of the confrontation and decide what to do next.

LEARN

You want to learn something. This isn't the same as the *Uncover a Secret* arc, in which you're looking for a bit of information. This is a skill or whole area of knowledge you want to gain proficiency with. This is learning a new language, how to play an instrument, or how to be a good cook. Since mechanics for learning most skills already exist, this arc might be more narrative in nature. Thus, it's not about gaining a level in climbing, but learning to be an experienced mountaineer.

*Magic is surreality, and
surreality is magic.*

Uncover a Secret, page 178

Cost: Discovering the Deficiency. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Focusing on the Problem. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Finding a Teacher or a Way to Teach Yourself. 2 Acumen reward. Now you can truly begin.

Step(s): Learn. 1 Acumen reward. Depending on what you're learning, this could involve one step or quite a few.

Climax: The Test. 3 Acumen reward. You put your new knowledge to the test in a real situation. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You relax a bit and decide what to do next.

MASTER A SKILL

You're skilled, but you want to become the best. This arc might logically follow the Learn arc. As with the Learn arc, this can involve any kind of training at all, not just a skill.

Cost: Realizing There's More. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Finding the Path. 1 Acumen reward. You've learned the basics. Now it's time for the advanced material.

Step: Discovering a Master. 2 Acumen reward. You find a master to help you become a master.

Step(s): Learn. 1 Acumen reward. Depending on what you're mastering, this could involve one step or quite a few.

Step: The Last Step. 1 Acumen reward. Eventually, you realize that even a master cannot teach you the last step. You must learn it on your own.

Climax: The Test. 3 Acumen reward. You put your mastery to the test in a real situation—and considering your goal, it's probably a very important situation. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You relax a bit and decide what to do next.



MYSTERIOUS BACKGROUND

You don't know who your parents were, but you want to find out. The mystery might be something other than your parentage, but that's a common theme in this kind of arc.

Cost: Tired of Not Knowing. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Beginning the Search. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Research. 1 Acumen reward. You look into your own family background, if possible.

Step(s): Investigation. 1 Acumen reward. You talk to people who might know. You follow clues.

Climax: Discovery. 3 Acumen reward. You discover the secret of your own background. You determine if what you learn is good (1 Joy) or bad (1 Despair).

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You contemplate how this new knowledge sits with you.

There should be plenty of room to record many character arcs in your character tome.

NEW DISCOVERY

You want to invent a new device, process, spell, or something similar. A cure for a heretofore unknown disease? An invocation with a result you've never heard of before? A method for getting into an impregnable vault? Any of these and more could be your discovery. While similar to the Creation arc and the Learn arc, the New Discovery arc involves blazing a new trail. No one can teach you what you want to know. You've got to do it on your own.

Cost: The Thrill of Discovery. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: The Idea. 1 Acumen reward. You draw up plans for the thing you want to invent or discover.

Step: Research. 1 Acumen reward. You learn what people have done before and recognize where they fell short.

Step(s): Trial and Error. 1 Acumen reward. You test your hypothesis. This often ends in many failures before you get a success.

THE UNDERSLING

Climax: Eureka! 3 Acumen reward. It's time to put the discovery to the true test. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on your discovery and probably compile your notes and write it all down, for posterity's sake if nothing else.

RAISE A CHILD

You raise a child to adulthood. It can be your biological child or one you adopt. It can even be a child taken under your wing, more a young protégé than a son or daughter. This is obviously a very long-term arc.

Cost: The Responsibility Is Yours. You pay a cost of 3 Acumen.

Opening: Sharing Your Home. 1 Acumen reward. The child now lives with you.

Step: Care and Feeding. 1 Acumen reward. You learn to meet the child's basic needs.

Step(s): Basic Instruction. 1 Acumen reward. You teach them to walk, talk, and read. You teach them to care for themselves.

GMs should keep track of each character's arcs in The Guiding Hand.

THE GATE

Wound, page 30

Anguish, page 32

Step(s): The Rewards Are Many. 1 Acumen reward. The child loves you. Relies on you. Trusts you. Eventually, helps you.

Step(s): Ethical Instruction. 1 Acumen reward. You instill your basic ethics in the child, hoping that they will mature into an adult you can be proud of.

Climax: Adulthood. 2 Acumen reward. At some point the child leaves the proverbial nest. You determine, at this point, your own success (1 Joy) or failure (1 Despair).

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on the memories you have made.

RECOVER FROM A WOUND (OR TRAUMA)

You need to heal. This isn't just for healing a **Wound** or **Anguish** (which can be done with a good night's sleep, most often). This involves recovering from a major debilitating injury, illness, or shock. Severe damage, the loss of a body part, and madness all fall into this category.

Cost: Hurt. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Rest. 1 Acumen reward. The first thing you need to do is rest.

Step: Self Care. 1 Acumen reward. You take care of your own needs.

Step: Getting Aid. 1 Acumen reward. Someone helps.

Step: Medicine. 1 Acumen reward. Some kind of drug, cure, poultice, potion, or remedy aids your recovery.

Step: Therapy. 1 Acumen reward. With the help of someone else, you exercise your injury or cope with your trauma.

Climax: The Moment of Truth. 2 Acumen reward. You try to move on and use what has been damaged (or get by without it). A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You get on with your life.

REDEMPTION

You've done something very wrong, but you want to atone and make it right again. This is like the *Justice* arc or the *Undo a Wrong* arc, except you are the wrongdoer. This could be a follow-up to the *Fall From Grace* arc.

Cost: Sorrow. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening: Regret. 1 Acumen reward. You are determined to rebuild, recover, and restore.

Step: Forgiveness. 1 Acumen reward. You apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Step: Identifying the Needs. 1 Acumen reward. You determine what needs to be done to atone for your transgression.

Climax: Making Good. 3 Acumen reward. You perform an act that you hope will redeem your past misdeed. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on what has happened but now look to the future.

Justice, page 172

Undo a Wrong, page 178

Fall From Grace, page 170

REPAY A DEBT

You owe someone something, and it's time to make good.

Cost: Debtor. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening: Debts Come Due. 1 Acumen reward. You determine to do what is needed to make good on the debt. It might involve repaying money, but more appropriately it's performing a deed or a series of deeds.

Step: Talking It Over. 1 Acumen reward. You discuss the matter with the person you owe, if possible. You ensure that what you're doing is what they want.

Climax: Repayment. 3 Acumen reward. Either you do something to earn the money or goods you owe, or you undertake a major task that will compensate the other person. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You relax knowing that your debt is repaid, and you look to the future.

RESCUE

Someone or something of great importance has been taken, and you want to get them back.

Cost: To the Rescue. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening: Heeding the Call. 1 Acumen reward. You determine what has happened, and who or what is missing.

Step: Tracking. 1 Acumen reward. You discover who has taken them, and where.

Step: Travel. 1 Acumen reward. You go to where they are being held and get information on the location and who is involved. Maybe make a plan.

Climax: Rescue Operation. 3 Acumen reward. You go in and get them. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You return them home.

RESTORATION

You're down but not out. You want to restore your good name. Recover what you've lost. Rebuild what has been destroyed. You've fallen down or have been knocked down, but either way you want to pick

yourself up. This is a possible follow-up to the Fall From Grace arc.

Cost: Brought Low. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening: Vow to Yourself. 1 Acumen reward. You are determined to rebuild, recover, and restore.

Step(s): Work. 1 Acumen reward. You rebuild, recover, and restore. If all your money was stolen, you make more money. If your house was destroyed, you rebuild it. If your reputation was tarnished, you perform deeds that restore your good name.

Climax: The Final Act. 3 Acumen reward. You undertake one last major task that will bring things back to where they were (or close to it). A lot is riding on this moment. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You enjoy a return to things the way they were before.

REVENGE

Someone did something that harmed you. Unlike the *Avenge* arc, this arc probably isn't about tracking down a murderer, but it might involve pursuing someone who stole from you, hurt you, or otherwise brought you grief. The key is that it's personal. Otherwise, use the *Justice* arc.

Cost: You've Been Wronged. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening: Vow. 1 Acumen reward. You swear revenge.

Step(s): Finding a clue. 1 Acumen reward. You find a clue to tracking down the culprit.

Climax: Confrontation. 3 Acumen reward. You confront the culprit. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You deal with the aftermath of the confrontation and move on. You think about whether you are satisfied by gaining your revenge.

ROMANCE

You want to strike up a relationship with a romantic partner. Perhaps you have a specific person in mind, or maybe you're just interested in a relationship in general.

NPC bond, page 157

PC bond, page 198

Avenge, page 166

Learn, page 172

Uncover a Secret, page 178

Justice, page 172

Cost: Interested. You pay 2 Acumen.

Opening(s): Caught Someone's Eye. 1 Acumen reward. You meet someone you are interested in. (Since this can be short-lived, it's possible to have this opening occur more than once.)

Step(s): Courtship. 1 Acumen reward. You begin seeing the person regularly. Although not every "date" is a step in the arc, significant moments are, and there may be a few of them.

Climax: Commitment. 3 Acumen reward. You may or may not be interested in a monogamous relationship. Regardless, you and your love have made some kind of commitment to each other. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You think about the future. Marriage? Children? These are only some of the possibilities. You can take the appropriate *NPC bond* or *PC bond* in lieu of the Acumen award if you wish.

SOLVE A MYSTERY

Different from the *Learn* arc and the *Uncover a Secret* arc, this arc is about solving a crime or a similar action committed in the fairly recent past. It's not about practice or study, but about questions and answers. In theory, the mystery doesn't have to be a crime. It might be "Why is this strange caustic substance leaking into my basement?"

Cost: On the Case. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Pledging to Solve the Mystery. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Research. 1 Acumen reward. You get some background.

Step(s): Investigation. 1 Acumen reward. You ask questions. You look for clues. You cast divinations. This likely encompasses many such steps.

Climax: Discovery. 2 Acumen reward. You come upon what you believe to be the solution to the mystery. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 2 Acumen reward. In this step, which is far more active than most resolutions, you confront the people involved in the mystery with

what you've discovered, or you use the information in some way (such as taking it to the proper authorities).

THEFT

Someone else has something you want.

Cost: Desire. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Setting Your Sights. 1 Acumen reward. You make a plan.

Step: Casing the Joint. 1 Acumen reward. You scout out the location of the thing (or learn its location).

Step(s): Getting to the Object. 1 Acumen reward. Sometimes, many steps are involved before you reach the object you wish to take. For example, if, in order to steal something from a vault, you need to approach one of the guards while they are off duty and bribe them to look the other way when you break in, that is covered in this step.

Climax: The Attempt. 3 Acumen reward. You make your heist. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You decide what to do with the thing you've stolen and contemplate the repercussions you might face for stealing it.

TRAIN A CREATURE

You want to domesticate and train a creature. While the beast doesn't need to be wild, it must not already be domesticated and trained.

Cost: Becoming a Trainer. You pay a cost of 3 Acumen.

Opening: Getting Acquainted. 1 Acumen reward. You get to know the creature a bit, and it gets to know you.

Step: Research. 1 Acumen reward. You get information on the type of creature or advice from others who have trained one.

Step: Domestication. 1 Acumen reward. After some work, the creature is no longer a threat to you or anyone else, and it can live peacefully in your home or wherever you wish.

Step(s): Training. 1 Acumen reward. Each time you use this step, you teach the creature a new,

significant command that it will obey regularly and immediately.

Climax: Completion. 2 Acumen reward. Believing the creature's training to be complete, you put it in a situation where that is put to the test. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on the experience.



TRANSFORMATION

You want to be different in a specific way. Because the **Growth** arc covers internal change, this one focuses primarily on external change. The most obvious means of transformation at your disposal are likely the **changeries** in Satyrine, but others are certainly possible. It could even be death, which would turn you into a ghost. For the change to be an arc, it should be difficult and perhaps risky.

Cost: Wishing for Change. You pay a cost of 1 Acumen.

Opening: Deciding on the Transformation. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Research. 1 Acumen reward. You look into how the change can be made and what it entails.

Step(s): Investigation. 1 Acumen reward. This is an active step toward making the change. It might involve getting more information, materials or ingredients, or something else.

Climax: Change. 2 Acumen reward. You make the change, with some risk of failure or disaster. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You contemplate how this change affects you going forward.

UNCOVER A SECRET

There is knowledge out there that you want. This arc is a great way to get one of the secrets in the chapter **Character and House Secrets** that the GM has said aren't readily available. Likewise, it could be an attempt to find and learn a specific rare spell or ritual. This could also be a hunt for a lost magic word or key that will open a sealed door, the name of a devil, the secret name of an important person, or just how the **arabast** fashioned their windows in ancient times.

Cost: Seeker. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Naming the Secret. 1 Acumen reward. You give your goal a name. "I am seeking the lost martial art of the Khendrix, who could slice steel with their bare hands."

Step(s): Research. 1 Acumen reward. You scour libraries and old tomes for clues and information.

Growth, page 171

THE WAY

Changeries, page 116

Justice, page 172

THE WAY

Character and House Secrets, page 84

THE PATH

Arabast, page 48

Step(s): Investigation. 1 Acumen reward. You talk to people to gain clues and information.

Step(s): Tracking. 1 Acumen reward. You track down the source of the secret information and travel to it.

Climax: Revelation. 2 Acumen reward. You find and attempt to use the secret, whatever that entails. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You contemplate how this secret affects you and the world.

UNDO A WRONG

Someone did something horrible, and its ramifications are still felt, even if it happened long ago. You seek to undo the damage, or at least stop it from continuing.

This is different from the **Justice** arc because this isn't about justice (or even revenge)—it's about literally undoing something bad that happened in the past, such as a great library being burned to the ground, a sovereign people being driven from their land, and so on.

Cost: Outrage. You pay a cost of 2 Acumen.

Opening: Vowing to Put Right What Once Went Wrong. 1 Acumen reward.

Step: Make a Plan. 1 Acumen reward. You learn all you can about the situation and then make a plan to put things right.

Step(s): Progress. 2 Acumen reward. This is an active step toward undoing the wrong. It might involve finding something, defeating someone, destroying something, building something, or almost anything else, depending on the circumstances.

Climax: Change. 3 Acumen reward. You face the challenge of the former wrong, and either overcome it or fail. A successful resolution results in 1 Joy. Failure results in 1 Despair.

Resolution: 1 Acumen reward. You reflect on what you've accomplished and think about the future.

GAMEMASTERING CHARACTER ARCS

Character arcs are the backbone of **Invisible Sun**. They encourage players to be proactive and create their own goals, with their own definitions of success and failure.

It's the spirit of character arcs that's important, not the specific rules. Because the arcs consist of broad sets of guidelines for handling a potentially limitless number of stories, you'll want to play fast and loose. Sometimes steps will be skipped. Sometimes they'll be repeated. Sometimes you'll go straight to the climax after the opening (this should be rare, however).

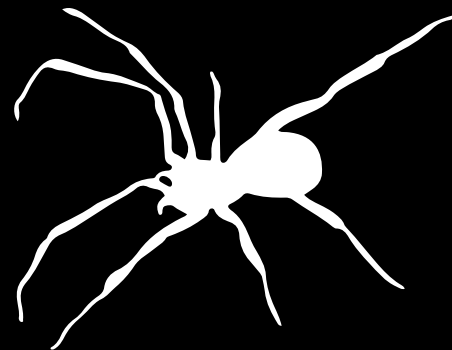
Other times, no character arc in this chapter will fit what a player wants to do. In that case, it behooves you to work with the player to make an arc that fits. The player's intention is what's important. Players should think of a goal for their character first and then look at the list of arcs, rather than browse the list and feel that those are the only options. When in doubt, find the arc in this chapter that most closely fits what the player wants and then massage it in a few places where needed.

One thing to keep in mind: if the arc doesn't involve at least a few steps and at least some time, it's not really a character arc. If a vislae gets picked on in a bar one evening by a jerk NPC and says, "My character arc is to punch that guy in the face," that's not really a character arc. That's just an action. Character arcs require depth, thought, and, most likely, change on the PC's part.

Think of them in terms of the arcs of characters in your favorite novels or movies. When a *vislae* takes on and eventually completes a character arc, that should feel like a novel or a movie's worth of story (or at least the story of one character in the novel or movie). There should be a real feeling of accomplishment and closure at the end of an arc, but at the same time—assuming the narrative is going to continue—a sense that there's more to come. One arc often leads right into the next.

Character arcs aren't meant to be entirely solo affairs. Vislae working as a group should help each other with their respective arcs from time to time. The Aid a Friend arc helps to encourage this. If one or two PCs use this arc to help another character, suddenly it's a group arc, and cohesion and cooperation will come naturally.

It's worth noting, however, that some players will want one of their character arcs to be a solitary venture. They won't want help. They might not even want the other PCs to know about it. That's okay. Development Mode side scenes are perfect for that kind of thing.

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MONEY AND GOODS

Just like in *Shadow*, money is extremely important in the Actuality. Considering, however, that in the Actuality money is based on ideas and thoughts, magical power, curses, and blood, and it can be used to buy living clothing, magic potions, and all manner of other surreal goods, the differences between money in the Actuality and money in *Shadow* are far greater than the similarities.

CURRENCIES

Many currencies are available in the Actuality, but most arise from the city of *Satyrine*. They have different uses and not all are compatible or exchangeable.

ORBS

The most widely accepted currency is made in *Satyrine*. These tiny orbs each represent a thought, a secret, or an idea. Most people just call them by their material, so 3 glass orbs are “3 glass,” 6 crystal

SHOPPING IN THE GAME

Because *Invisible Sun* is so much about personality and character, focusing not just on the PCs but their houses, neighborhoods, and so on, how characters spend their money is an important facet of the game. Thus, the price lists in this chapter are extensive.



THE GATE

Unwanted Conditions,
page 44

*Character starting money
is determined by the
savings indicated in their
foundation. See page 144.*



THE PATH

Ash Gardens, page 79

Satyrine, page 64

*The Deathless
Triumvirate, page 65*

*It's not important for GMs
to detail the thoughts and
ideas represented by each
orb the PCs come across.*

*Characters should keep
track of their money and
their possessions—whether
they carry those things or
keep them in their house—
in their character tome.*

orbs are “6 crystal,” and 2 gem orbs are “2 gems.” The exception is that sometimes people just say “orbs,” in which case they mean glass orbs.

Glass orbs: More often than not, just called an orb. If someone says the price of a sandwich is 21 orbs, they mean glass orbs. In *Shadow*, this might be worth about a dime in the United States in the early 21st century. Each glass orb represents a very common thought or idea, like the taste of cheddar cheese or that you should wear a jacket when it's chilly.

Glass orbs are produced in the *Ash Gardens* by child laborers who spend their long days conceiving basic ideas and thoughts. This is a slow process, so it is difficult to make much of a profit on the orbs, except through massive quantities. The *Deathless Triumvirate* attempts to regulate the production of orbs, nevertheless, to ensure that the currency maintains its value.

Glass orbs disincorporate in about fifty years, so they are not a good currency for hoarding.

Crystal orbs: A crystal orb is worth 100 glass orbs. In *Shadow*, the equivalent value of a crystal orb would be about 10 American dollars. Each represents a relatively common or mundane idea, like a recipe for lentil soup or directions to get up Ferrock Mountain.

Crystal orbs do not disincorporate, but they are as fragile as they sound.

Gem orbs: Gem orbs are rare. Most transactions involving such large amounts of value are handled by bank cheque. A gem orb is worth 100 crystal orbs. In *Shadow*, the equivalent value would be about 1,000 American dollars.

They are permanent and nigh-indestructible.

Trueorbs: Last but not least, there are trueorbs, which are the essence of the original concept of orbs from days of old. In other words, these orbs are solidified ideas, thoughts, and secrets. Trueorbs have the same value as gem orbs and look similar, but even a casual glance confirms that they are different. To most people, the distinction is all but meaningless. However, as with magecoins, a vislae or other skilled individual can use the currency for something entirely different than buying goods or services. Vislae can draw the idea or sensation out of a trueorb and put it in their own mind. This adds 1 to the character's **Hidden Knowledge** score. The concept is usually fleeting and ephemeral. It also utterly consumes the trueorb.

MAGECOINS

Orbs are not the only currency in use. Large gold coins covered in mystic symbols come in two varieties, called vim and lumins. These coins are of particular value to vislae (and a limited number of others). They are called magecoins most of the time, but mana coin is the more formal term.

Each of these coins contains a tiny modicum of power that vislae can draw into themselves. This power comes in the form of restoring a given pool. Vim can restore any of the four **Certes** pools. Lumins can restore any of the four **Qualia** pools.

There is no easy exchange rate between orbs and magecoins. In Shadow, it's relatively easy to put a cohesive value relationship on two disparate things—a smartphone and tickets to a play, for example. Although one has little to do with the other, you can break each down into the costs of producing them and the value to the end user. But once you add magic into the mix, it becomes far more difficult to establish meaningful equivalency. Equating a fine meal with a potion that grants life to the dead, for example, borders on the absurd.

That's why magical things—spells, objects of power, potions, and usually magical services—are paid for with magecoins or sometimes barter (typically using other magical things), but never with orbs or other nonmagical currencies.

Because even the lowliest orb is created through a specific magical process, spells and other effects that can create objects cannot create any currencies other than bits and bobs, and they're so low in value that it's not worth a vislae's time.

Hidden Knowledge, page 30

Vance, page 37

It doesn't matter if bloodsilver coins are carried by the character or kept in a locked vault miles away. Ownership of the coins is all that is required to potentially trigger the curse.

Vim is both singular and plural.

Certes, page 26

Qualia, page 27

Withstand, page 32

Resist, page 32

Thus, people are rarely willing to trade magecoins for orbs. This means there is no standard exchange rate. Someone wealthy with orbs might not be able to get their hands on many magecoins, because most of the people who have them (vislae, usually) are unwilling to give them up for anything other than magic. When it is possible for someone without magic to get a few magecoins, it's at a rate of 1 magecoin for 1 or 2 gem orbs. And even then, such an exchange is rarely available for more than 1 or 2 magecoins.

So how does one get magecoins, then? Vislae trade them to other adepts for magical goods and magic-related services. For example, if a 4th-degree **Vance** needs materials to perform an evocation, they might pay a lesser Vance in magecoins to obtain those materials (even if the lesser Vance uses orbs to buy the items).

Drawing power from a magecoin is an action. A drained magecoin is a piece of metal worth about an orb. Vislae cannot “recharge” drained magecoins. No one knows where new magecoins come from.

BLOODSILVER

Bloodsilver are silver coins that carry a curse. Each is worth about 1 crystal orb, but most people won't accept them. Using bloodsilver as a currency is an act of bravado. You'll find people interested in looking powerful or fearless hoarding the coins. It's said that sometimes assassins are paid only in bloodsilver. Someone too timid to take these coins, it's thought, has no place killing people for a living.

Possessing one bloodsilver coin is rarely a problem. More than that, though, and the GM can begin to ask for occasional **Withstand** or **Resist** actions to hold off the effects of the curse. (The GM probably should ask no more than once a week, but no less than once a month.) The level of the challenge is based on the number of coins possessed:

- 2–10: level 1
- 11–20: level 2
- 21–30: level 3
- 31–40: level 4
- And so on.

The exact nature of the curse varies but is probably similar to some of the **magical flux**. As with most curses, once a character is afflicted, it lasts until it is lifted. The curse on the coins can't be lifted, but the curse afflicting a character can.

DEMONTARS

These objects are almost certainly not what their name implies, and some have chosen to call them demondrops for just that reason. However, they might be demonic secretions of some kind. Or they might not. Each looks a little like a blood-red pearl, although few are perfectly round. They are found by explorers who have ventured into the **Red**. Some demons carry these objects, bringing them into other realms, but are they possessions or creations of the demons? They're not telling, and no one who cares enough about the answer is in a position to ask.

Demontears work like—and are valued like—magecoins that can restore any pool. Some people fear to use this currency, however, believing that doing so subjects them to some kind of demonic influence.

BITS AND BOBS

In all the realms, half-worlds, and mysterious lands in the universe, there are many types of coins or baubles that an explorer might find. Regardless of their local value—scarcity of so-called rare metals, for example, is a concept that does not exist in Indigo—these are all lumped together as “bits and bobs.” Five bits and bobs are worth an orb, making them—from Shadow's perspective—basically pennies.

CHEQUES

For large amounts, people use paper cheques of varying value, backed up by one of the banks in Satyrine. These frequently carry minor enchantments from the bank to assure the holder of their validity. Cheque values are always expressed in orbs. Most established businesses accept cheques.

THE WAY

Magical flux, page 13

THE PATH

Noösphere, page 14

Psychopomp, page 131

Red, page 56

*Starting ephemera,
page 200*

Testament of Suns, page 16

Apostate, page 60

*If a Testament of Suns or
vertula kada is destroyed,
the former owner can
create a new one, but the
process requires a full week
of utter concentration and
100 crystal orbs to buy the
materials.*

*As time passes, a vislae's
Testament of Suns or
vertula kada gains power
just by being in their
presence. See page 206.*

Foundation, page 144

NOÖSPHERE EXCHANGES

Because orbs represent a thought, a secret, or an idea, the equivalent value can be transferred through the **Noösphere** between two entities there. The value can also be transferred by someone with access to the Noösphere, such as through a **psychopomp** or someone with the right spells.

CHARACTERS AND STARTING GOODS

Starting characters' houses are very simply furnished and equipped. This includes kitchen tools and supplies, a few other miscellaneous tools (perhaps a hammer, a hand mirror, a flashlight, a few pens, and so on), grooming supplies, personal effects (a few framed photos or artwork), a few books, and other odds and ends. In addition, characters start with a few changes of nice clothing, a bit of simple jewelry (if they wish), a bag or satchel of some kind, a coat or cloak, their **ephemera**, and their **Testament of Suns**. (**Apostates**, of course, start with a **vertula kada** in place of a Testament.)

For a starting character, the Testament of Suns or **vertula kada** is invested with enough of their essence that if they do not have it with them, any challenge they face is 1 level higher until they get it back. Worse, if someone gets their hands on it and uses magic against the character it is tied to, the magic is always 2 levels higher than normal against them.

GOODS

Vislae have a wide variety of goods they can spend their money on. Starting characters can spend their “Initial Savings” from their **foundation** on anything they can afford.

The following lists are extensive, but by no means comprehensive.

KINDLED ITEMS

Goods marked with an asterisk (*) are referred to as “kindled,” which was originally a Maker term

for an item that has been made to be “more like itself than itself.” Kindled items typically do exactly what you think they will do, but they do it better. A kindled lockpick picks locks better than a lockpick. A kindled shirt is more appealing than a shirt. The vast majority of the time, this is because they are made from extraordinary materials.

A few kindled items go beyond this concept, such as the eyestalk hat—it grants even greater perception, which is beyond what you might expect a hat to do. In any event, two traits distinguish kindled items:

1. They add **bene** and **vex** to stat pools (and sometimes provide Armor) rather than conveying other, less conventional abilities.

Bene, page 25

Vex, page 29

KINDLED ITEMS AND MODIFYING STAT POOLS

Kindled items add bene or vex (and often both) to stat pools. The item must be actively used in the obvious way to get the benefit—a hat must be worn on the head, a sortir must be held in the hand, and so on. You gain the benefits (and drawbacks) immediately upon using the item in this fashion. And when you stop using it, the benefits (and drawbacks) immediately disappear. Taking off your blood boots removes 3 bene from your Accuracy pool. The only exception is if your stat pool is empty. You can't have negative pool values.

Conversely, vex don't go away so easily. If you take off your blood boots, the vex in your Interaction pool remains until it takes effect. However, a kindled item can never give you more vex than its normal maximum. So putting on the blood boots, taking them off, and putting them back on still results in you having 1 vex, whether you've spent that vex or not.

If you are no longer using the item, refreshing the pool will rid you of the vex.

Characters will want to keep track of which items they have with them when they go places and which they leave at home.

2. They are relatively low-powered and are produced in sufficient quantities that they can be purchased with more conventional currencies than the difficult-to-obtain magecoins, which are required to purchase ephemera and objects of power.

The term “kindle” implies a small awakening of a sort, and that's an accurate assessment. Kindled objects—while not enchanted in the strictest of senses, in that they have not had a magical ability conferred upon them—have an awakened spirit within them that encapsulates the ideal of that object. As such, there is a sort of intelligence there, or at least there are emotions and will. This is seen most dramatically in the jealous, selfish nature of such objects. Kindled items, given time, mysteriously devour lesser, similar items. The owner of two kindled jackets will open their closet one day and discover only one jacket. A perceptive owner might describe the remaining jacket as having an aura of greater satisfaction.

Attempting to use two similar kindled items—two kindled dresses, one atop the other, for example—results in no benefit, and a literal battle right there on the character's body, with only one item surviving.

Kindled items normally—but not always—seem to ignore non-kindled items.

The intelligence awoken in a kindled item is specialized and slight. Emotional rather than intellectual. You cannot communicate with kindled items unless using a spell or ability that grants the ability to speak to inanimate objects. You can, however, develop an empathic rapport with a kindled item you have owned for a while, gaining and perhaps conveying a sense of general well-being.

As previously stated, kindled items are common enough in most places (particularly Satyrine) that you don't need to purchase them with magecoins, despite their somewhat magical nature. This, ultimately, is the most practical distinction between a kindled item and an object of power.

Kindled items do not count toward the total number of ephemera or objects of power that a character can safely handle at once.

AETHYRIC DEVICES

Some items on the following lists, like radios and telephones, will seem familiar to readers in Shadow, but they are marked with two asterisks (**) to indicate that they are “aethyric.” Aethyr is a spiritual medium woven throughout the Actuality, and aethyric devices tap into this medium and use it.

Aethyric devices, even more than kindled items, straddle the line between objects of power and mundane items.

All items that would be called electric in Shadow are aethyric. That’s because they draw their power from the aethyr, not from batteries, wired connections to outlets, or any such thing. An aethyric icebox just works. Aethyric phones don’t require phone lines to be connected.

This means, however, that spiritual creatures using the aethyr can gain easy access to such devices and affect them even when in the possession of someone else.

It would be wrong to label these items as “magic becoming technology” or even “magic masked as technology.” Far more accurate is the statement that radios, powered lights, and similar devices in Shadow are an illusory distortion of the true devices found in the Actuality (and on the lists in this chapter).

For more on science in the Actuality, see Precepts, The Path, page 5.

EMOTIONS AND CONCEPTS

The ephemeral nature of emotions and concepts is captured through processes unique to the emotion mills. There, they are made into semi-solid but pliable “objects” about an inch across. The only way to store an emotion or concept, however, is to turn it into an emotion leaf by pressing it between the pages of a book of poetry (or similar tome) of a nature in opposition to the emotion or concept. Thus, hate is pressed in a book of love poems, while fulfillment is stored in a book filled with longing verses.

Emotion leaves are used as components in Maker creations, they are used in rituals and other long-form magic, and they are used directly, even by non-vislae. If you want to feel respected, you can buy a leaf of respect and just sort of absorb it. The feeling is intense for a few hours, and it lingers until the sun next rises. Beyond the people who desire or need a particular feeling, there seem to be a lot of people in Satyrine (or perhaps the Actuality) who are losing the ability to feel emotions naturally, so they use emotion leaves to feel something. Some people consider this loss of emotions a malady that is slowly spreading like a disease.

Item	Cost
Emotion or concept “leaf”	25 crystal orbs



HOME FURNISHINGS AND NEEDS

Although a vislae's house is assumed to be furnished comfortably at the start of the game, some players will want to customize or upgrade their homes, and furnishings are the most straightforward means to do so.

Item	Cost
Decor (one room): includes curtains, paint or wallpaper, artwork, rugs, and perhaps some bric-a-brac.	25 crystal orbs
Stove	21 crystal orbs
Icebox	50 crystal orbs
Full kitchen needs (cookware)	22 crystal orbs
Dining table	20 crystal orbs
Dining table (grand)	50 crystal orbs
Dinnerware, one setting	100 orbs
Dinnerware (fine china), one setting	5 crystal orbs
Side table	5 crystal orbs
Chair	3 crystal orbs
Chair (grand)	10 crystal orbs
Chair (<i>invisible</i>)	100 crystal orbs
Davenport	35 crystal orbs
Footstool	4 crystal orbs
Barrel	2 crystal orbs
Bookcase	8 crystal orbs
Chest with lock	15 crystal orbs
Crate	1 crystal orb
Desk	16 crystal orbs
Desk (grand)	50 crystal orbs
Display case	20 crystal orbs
File cabinet	8 crystal orbs
Wardrobe	9 crystal orbs
Bed	10 crystal orbs
Bed (grand)	30 crystal orbs
Pillow	2 crystal orbs
Pillow (massaging)	25 crystal orbs
Pillow (whispering)	25 crystal orbs
Book	5–500 orbs
Book with lock	150 orbs

Item	Cost
Book bound in metal	5 crystal orbs
Book ends (alphabetizing)	15 crystal orbs
Library (small): 1 bene to Intellect pool if all day is spent researching	100 crystal orbs
Library (large): 3 bene to Intellect pool if all day is spent researching	10 gem orbs
Library (exotic): 5 bene to Intellect pool if all day is spent researching	100 gem orbs
Clock	3 crystal orbs
Mirror	4 crystal orbs
Lamp	6 crystal orbs
Rug	10 crystal orbs
Fountain	50 crystal orbs
Watcher painting: always stares at you	20 crystal orbs
Whisper lock: whisper a secret word as the key	20 crystal orbs
Athletic training equipment	50 crystal orbs
Clothes washer	40 crystal orbs
**Aethyric lamp (immobile): in addition to providing light, reveals ghosts within a few feet	10 crystal orbs
**Aethyric lamp (movable): in addition to providing light, reveals ghosts within a few feet	1 gem orb
Grigbane: keeps grigs and other magical pests away (unreliably) for a day	50 orbs
Full laboratory equipment	50 crystal orbs
**Phonograph	10 crystal orbs
**Radio: receives one of three Satyrine broadcast stations	5 crystal orbs
Shamlight: magical (not aethyric) pale, glowing lamp	1 magecoin
**Telephone: operates throughout Satyrine	20 crystal orbs
Workbench	30 crystal orbs

Telephones are instantaneous and free to use, but because it's so easy to get interference or interception from ghosts and spirits, most people don't have them.

SUPPLIES AND TOOLS

Vislae income assumes that a small portion has already been deducted for minor basic expenses like food for simple meals, toiletries, and so on. Use the food costs here if a vislae wants higher-quality meals or if guests need to be provided for.

TOOLS

Item	Cost
10 envelopes	1 orb
10 sheets of paper	1 orb
Blue paper sheet (records thoughts as written words)	1 crystal orb
Red paper sheet (instantly erases itself up to 7 times)	2 crystal orbs
Chalk	1 orb
Paintbrush (fine)	3 orbs
Paint pot	5 orbs
Painting canvas	8 orbs
Pen	1 orb
Indigo Pen (won't write a lie)	50 crystal orbs
Grey Pen (won't write the truth)	50 crystal orbs
Pencil	1 orb
Notebook	5 orbs
Wax seal	50 orbs
Binoculars	10 crystal orbs
Complete tool set, specific to a craft (woodworking, metalworking, etc.)	50 crystal orbs
Disguise kit	15 crystal orbs
First aid kit	10 crystal orbs
Hammer	50 orbs
Light Basket (stores light up to 24 hours)	25 crystal orbs
Magnifying glass	50 orbs
Chain (10 feet [3 m])	3 crystal orbs
Fine detail toolkit	5 crystal orbs
Handcuffs	4 crystal orbs
Lock (with key)	3 crystal orbs
Lockpick set	4 crystal orbs
Manacles	8 crystal orbs
Prybar	70 orbs
Saw	1 crystal orb
Simple toolkit	3 crystal orbs
Sledgehammer	3 crystal orbs

FOOD

Item	Cost
Food (one day's worth per person)	1 crystal orb
General foodstuffs (one day's worth per person)	10 orbs
Gourmet foodstuffs (one day's worth per person)	1 crystal orb
Fresh fruit and vegetables (one day's worth per person)	10 orbs
Bread and baked goods (one day's worth per person)	10 orbs
Meat (one day's worth per person)	30 orbs
Deserts and sweets (one day's worth per person)	50 orbs
Ice (one day's worth per person)	15 orbs
Tea or coffee (one day's worth per person)	1 crystal orb
Beer (one day's worth per person)	70 orbs
Liquor (one day's worth per person)	1 crystal orb
Wine (one day's worth per person)	1–2 crystal orbs

MISCELLANEOUS

Item	Cost
Bubble wand (blows square bubbles)	1 crystal orb
Game (card or board)	2 crystal orbs
Mood ball (changes color based on mood)	2 crystal orbs
Toy	1 crystal orb
Bell	1 crystal orb
Drum	3 crystal orbs
Drum kit	9 crystal orbs
Flute	5 crystal orbs
Gong	4 crystal orbs
Guitar	4 crystal orbs
Harmonica	2 crystal orbs
Harp	12 crystal orbs
Piano	25 crystal orbs
Trumpet	3 crystal orbs
Violin	10 crystal orbs
Body paint	1 crystal orb
Invisible body paint	3 crystal orbs
Changing body paint	10 crystal orbs
Cosmetics	1–4 crystal orbs
Grooming kit	2 crystal orbs
Hair dye	2 crystal orbs
Watch	5 crystal orbs
Watch, gold	10 crystal orbs

CLOTHING

Although each item has a price listed, players can use them as benchmarks, because with clothing, one can pay almost any price desired. If simple shoes are 1 crystal orb, and fashionable shoes are 100 crystal orbs, a character could pay, say, 50 crystal orbs and have a very nice pair of shoes.

FOOTGEAR

Item	Cost
Boots	5 crystal orbs
Hiking boots	10 crystal orbs
*Blood boots: 3 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Interaction. Dark red boots with an aura of murder	3 gem orbs and 25 bloodsilver
*Fighting boots: 2 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Movement. These tough, armored boots have space to store a small weapon	1 gem orb and 10 bloodsilver
*Ritterskin boots: 3 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Movement	3 gem orbs and 25 bloodsilver
Simple shoes	100 orbs
Shoes	6 crystal orbs
Slippers	2 crystal orbs
Fashionable shoes	100 crystal orbs
*Montreiness shoes: 3 bene Interaction	12 gem orbs
*Silent boots: 3 bene Movement, 1 vex Interaction	4 gem orbs
*Slickslips: 2 bene Movement	10 gem orbs

GLOVES

Item	Cost
Work gloves	50 orbs
Winter gloves	100 orbs
Climbing gloves: +1 climbing	100 crystal orbs
*Eye gloves: 2 bene Perception, 1 vex Interaction	1 gem orb
*Milk silk gloves: 2 bene Interaction, 1 vex Accuracy	120 crystal orbs
*Murderer's gloves: 2 bene Accuracy, 2 vex Interaction, +1 melee damage	4 gem orbs + 10 bloodsilver
*Nimble gloves: 1 bene Movement, 2 vex Accuracy	55 crystal orbs
*Spiderweb gloves: 2 bene Accuracy, 2 bene Movement, 1 vex Interaction	10 gem orbs

OUTERWEAR

Item	Cost
Cloak	8 crystal orbs
Coat	9 crystal orbs
Elegant coat	120 crystal orbs
*Magma cloak: +1 Armor, 2 bene Accuracy, 2 vex Movement. Coated with flowing magma, this cloak is insulated so that the wearer is merely toasty warm	8 gem orbs
*Unikskin coat: +1 Armor, 2 vex Movement	130 crystal orbs
*Melisonis coat: 1 bene Interaction, 1 vex Accuracy	80 crystal orbs

HEADGEAR

Item	Cost
Cap	2 crystal orbs
Fedora	10 crystal orbs
Hat, simple	100 orbs
Hat, winter	100 orbs
Top hat	15 crystal orbs
Secret top hat: has a secret compartment for hiding small objects	70 crystal orbs
*Codos feathered hat: 1 bene Interaction, 1 vex Accuracy, 1 vex Movement	80 crystal orbs
*Dravan hat: 2 bene Interaction	10 gem orbs
Elegant hat	100 crystal orbs
*Eyestalk hat: 2 bene Perception, 1 vex Interaction	120 crystal orbs
*Tentacle hat: 1 bene Accuracy, 1 bene Movement	8 gem orbs
*Whispering hat: 3 bene Intellect, 1 vex Interaction	3 gem orbs

SHIRTS

Item	Cost
Work shirt	20 orbs
Simple shirt	200 orbs
Quality shirt	4 crystal orbs
Silk shirt	8 crystal orbs
Smock	5 crystals
*Kleum mail shirt: +1 Armor, 1 vex Movement	125 crystal orbs
*Splintergold shirt: 3 bene Interaction, 1 vex Movement	2 gem orbs

PANTS

Item	Cost
Work pants	80 orbs
Simple pants	250 orbs
Quality pants	6 crystal orbs

DRESSES AND SKIRTS

Item	Cost
Fashionable gown	100 crystal orbs
*Toletta gown: 1 bene Interaction	2 gem orbs
*Resonance gown: 2 bene Interaction, 1 bene Perception, 1 vex Movement	2 gem orbs
*Armored gown: 1 bene Interaction, 1 vex Movement, +1 Armor	4 gem orbs
Simple dress	200 orbs
Quality dress	5 crystal orbs
Quality skirt	3 crystal orbs
Silk skirt	8 crystal orbs
Beautiful dress	90 crystal orbs
*Inderglass dress: 3 bene Interaction, 1 vex Movement	3 gem orbs

JACKETS

Item	Cost
Lab coat	4 crystal orbs
Simple jacket	200 orbs
Leather jacket	10 crystal orbs
Fashionable jacket	100 crystal orbs
*Brawler's jacket: +1 Armor	4 gem orbs
*Seenth jacket: 1 bene Interaction	1 gem orb

SUITS

Item	Cost
Suit	20 crystal orbs
Fashionable suit	100 crystal orbs
*Slicksuit: 2 bene Movement, 1 vex Interaction	150 crystal orbs
*Spidersilk suit: 2 bene Movement	3 gem orbs
*Stealthsuit: 1 bene Movement	2 gem orbs

MISCELLANEOUS ACCESSORIES

Item	Cost
Eyeglasses	5 crystal orbs
Fashionable eyeglasses	80 crystal orbs
*Kaleidoscope eyeglasses: 3 bene Interaction, 1 vex Perception	4 gem orbs
Protective goggles	4 crystal orbs
Sunglasses	4 crystal orbs
Mask	5 crystal orbs
Mask (elaborate)	45 crystal orbs
Leather apron	50 crystal orbs
Umbrella	4 crystal orbs
*Tentacle umbrella: 3 bene Accuracy	10 gem orbs
Walking cane	9 crystal orbs
Jeweled cane	12 gem orbs
Hollow cane: this walking cane has a secret compartment for a rolled piece of paper, some liquid, or something similarly shaped	25 crystal orbs
*Battle scarf: +1 damage, 1 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Interaction. This long, stretching scarf has sharp metal plates hidden within it and lashes out in combat	3 gem orbs
Fashionable cape	10 crystal orbs
*Fighting cape: this tough cape helps deflect attacks while fighting. +1 Armor, 2 vex Movement	150 crystal orbs
*Vlinian cape: 2 bene Interaction, 1 vex Movement	4 gem orbs

JEWELRY

Item	Cost
Simple ring	2–10 crystal orbs
Ring with secret compartment	12 crystal orbs
Poison needle ring: delivers one dose of poison	20 crystal orbs
Lavish ring	15 gem orbs
*Trasnian ring: 1 bene Interaction	5 gem orbs
Simple necklace	1–10 crystal orbs
*Trasnian necklace: 1 bene Interaction	5 gem orbs
Simple earrings	2–10 crystal orbs
*Trasnian earring: 1 bene Interaction	5 gem orbs
Simple cufflinks	2–10 crystal orbs
Lavish cufflinks	15 gem orbs
*Trasnian cufflink: 1 bene Interaction	5 gem orbs
Simple tiepin	1–10 crystal orbs
Lavish tiepin	10 gem orbs
*Trasnian tiepin: 1 bene Interaction	5 gem orbs

MAGICAL IMPLEMENTS

Item	Cost
Sooth Deck	4 crystal orbs
Sooth Deck (high quality)	15 crystal orbs
*Glass sortir: curved glass wand with a leather handle. 1 bene Sorcery, 1 vex Physicality	1 magecoin
*Bronze sortir: curved bronze wand with a leather handle. 1 bene Sorcery	2 magecoins
*Gold sortir: curved gold wand with a leather handle. 3 bene Sorcery, 2 vex Physicality	2 magecoins
*Bladed sortir: curved, bladed steel wand with a leather handle. 2 bene Sorcery, 1 bene Accuracy	3 magecoins
*Ebony sortir: curved ebony wand with a leather handle. 4 bene Sorcery, 1 vex Physicality	4 magecoins
*Diamond sortir: curved diamond wand with a leather handle. 4 bene Sorcery	6 magecoins
*Trefoil: three-part amulet. 1 enhancement Sortilege	5 magecoins

Sortir are the current magic focus item of choice for vislae, rather than wands or the utterly out-of-fashion staves.

TRAVELING EQUIPMENT

Item	Cost
Lantern, oil	3 crystal orbs
Lantern, electric	5 crystal orbs
Matchbook	3 orbs
Torch	5 orbs
Road stove: cooks 10 meals	1 crystal orb
Pocketknife	2 crystal orbs
Rope (50 feet [15 m])	2 crystal orbs
Grappling hook	6 crystal orbs
Climbing gear: +1 climbing	100 crystal orbs
Map	2–6 crystal orbs
Backpack	3 crystal orbs
Satchel	5 crystal orbs
Large suitcase	10 crystal orbs
Insulated bag	4 crystal orbs
Sleeping bag	4 crystal orbs
Tent (one person)	5 crystal orbs
Tent (two people)	8 crystal orbs
Tent (four people)	12 crystal orbs
Tent (pavilion)	20 crystal orbs
Insulated flask	2 crystal orbs
Traveler's rations (one day)	5 crystal orbs
First aid kit	10 crystal orbs
**Camera	11 crystal orbs
Binoculars	15 crystal orbs
Telescope	40 crystal orbs

TRAVELING EXPENSES

TICKETS

Item	Cost
Rail ticket	5–20 crystal orbs
Ship ticket	10–50 crystal orbs
Skyship ticket	30–100 crystal orbs
Sunship ticket	10 gem orbs

Sunships are massive, intelligent vehicle creatures that are also the most common way to travel the Path of Suns. See The Path page 36.

LODGING

Item	Cost
Flophouse: common room	150 orbs
One star: private room, shared bath, poor security	3 crystal orbs
Two stars: private room and bath, moderate security	7 crystal orbs
Three stars: comfortable room and bath, excellent security	12 crystal orbs
Four stars: sumptuous room and bath, many luxuries and services	24 crystal orbs
Five stars: luxurious room and bath, every conceivable service	50 crystal orbs
Five-star suite: large set of luxurious rooms, every conceivable service	100 crystal orbs

MEALS AND DRINKS

Item	Cost
Quick and greasy	50 orbs
Adequate	150 orbs
Pleasant	3 crystal orbs
Fancy	10 crystal orbs
Luxurious	25 crystal orbs
Alcoholic drink	60–120 orbs
Beer	30–90 orbs
Wine (glass, common)	40 orbs
Wine (glass, expensive)	70 orbs
Wine (glass, fine)	150 orbs
Wine (bottle, common)	1 crystal orb
Wine (bottle, expensive)	5 crystal orbs
Wine (bottle, fine)	15 crystal orbs

MOUNTS AND VEHICLES

Item	Cost
Horse (or equivalent)	50 crystal orbs
Giant bird (or equivalent)	10 gem orbs
Wheelbarrow	3 crystal orbs
Cart	8 crystal orbs
Carriage (drawn)	1 gem orb
**Carriage (self-propelled)/automobile	7 gem orbs
Wagon (drawn)	25 crystal orbs
Rowboat	14 crystal orbs
Medium-sized sailboat	2 gem orbs
Large sailboat	20 gem orbs
Small skyship	60 gem orbs
Large skyship	700 gem orbs

Self-propelled carriages are aethyric vehicles that hold a driver and one to four passengers. They travel up to 75 miles (120 km) per hour on a good road.

Skyships are magically powered vehicles that also use large bags of lighter-than-air gas. They can carry 10 to 500 tons (9 to 450 metric tons) of cargo and passengers and travel about 50 miles (80 km) per hour.

WEAPONS

LIGHT (ALL INFLICT 2 POINTS OF DAMAGE)

Item	Cost
Shuriken: level 2	2 crystal orbs
Dagger: level 1	8 crystal orbs
Dart thrower: level 1	30 crystal orbs
Throwing knife: level 1	8 crystal orbs
Battle fan: level 2	15 crystal orbs
Rapier: level 2	15 crystal orbs
Swordcane: level 2	25 crystal orbs

MEDIUM (ALL INFLICT 4 POINTS OF DAMAGE)

Item	Cost
Axe: level 2	10 crystal orbs
Baton/Rod: level 1	4 crystal orbs
Bow: level 2; long range	20 crystal orbs
Cane: level 1	4 crystal orbs
Crossbow: level 3; long range	25 crystal orbs
Cudgel: level 1	2 crystal orbs
Pistol: level 4; long range	35 crystal orbs
Sword: level 2	20 crystal orbs
*Reticulated sword: level 4. 1 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Movement	150 crystal orbs
*Poison pistol: level 4. 1 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Physicality	180 crystal orbs

HEAVY (ALL INFLICT 6 POINTS OF DAMAGE)

Item	Cost
Greataxe: level 2	30 crystal orbs
Greatsword: level 2	30 crystal orbs
Rifle: level 4; very long range	50 crystal orbs
Staff: level 2	5 crystal orbs
*Daetha sword: level 3. 1 bene Accuracy, 1 vex Interaction	160 crystal orbs

POISONS

Item	Cost
Urastin powder: level 3 ingested poison. Inflicts 1 damage per hour (4 rests)	10 crystal orbs
Drop of Sisk: level 5 ingested poison. Induces unconsciousness within 15 minutes, lasts 1 hour.	25 crystal orbs
Numak venom: level 4 blade poison. Inflicts 1 Wound per hour (2 rests)	30 crystal orbs
Iilissar: level 6 inhaled poison. Grants 1 scourge on Movement (3 rests)	30 crystal orbs
Heart's Bane: level 7 blade poison. Inflicts 1 Wound and 1 scourge on all pools per hour (5 rests)	1 gem orb

For more potent and exotic poisons, see ephemera objects, The Way, page 100

SERVICES

Even more than the other lists provided here, these prices assume that the character is in Satyrine. It's possible that other locations might offer similar services on a case-by-case basis.

MESSAGE DELIVERY

Item	Cost
Postal delivery: delivery throughout Satyrine for letters; takes 1–3 days	2 orbs
Package delivery (personal): delivery throughout Satyrine for packages of up to 20 pounds (9 kg); takes 1–3 hours	2 crystal orbs
Message delivery (personal): delivery throughout Satyrine; message can be written or spoken; takes 1–2 hours	35 orbs
Noosphere	1 crystal orb/level/day
Whispernet message delivery: instantaneous delivery throughout Satyrine for spoken messages of 25 words or less	4 crystal orbs

SECURITY, INFORMATION, AND TRANSPORT

Item	Cost
Psychopomp search services: ghost searching the Noosphere for requested information; takes 2–3 days	1 gem orb/level
Psychopomp security services: ghost protecting specific information in the Noosphere	1 crystal orb/level/day
Psychopomp delivery services: ghost using the Noosphere to instantaneously transfer (usually large amounts of) information	20 crystal orbs
Bodyguard services	25 crystal orbs per week, plus room and board
Cab within a district in Satyrine; takes 3–10 minutes	50 orbs
Cab to another district in Satyrine; takes 5–30 minutes	1–3 crystal orbs
Local rail ticket: connecting to a station in almost every district in Satyrine; takes 2 hours for a full circuit	8 orbs

HOME AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Item	Cost
Cleaning services	100 orbs per room
Cooking services (does not include cost of food, cookware, etc.)	100 orbs per meal
Laundry	2 crystal orbs per week
Low-skill employee services	20 crystal orbs per week
Valet services	25 crystal orbs per week, plus room and board
High-skill employee services	50 crystal orbs per week

BUILDING RENTAL AND REAL ESTATE

Item	Cost
Apartment rental	200 crystal orbs deposit, 40 crystal orbs per week
House (small) rental	300 crystal orbs deposit, 50 crystal orbs per week
Storefront rental	200 crystal orbs deposit, 40 crystal orbs per week
Vacant lot	20 gem orbs
House (small)	50 gem orbs
House (large)	100 gem orbs

CRAFTING MATERIALS

This section will be of interest primarily to Makers. Prices here are for a typical amount needed in the crafting of a magical object.

MATERIALS

Item	Cost
Iron: level 1	10 crystal orbs
Common wood: level 1	10 crystal orbs
Granite: level 1	10 crystal orbs
Glass: level 1	10 crystal orbs
Crystal: level 2	25 crystal orbs
Fine iron: level 2	25 crystal orbs
Goblinbone: level 2	25 crystal orbs
Steel: level 2	25 crystal orbs
Gold: level 3	50 crystal orbs
Silver: level 3	50 crystal orbs
Human flesh: level 3	50 crystal orbs
Ancient oak: level 3	50 crystal orbs
Emerald: level 4	75 crystal orbs
Diamond: level 4	75 crystal orbs
Ice: level 4	75 crystal orbs
Silver yak hide: level 5	100 crystal orbs
Taborwire threads: level 5	100 crystal orbs
Hastric wood: level 5	100 crystal orbs
Lusterstone: level 6	150 crystal orbs
Ebonwood: level 6	150 crystal orbs
Frozen curses: level 6	150 crystal orbs
Desaldium: level 6	150 crystal orbs
Demonbone: level 7	200 crystal orbs
Demonflesh: level 7	200 crystal orbs
Talish glass: level 8	1 magecoin
Sands of time: level 9	2 magecoins
Solidified song: level 9	2 magecoins
Pure love: level 10	5 magecoins
Godflesh: level 10	5 magecoins

There are courier offices throughout Satyrine. They are also where whispernet messages can be paid for and sent. Couriers need addresses, but the name of the recipient is all that's needed for whispernet. Post offices are different buildings, maintained by the city.

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INGREDIENTS

Item	Cost
Sugar: level 1	10 orbs
Salt: level 1	10 orbs
Spices: level 1	10 orbs
Honey: level 1	10 orbs
Caterpillar: level 1	10 orbs
Mistletoe: level 1	10 orbs
Bat wing: level 2	50 orbs
Rat tail: level 2	50 orbs
Newt's eye: level 2	50 orbs
Elderflower stems: level 2	50 orbs
Black beetle eye: level 2	50 orbs
Powdered moonstone: level 2	50 orbs
Liquid silver: level 2	50 orbs
Bone dust: level 2	50 orbs
Nightshade: level 2	50 orbs
Peacock feather: level 2	50 orbs
Crocodile heart: level 3	100 orbs
Powdered lilbana leaf: level 3	1 crystal orb
Eyelash of an infant: level 3	1 crystal orb
Elderbrin tears: level 3	1 crystal orb
Toad hairs: level 4	2 crystal orbs
Nettle bird feather: level 4	5 crystal orbs
Mummy dust: level 4	5 crystal orbs
Gravel trod upon by a king: level 5	10 crystal orbs
Polist petals: level 6	20 crystal orbs
Powdered despair: level 7	50 crystal orbs
Truespider eye: level 7	50 crystal orbs
Errix hound blood: level 8	1 magecoin
Secret name of an angel: level 9	2 magecoins
Godsblood: level 10	3 magecoins

POWER SOURCES

Item	Cost
Good intentions: level 1	No cost
Heat from a silent fire: level 2	4 crystal orbs
Stray idea: level 2	4 crystal orbs
Moon fox brain: level 3	8 crystal orbs
Qaat leaf solution: level 4	15 crystal orbs
Vug essence: level 5	30 crystal orbs
Cold trapped in crystal: level 6	50 crystal orbs
Demon's heart: level 7	1 gem orb
Durrantix eye: level 8	1 magecoin
Vigor shard: level 9	2 magecoins
Sun essence: level 10	5 magecoins

CATALYSTS

Item	Cost
Sulfur: level 1	10 orbs
Rotten egg: level 1	10 orbs
Platinum: level 2	50 orbs
Prism: level 2	50 orbs
Snake fang: level 2	50 orbs
Wormwood: level 2	50 orbs
Powdered redweed: level 3	1 crystal orb
Moon fox hair: level 3	1 crystal orb
Demon blood: level 4	2 crystal orbs
Ivum: level 4	2 crystal orbs
Tears of a spider: level 5	5 crystal orbs
Trasnian emerald: level 6	10 crystal orbs
Jerymal bone: level 7	20 crystal orbs
Durrantix heart: level 8	50 crystal orbs
Footprint of a ghost: level 9	1 magecoin
Kind words sincerely spoken by an evil man: level 9	1 magecoin
Distilled darkness: level 10	2 magecoins

STABILIZERS

Item	Cost
Cow's milk: level 1	10 orbs
Purified water: level 1	10 orbs
Aloe: level 1	10 orbs
Vinegar: level 1	10 orbs
Pure note of middle C: level 2	50 orbs
Cat's eye: level 2	50 orbs
Turtle shell: level 2	50 orbs
Powdered diamond: level 3	1 crystal orb
Lyvandris syrup: level 4	2 crystal orbs
Urbrail mist: level 5	5 crystal orbs
Milk silk: level 6	10 crystal orbs
Kithra heart: level 7	20 crystal orbs
Mother's final word: level 8	1 magecoin
Breath of an angel: level 8	1 magecoin
Cat's loyalty: level 9	2 magecoins
Liquid moonlight: level 9	2 magecoins
Gaze of an angel: level 10	5 magecoins

OTHER POWER SOURCES

Item	Cost
Miscellaneous soul: equal to creature's level	Match price to other power source of the same level
Ephemera object: equal to item's level minus 1	Varies
Object of power: equal to item's level	Varies
Human soul: equal to human's level plus 2	Match price to other power source of the same level
Demon: equal to demon's level plus 2	Match price to other power source of the same level



THE FIRST SESSION

You've completed the steps suggested by the Testament of Suns. The icon you bear represents your choices and your personal power. But you're still not quite finished with character creation. You're only finished with the part you can do alone.

In *Invisible Sun*, the first session includes “finishing” a character as a group exercise. Thus, everyone shows up at the table with a character developed using all the material presented in this book so far: stats, order, heart, forte, soul, and so on.

The rest of the character details will be developed in that first game session, with all players involved. This group experience further adds to and expands upon each character's foundation. It also sets up the beginning of the narrative, so the GM can craft a story that will involve the group. This includes the following steps:

- + Neighbors
- + Nearby points of interest
- + Local issues
- + PC bonds
- + Ephemera
- + The desideratum

THE PROCESS

Each player, one at a time, introduces their character to the group, describing order, forte, and foundation (so far). Minutiae like stats and even skills are probably not relevant, but they might be—that's up to the group. Every player is allowed to describe and discuss their character as much or as little as they want, and ultimately more information is better and more useful than less. Obviously, secret soul information shouldn't be shared.

Most PCs should have their homes in Fartown, where most vislae live. Fartown—and certainly the entirety of Satyrine—is both large enough and varied enough to accommodate whatever neighborhoods the players want to suggest.

It's probably best not to have any side scenes between the first and second sessions. The exception to this would be if the GM set up a flashback scene for each character between the first two sessions, solely for character development purposes.

There's a general area in every character tome to record whatever details about your house you wish—including neighbors, neighborhood, and so on.

Because there's no reward for a player whose neighborhood nets a “neutral” result, most groups will avoid that. That's good, because neutral results are dull and don't as easily suggest stories, allies, or complications.

Wicked key, page 207

The group helps to expand on the foundation of each character, one at a time. Specifically, the neighborhood in which they live. All of these topics are covered in more detail in the sections below.

Characters without houses still live somewhere, so this process should still work for them as well.

The players first suggest a neighbor for the PC. This can be handled with suggestions and discussion, and all players—including the GM and the player directly involved—can participate. When a decision is reached, the GM rates the neighbor as being a positive, negative, or neutral force for the PC in question. The player in question should take notes and add it to their foundation information. It will be up to the player to flesh out the neighbor—giving them a name and perhaps more details. However, if the player wishes, the GM can be brought in to help with this, or the group can provide this information as well.

Then the group goes through the process again, for another neighbor. Again, the GM determines if the neighbor is positive, negative, or neutral.

Next the players suggest one to three nearby points of interest in the neighborhood. Once more, the GM determines if these are positive, negative, or neutral for the PC. Again, the player notes all relevant information.

Last, the group comes up with one or two local problems, issues, or rumors, and the GM determines if they are positive, negative, or neutral.

The GM tallies the results to see if there are more positive or negative results (neutral results basically don't count). If positive, the PC in question is given 1 Joy. If negative, the PC is given 1 Despair. If neither, then the PC gets neither. Either way, the PC is then given a *wicked key*, which the player then

awards to another player for a suggestion that they liked or thought was particularly fun or imaginative.

The player makes sure they have all the information they need to finish their foundation material, asking any remaining questions or getting clarifications if desired.

The group moves on to the next player.

When all characters have their neighborhood information, players then agree on any and all bonds they might share. Ideally, each character has a bond with at least one other character, but it's not required.

NEIGHBORHOOD

The nature of the neighborhood where your house is located is determined by the group. The default is that all PCs live in different neighborhoods, but this doesn't have to be the case. Two PCs might share one neighbor (but probably not two) and have the same points of interest and local issues.

NEIGHBORS

A neighbor can be a vislae or non-vislae. Below are some suggestions. Obviously, each should be fleshed out. A neighbor should have a name, a general appearance and demeanor, and so forth. These details might become part of the ongoing narrative, so it's good to work all this out.

VISLAE SUGGESTIONS

- + Experiments with dangerous materials (negative)
- + Learned and likes to share information (positive)
- + Not as smart as they think, but still likes to share information (negative)
- + Member of the same order as the PC (positive)
- + Member of a different order than the PC (neutral)
- + Member of a different order than the PC and is hostile to the PC's order (negative)
- + Nosy (negative)
- + Helpful (positive)

THE PATH

Church of Midnight,
page 111

The War, page 65

Demons and devils are the same thing—the difference is perception, not one of species (if such a term is even appropriate). Generally, demons are nasty and brutish, and devils are sinister and intelligent. They refer to themselves however they wish.

THE PATH

Devil, page 142

Elderbrin, page 30

Lacuna, page 30

Ratgoblins, page 131

THE PATH

Ruined Expanse, page 72

- + Angry, belligerent Apostate (negative)
- + Bookish, introverted (neutral)
- + Maker willing to give discounts (positive)
- + Wants to steal the PC's ideas (negative)
- + Wants to steal the PC's belongings (negative)
- + Jealous and vindictive (negative)
- + Extroverted and needy (negative)

NON-VISLAE SUGGESTIONS

- + Member of the Church of Midnight (probably negative)
- + Retired veteran of the War (neutral)
- + Abandoned lot (neutral)
- + Abandoned home (neutral)
- + Abandoned home, possibly haunted or used by squatters (negative)
- + Very nosy couple (negative)
- + Very quiet individual (neutral)
- + Very friendly and kind family (positive)
- + Very loud and raucous family (negative)
- + Possibly a vampire (negative)
- + Owns a dog that barks incessantly (negative)
- + Religious—different religion from PC, if applicable—and extroverted (negative)
- + Thief (negative)
- + Philanthropist (positive)
- + Devil (negative)
- + Elderbrin (neutral)
- + Lacuna (neutral)
- + Nest of rats (negative)
- + Nest of ratgoblins under the house (negative)
- + Spider with a very large web (neutral)

POINTS OF INTEREST

Points of interest can be almost anything—a landmark, a shop, the home of a prominent figure, or a den of thieves.

Here are some suggestions:

- + Monument to a War hero (neutral)
- + Fountain (neutral)
- + Park (neutral)
- + Famously haunted building (negative)
- + Edge of a Ruined Expanse (from the War) (negative)

- + Thah installation (law enforcers) (depends on PC)
- + Theater (positive)
- + Library (positive)
- + Hospital (positive)
- + Flophouse (negative)
- + One-star hotel (negative)
- + Two-star hotel (neutral)
- + Three-star hotel (neutral)
- + Four-star hotel (positive)
- + Five-star hotel (positive)
- + Quick and greasy restaurant (depends on PC)
- + Adequate restaurant (neutral)
- + Pleasant restaurant (positive)
- + Fancy restaurant (positive)
- + Luxurious restaurant (depends on PC)
- + General goods shop (neutral)
- + Luxury goods shop (neutral or positive, depending on PC)
- + Food market (positive)

THE WAY

Changery, page 117

THE PATH

Prosody, page 24

As the GM guides the First Session, they should be taking notes of all the ideas and results in The Guiding Hand.

- + Pawn shop (neutral)
- + Furniture shop (neutral)
- + Book shop (positive)
- + **Changery** (neutral)
- + **Prosody** (positive)
- + Magic implements shop (positive)
- + Magic materials and ingredients supplier (positive)
- + Clothing shop (depends on PC)
- + High-end clothing shop (neutral or positive, depending on PC)
- + Tool shop (depends on PC)
- + Outdoor gear shop (depends on PC)
- + Music shop (neutral or positive, depending on PC)
- + Weapon shop (neutral or positive, depending on PC)
- + Drug den (neutral or negative, depending on PC)
- + Thieves' den (negative)

COLLABORATIVE CREATION

Creating collaboratively can be a rewarding experience, particularly if everyone involved has a good attitude about it. There are no right or wrong ideas, and no bad suggestions. That doesn't mean every idea or suggestion will be used.

For each topic, the group should brainstorm a bit—five or ten minutes, perhaps—with everyone who wants a chance to make a suggestion getting to contribute. When the group is ready, they decide which ideas to use. If multiple ideas are discussed, consider whether several of them can be combined. For example, if one person suggests a friendly neighbor who likes to drop by with gifts, and another suggests a nosy neighbor who likes to share gossip, those ideas could easily be combined into a single, even more interesting neighbor.

Suggestions should never be mean-spirited. The purpose of this process is to make each player's foundation more interesting, providing more fodder to build stories upon (that's why it's called a foundation). At the same time, players should take the suggestions of the group for their PC and not get sad or angry if they suggest trouble or negativity for their character. Remember, a negative impact on the character not only makes for a better story, but it also results in a reward for the PC in the form of 1 Despair.

Lots of players will tend toward either really mundane or really wild, surreal ideas and suggestions. Experience has shown that for a good narrative, you want to end up with a nice mixture of both. For every neighbor who is secretly the amalgamation of a hundred rat ghosts, give the vislae a nice café or bookstore nearby. Satyrine is all about the juxtaposition of the mundane and the surreal, and making both equally real.

The GM leads the discussion but also can contribute. When in doubt, however, in this collaboration, the GM should step back and let the players shine. If all the players have great ideas, the GM can just take a few notes. (GMs get plenty of opportunity for creation throughout the course of the game.)

As the collaboration process goes on, ideas from people who haven't yet contributed much (or haven't been accepted much) should get more weight than those from players who have already contributed a great deal. This process should be fun and rewarding, never frustrating or disappointing. In the end, though, each decision is made by group consensus.

LOCAL ISSUES

Local issues affect a neighborhood and its residents. They can also be springboards for character arcs and story arcs.

Some suggestions:

- + High amounts of crime (negative)
- + Vandals (negative)
- + Young troublemakers (negative)
- + Heavy **Thah** activity (depends on character)
- + Lots of new construction (neutral)
- + Rat and/or ratgoblin infestation (negative)
- + Grig infestation (negative)
- + Ghost infestation (negative)
- + Large number of elderbrin (neutral)
- + Large number of lacuna (neutral)
- + Local **gerent** is kind and good (positive)
- + Local gerent is corrupt (negative)

PC BONDS

PC bonds, unlike **NPC bonds**, should be developed in the first session with the other players involved. Once everything has been determined, including neighborhoods for each character's foundation, players should agree on their characters' relationships with one another. Most of the time, in **Invisible Sun**, characters already know each other at the start of the game, and thus many have formed powerful bonds.

Most bonds are intended for two characters, but most befit a group of more. Three or more characters could be linked with the close friends bond, for example.

Most characters should have only one PC bond to start the game. It's possible to develop a bond later in the narrative using the Develop a Bond character arc.

Bonded characters can share **character arcs**. In other words, two close friends can set out to undo the same wrong, train the same creature, or solve the same mystery.

THE PATH

Thah, page 71

Gerents, page 71

Thah are an organization of self-imposed—and sometimes not all that well liked—law enforcers.

Gerents are local leaders, and officially or unofficially administrators.

NPC Bonds, page 157

Refreshing pools, page 29

Every character tome has room to record PC bonds.

Long range is anywhere from 50 to 100 feet.

Character arcs, page 162

CLOSE FRIENDS

The two characters are close friends and have been for some time. They are familiar with each other's homes, general abilities, personalities, and backgrounds.

Benefit: If one friend has a connection with a group or a bond with an NPC, the other gains the benefit of that connection or bond as well. This applies to a maximum of one connection or bond per character.

Drawback: If one friend is gravely imperiled, the other loses one action in fear. The GM determines when this happens.

FATED COMPANIONS

While not friends, two characters always seem to be crossing paths. They frequently turn up at the same places at the same time. Perhaps there is a reason for all this that will become clear later.

Benefit: At some point in the narrative, fate intervenes. Each character has all their pools **refreshed** and all Injuries, Wounds, and Anguishes healed, and both succeed on their next action, regardless of what it is (assuming it is not utterly impossible). Both characters must agree as to when this happens and have it fit their background story.

Drawback: Once the characters use the benefit, the bond is basically done.

FELLOW STUDENTS

The characters studied together and thus have known each other for a long time.

Benefit: Each character gains a spell of level 3 or less. It must be the same spell for both PCs.

Drawback: The characters can use the chosen spell only if they are within **long range** of each other.

FRIENDS FROM THE PAST

The characters have known each other for a long time. They are not only familiar with each other's homes, they are also very knowledgeable about each other's general abilities, personalities, families, and backgrounds.

Benefit: Each friend gets a level 1 **connection** to a group. It must be the same connection for both characters.

Drawback: If one friend is gravely imperiled, the other loses one action in fear. The GM determines when this happens.

HOUSEMATES

Two characters live in the same home. They share at least some significant space, but each probably has personal space as well. They must work out various issues (who pays for what? who does the dishes?).

This bond directly impacts character foundation. For example, if a **Connected** character with an average house is the housemate of a **Mendicant** character, the two share an average house, probably owned entirely by the Connected character. However, if an **Established** character with a unique house and a **Stalwart** character with an average house are housemates, they have a single house that is larger than average with some unique aspect. Two housemates that each should have small houses share an average house. Two that should have average houses share a large house. And so on.

Benefit: Shared expenses, as well as combined house “values,” as described above.

Drawback: The lack of an additional house.

LOVERS

The two characters are in love. They share a romantic interest in each other and feel very deeply. A lover can also be a spouse. Spouses can also be housemates, and thus have two bonds.

Benefit: When close, the lovers gain +1 to any action they attempt.

Drawback: If apart for more than one day, each character suffers 1 **scourge** in to one stat pool. On the second day, they suffer 1 scourge in two stat pools. And so on until they face a –1 penalty on all actions.

Connection, page 156

Connected, page 147

Mendicant, page 148

Established, page 146

Stalwart, page 148

Scourge, page 29

MYSTIC BOND

The two characters are linked by a deep, magical connection. Magic flows from one character to the other. This is one of the rarest but also the most potent of all bonds. Only two characters can be a part of this bond.

Benefit: The two characters can affect each other with spells and abilities that normally affect only themselves. Further, when the two characters are close, their spells and abilities each gain a +1 level bonus.

Drawback: Anytime one character suffers any kind of damage, both characters suffer that damage, no matter how far apart they are.

RELATIVES

The characters are related in some way. They know more about each other than most friends could ever know.

Benefit: The characters each have a new level 1 skill, but it must be the same skill.

Drawback: When one character suffers a Wound, the other suffers 1 point of mental damage.

RIVALS

Two characters share a friendly rivalry. They don’t want to see the other outright fail, but each would like to succeed more than the other. The rivalry may have an overt, specific story reason as well as a general one, such as being rivals for the same romantic partner, rivals for a position in a shared order, and so on.

Benefit: Each time one character succeeds at an action, the other is incentivized and gains +1 to their next action. This applies only if the characters are within long distance of each other and can see each other.

Drawback: If the characters are apart for more than an hour, it takes until the next sunrise to “recharge” the benefit power.

SHADOW FRIENDS

Two characters knew each other in Shadow. It's possible that they escaped Shadow at the same time, or in the same circumstances.

Benefit: If the characters have the same **Shadow skill**, it is level 3 instead of level 2.

Drawback: If one PC is pulled back into Shadow, the other suffers a –1 on all actions until the friend returns.

SOULMATES

“Soulmate” means something slightly different in the Actuality than it does in Shadow. These are two characters who have revealed their secret soul to each other and found that they share the same one (a slight adjustment to one of the PCs may be necessary for this to work).

Benefit: The characters can exchange or trade Joy and Despair as they wish.

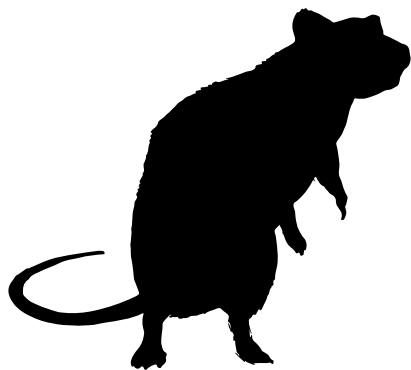
Drawback: If anyone knows the secret soul name of either character, they can use it against one or both.

STEWARDSHIP

One character is in a situation where they must watch over and protect another. One might be the parent of the other, a close servant, someone who owes a life debt, or some other guardian.

Benefit: The protected character gains +1 to **Dodge** actions when the steward character is close.

Drawback: The steward character suffers –1 to Dodge actions when close to the protected character.



Shadow skill, page 154

Close is within about 10 feet or so.

Ephemera, page 23

Dodge, page 32

Characters should keep track of all the incantations that they have ever known on their Grimoire sheet.

UNREQUITED BOND

One character would *like* to be closely bonded with the other, possibly romantically but perhaps just in friendship, but the other does not share this feeling. This, then, is a bond that affects only one PC.

Benefit: The character who would like to form a bond gains +1 to all actions when the other is **close**. The character who is uninterested in the bond, when close to the other, can move a short distance away from the other and it does not count as part of their action.

Drawback: The character who is uninterested in the bond is, as a default, never close. So the character who desires the bond must always move closer to get the bonus.

EPHEMERA

All characters start with **ephemera**. The number of ephemera you start with is your maximum, as dictated by your order. Most characters start with three. The GM and player should work together to determine what these are, although the GM's voice is the dominant one in this case. This is done with the whole group in mind, however, so that no two starting ephemera in the group are the same, and there is a nice mix of types and abilities.

Although a PC's starting ephemera can include anything, two items (perhaps a potion and an amulet) and an incantation is a good mix. The best way to do this might simply be to give out random ephemera cards to each player.

THE DESIDERATUM

Once all the bonds are set, the group works together to decide what they need to start the game. This can be many things, of course, but to start off a narrative, the characters—as a group—need a single desideratum that provides the impetus for the first stories told. Essentially, the desideratum is the players' way of deciding how they want the narrative to start, at least very broadly.

This decision is probably based on the individual character arcs the players have chosen for their vislae. They can simply choose what's needed for one character or—even better—find a way to merge more than one arc's initial step into one need. For example, if one character is looking to avenge their family and another to uncover a secret, they both very likely need a good source of information to start their stories.

Obviously, if two bonded characters share a starting arc, this is a very good starting point for a group desideratum.

The desideratum can come in six forms:

Money: The group needs money and is interested in work or a scheme that will earn them a substantial amount.

Power: The group recognizes that to achieve its goals, everyone must become more magically adept or get their hands on some kind of magical aid.

Information: The group needs information. They seek answers, ideas, or just knowledge to start off their story.

Allies: The group needs the assistance of others more powerful than themselves.

Travel: The group needs to go somewhere to get what they want.

Altruism: The group needs to help someone. This could be general altruism (we're looking to help those in need) or, more likely, they have a specific person or group in mind to help.

After the players select one of these six types, the GM can begin to craft the beginning of the narrative, knowing exactly what motivation will pull the characters into the tale. Essentially, the desideratum is the players' way of saying, "GM, if you assume this as our motivation, you can start the narrative with us already involved." In other words, if the group desideratum is information, the GM can start the second session—where the story really begins—by saying, "You all have agreed to travel together to the Library of Rhol, the Left-Handed God. On your way there . . ."

The GM should use The Guiding Hand to make notes on the group's desideratum. These are the notes for what will happen in the game's second session and will likely affect many of the sessions going forward. For example, if the desideratum is "information" (and that's a very common one), the group's first task might be tracking down a secret library that they've heard of, but to get that information, they might have to steal it from the well-known vislae Dark-Eyed Manfred (see The Path, page 140), which in turn makes him a long-term foe that affects events in the group's entire narrative.

THE PATH

Rhol, page 29





ADVANCING CHARACTERS

“One finds the beginning of the path to understanding when one realizes it has no end.”

—The Book of Nħagil

Character development is the key that drives all play in *Invisible Sun*. So much so, in fact, that it's best to think of character creation as an ongoing process. Even with one's character tome all filled out and ready, you're never actually *done*. Events occur, secrets are discovered, and lore is mastered that alter characters in both personality and abilities. Just like characters in your favorite stories. Just like real people. Each character has their own character arcs, many determined by the choices they've made (the order they belong to; their patron, if any; their background; their enemies; and so on), that key into the actions they take in the game. For example, a character might have a character arc that says that, because of their allegiance with *King Nine*, they want to find any information they can about something called the *Fatigue Bible*. Now any action they take based on that goal might earn them points called *Acumen*. Obviously, if they change their allegiance, they might lose this arc. In that case, they will get another. The point is that characters are ever-changing, and these changes are story based, not simply game mechanics.

Advancement is like tinkering. You might tinker with the choices of various abilities, spells, or secrets to deal more damage with your attacks, or you might tinker as you decide whether to align yourself with the current leader of your order or the upstart secessionist who wants to break away and start a new group. You tinker with the designs

Keep track of Joy, Despair, and Acumen in your character tome. Keep track of Joy and Despair even after you've used them (to make Crux) to determine things like the increasing power of your Testament of Suns (see page 205).

THE PATH

King Nine, page 48

The Fatigue Bible is a magical treatise on negative emotions. It contains all manner of unique secrets and spells. Some say it was never actually written and exists only as a ghost of an unwritten book.

your new face will have once you've earned enough money to pay the changery. You tinker with whether it fits your character better to pursue the secret of talking to red shadows or another that allows you to persuade locks to open.

CURRENCIES OF ADVANCEMENT

There are three currencies involved in advancing your character.

ACUMEN

You gain Acumen by just experiencing life. You earn it as a part of your character arc, or as general rewards from the GM based on experiences you have. In this way, it's not wrong to think of Acumen as “experience points.” You spend Acumen to get new skills, spells, secrets, and so on. Acumen comes and goes, but you only need to keep track of your current total.

JOY

You gain Joy by doing the things you love. Happiness, inspiration, support, and fulfillment allow you to hone your strengths and expand your horizons. You'll earn Joy by concluding character arcs successfully or accomplishing other deeds. You'll also get Joy directly from the GM, who will sometimes insert a twist in the tale that makes things better for you. This direct, positive “intrusion” into the narrative earns you 1 Joy.

You combine Joy with Despair to form another sort of “experience point” called *Crux* that you use to gain an ability in your forte or advance in your

EDMUND SAYERS

order. Sometimes you'll use Crux to make magical items and objects, as well as activate other specific abilities. Unlike Acumen, you should keep track of your total earned Joy, even after you spend it, so you can track the increasing power of your Testament of Suns or vertula kada.

DESPAIR

You gain Despair when things go poorly for you. Angst, defeat, anxiety, loss, and stress motivate change. You'll earn Despair by concluding character arcs but with unsatisfying conclusions. In other words, you tried and failed. You'll also get Despair directly from the GM, who will sometimes insert a twist in the tale that makes things more complicated. This direct, negative "intrusion" into the narrative earns you 1 Despair. Like Joy, you should keep track of your total earned Despair, even after you spend it, so you can track the increasing power of your Testament of Suns or vertula kada.

SPENDING ACUMEN

Many things related to character advancement depend on spending Acumen. These include

THE WAY

Spells, page 46

Minor Magic, page 24

Long-Form Magic, page 28

Secrets, page 84

See also Joy and Despair in the Gamemastering chapter of The Gate, page 60.

knowledge to use most magical practices, such as **spells**, **minor magic** (cantrips, charms, signs, and hexes), and **long-form magic** (conjunctions, invocations, enchantments, and rituals). You also spend Acumen to gain **secrets**, which can give your character new capabilities or your house new features. These cost varying amounts of Acumen, usually 1 per level.

Basically, anything you want to do to advance your character that isn't part of your order or your forte is done with Acumen.

SPENDING JOY AND DESPAIR

Joy leads to enlightenment. Despair makes us human.

You can spend Joy only along with the same amount of Despair. If you want to spend 2 Joy, for example, you must also spend 2 Despair. This is because you spend Joy and Despair together as "Crux." A Crux is 1 Joy and 1 Despair. Crux are used to advance in your order (although there are always narrative requirements as well) and your forte.

Joy has no relationship with Acumen. However, you can spend 1 Despair to gain 2 Acumen. You *cannot* use Acumen to buy Despair.

NEW SPELLS, SECRETS, SKILLS, AND MORE

Your character might have access to spells or other powers that arise from their order or forte. You will have special objects or incantations that you gain as ephemera. But there's more. As you advance in knowledge and power, you will gain access to secrets that allow you to use magic in strange and interesting ways. You will gain new spells in all different forms. You might find the instructions for a ritual, although you'll need at least one other person to help perform it. You might find an object of power, like a powerful weapon or a ring imbued with its own magical ability. Along the way you might also learn a few very minor magical powers in the form of cantrips, charms, signs, or hexes.

The point is, characters are extremely customizable and flexible. You can spend your time and energy on advancing in your order, or you can ignore that altogether and advance through other means.

Spells, secrets, and **skills** might require something from the character in the narrative. If you want to learn painting as a skill, you've got to find a teacher, read a book, or at least get out an easel and practice. If you want to learn the secret of wielding two weapons effectively at once, you might need to find a trainer who knows that secret. If you want to learn a new **invocation**, you might have to find a gramayre that relates the steps and intonements involved.

ADVANCING IN ORDER OR FORTE

Advancing in your **order** always has a story requirement (performance of a specific ritual, sponsorship of another member, and so on) as well as a game mechanic requirement. Advancing to a new degree requires Crux equal to the degree. So advancing from 1st to 2nd degree requires 2 Crux.

Advancing in your **forte** is more esoteric. Fortes are very specific to the vislae, so advancing is more about inner exploration and practice than

*Testament of Suns and
vertula kada, page 16*

THE WAY

*Effects by Level table,
page 21*

Skills, page 31

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Invocation, page 30

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interacting with anyone else. The cost of gaining a new ability depends on its level. An ability of level 1–4 requires 1 Crux, level 5–6 requires 2 Crux, and level 7 and above requires 3 Crux.

Gaining a new forte ability also grants you 2 points to add to your stats.

TESTAMENT OF SUNS AND VERTULA KADA ADVANCEMENT

As you advance with your Testament of Suns or vertula kada in your possession, some of your increasing power is passed into the item. You can draw on this power when you hold it. The level of this power depends on the overall total of Crux that you have earned and spent.

The GM should choose the power, but it should be suited to the vislae.

Crux	Object Power
0–4	No additional power
5–8	Level 2 effect
9–12	Level 3 effect
13–16	Level 4 effect
17–24	Level 6 effect
25–34	Level 8 effect
35–46	Level 9 effect
47+	Level 10 effect



TIME REQUIREMENTS TO ADVANCE

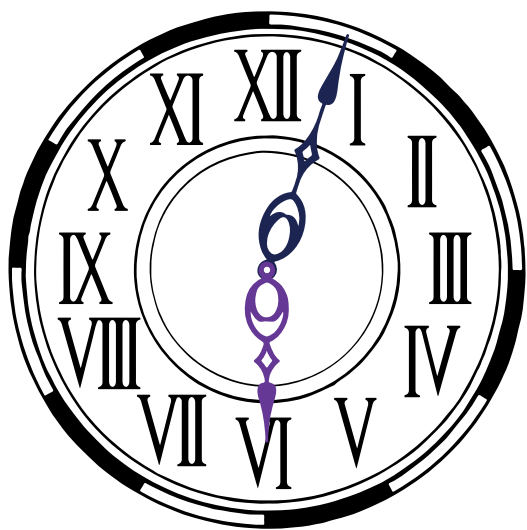
Vislae are a bookish lot and spend a lot of time studying new spells, secrets, and so forth. That means it takes time to learn new capabilities, but the game assumes that characters spend a great deal of time between significant events or missions. Lots of time to study, research, teach, and learn should be baked into every narrative.

ADVANCING IN YOUR ORDER

Advancing to the next degree in your order always requires interacting in some way with other members of your order (unless you're an **Apostate**). Thus, this is always flexible—some characters will complete all the necessary requirements before they earn enough Crux. But if you have the Crux to advance, the process usually takes somewhere between two weeks and two months, with higher degrees requiring more time. Sometimes a particular order will specify the length of time needed.

ADVANCING IN YOUR FORTE

Advancing in your forte takes little time. New abilities gained spring forth organically as you use the abilities you already have.



All times given for advancement are approximate and should vary based on circumstances. In general, however, the assumption is that at the minimum, a character should not advance to the highest degree of their order in less than a year. Doing so in two years, along with developing a fully advanced forte and a large number of skills, spells, secrets, and so on, is far more appropriate. And that doesn't assume true downtime.

Apostate, page 60

Players have a tendency to want to fill every moment of their character's time with important events. There's no need for that. In a tabletop RPG, it's literally no more time or effort to say "A month passes" or even "A year passes" than it is to say, "It's the next day." GMs are discouraged from putting time pressures on the characters all the time and encouraged to let vislae be vislae (people who spend most of their time studying, practicing, or relaxing). Let a week or a month go by—it's not only more realistic than constant action, it feels more like the events of a well-told story.

GAINING NEW SKILLS

Learning a brand-new skill generally requires at least six weeks of study. However, this is usually accomplished while taking part in other studies and activities. If a vislae "crams" for a skill and does nothing but study and practice, a new skill at level 1 can be gained in just two weeks.

IMPROVING AN EXISTING SKILL

Improving an existing skill is easier than learning a new one. Either a week of concentrated study or two weeks of more casual study are probably enough.

GAINING NEW CONNECTIONS OR CONTACTS

Social connections and contacts take time and vary greatly based on circumstances. In general, though, connections are the opposite of skills in that gaining a new connection is easier and takes about a week, whereas improving a connection is harder and requires about a week per new level (so improving a level 2 connection so that it becomes a level 3 connection takes three weeks). As with skills, a vislae can do other things during this time. Unlike skills, this process cannot be rushed.

LEARNING NEW MAGIC PRACTICES

Learning a new spell, long-form magic, or secret takes about three days per level of the new ability, but this is just a guideline. This assumes concentrated study, not working on anything else at the time.

DOWNTIME

All characters should take real rests from time to time. A day or a week here or there wherein they don't study, don't go off into dangerous situations, don't make new connections, and so on. Where they literally do nothing but relax. The GM should gently "require" such breaks at a rate of one day a week, although this can accumulate, so after a month a character relaxes for four days, or after seven weeks they take a whole week off.

WICKED KEYS

Wicked keys are not used in advancement, but we'll mention them here since these currencies are all things primarily awarded by the GM, and wicked keys are as well.

A wicked key is something discovered in a keyfall (or very, very rarely they can be purchased or traded for). These are rare, magical keys that a vislae can use to bypass barriers. In the case of a wicked key, the definition of "barrier" is extremely broad. Obviously a locked door is a barrier, but a wicked key could get you through a wall that has no door. A keyhole would just appear in the wall, and you'd insert the wicked key and be past it.

It gets even more surreal. A person can be a barrier. A guard or an official might not let you into a locale that you need to enter. Pull out a wicked key and the person suddenly has a keyhole in their flesh (usually their head). Insert and turn the key, and the person will no longer keep you out.

In effect, then, wicked keys are a vislae's way of changing any situation to their favor. They change the course of the story. If a foe stands atop a tall pedestal and a vislae with a wicked key wants the pedestal to topple, it will.

The only limitation is that you must use the key in a physical object or creature. You can't use a wicked key to learn the location of a missing object of power. But you could use it to convince someone who knows where it is to tell you.

Using a wicked key causes it to vanish. No exceptions.



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As we agree with the growing consensus that “they” can and should be used as a gender-neutral, singular English language pronoun when one is needed, we have adopted that as the style in our products. If you see this grammatical construction, it is intentional.



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