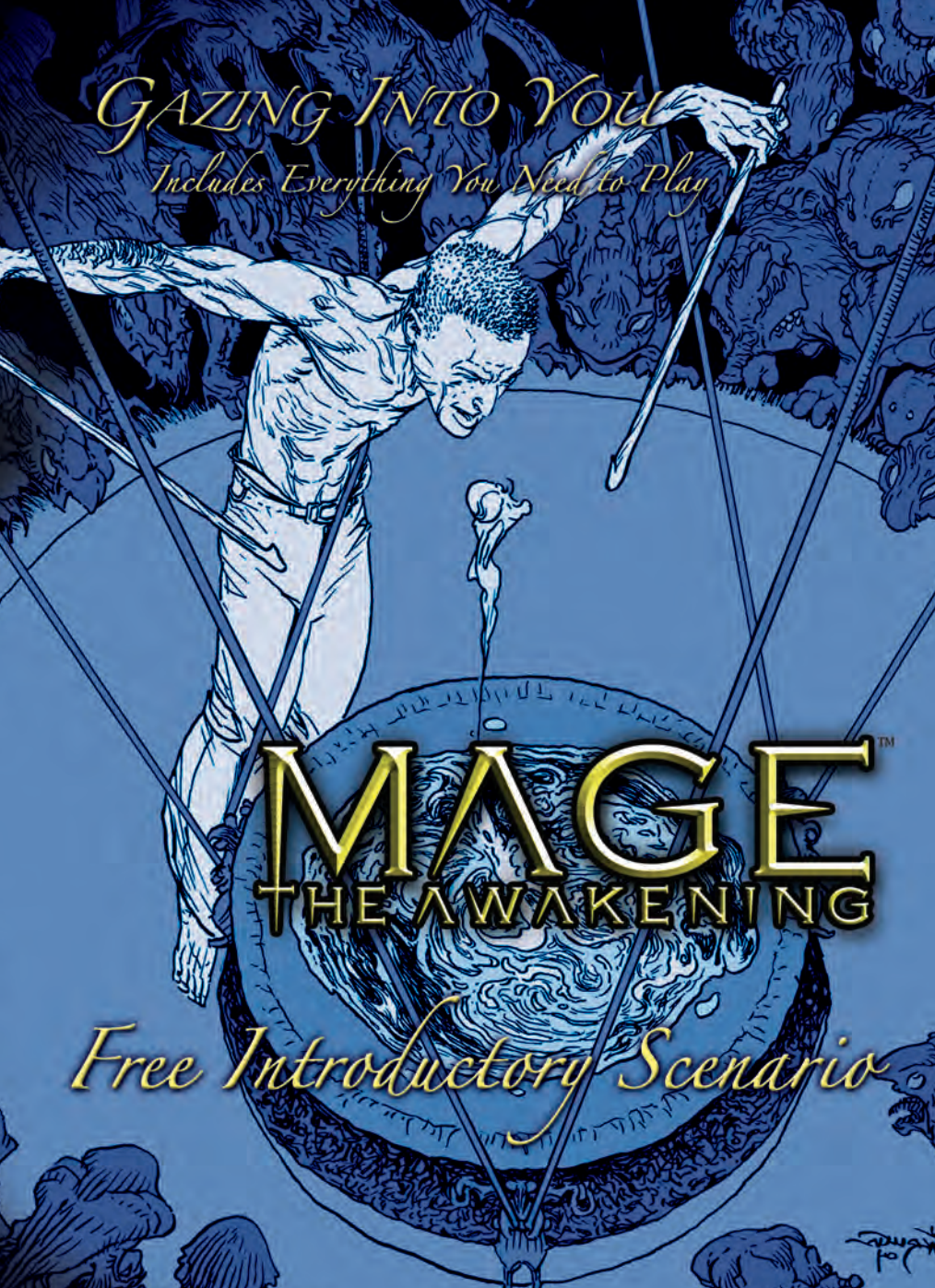




GAZING INTO YOU
Includes Everything You Need to Play

MAGE™ THE AWAKENING

Free Introductory Scenario

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TO WAKE FROM DREAMING...

The sea of time grows murky as one approaches the distant past. Ruins, artifacts, cave paintings—all this evidence of history tells an incomplete tale. Most people never realize that they don't know the whole truth, but some can see that there is more to learn. Those who do, and who know where to look, eventually discover a legend of a fallen civilization and a war for the throne of reality. The names for that civilization are many, most of them lost over the years, but even patchwork recorded history remembers one of them: Atlantis.

Humanity found that mythical place eons ago, led by dreams more real than their waking sight. There they learned to see beyond this world to the Supernal Realms, and what they discovered in those places set their very souls aglow. By the power of their thoughts, they learned how to make what was real in the Supernal Realms real in this world—to make the impossible possible. What once could be done only in dreams was now achievable in the waking world. Indeed, it seemed only those most enlightened souls were truly Awake, while everyone else was but a Sleeper, sharing the same dream.

The Awakened built a glorious civilization on their sacred island, dividing themselves into specialized orders of governance and working together to unravel the Mysteries of the higher realms. Yet the power they uncovered in unraveling these mysteries soon outstripped their wisdom, and they committed a great crime of hubris. Seeking to abandon the dreaming world altogether, they constructed a grand celestial ladder to carry them to the Supernal Realms, where they overturned the thrones of the gods

and usurped their places. They sought to control all reality with their thoughts alone, yet Creation trembled at their every unwise whim. There was no choice but to cast them down, lest all of reality be corrupted and sundered. Those Awakened still left in our world climbed the celestial ladder themselves and made wizard-war on their erstwhile brethren, shaking all of Creation. In the end, the very ladder itself was shattered and our world fell away from the Supernal Realms, leaving only an impassable gulf of unreality known as the Abyss between them.

Yet though the Fallen World was cursed to fall deeper into Sleep, there are those still who Awaken. Deep in the Supernal Realms stand cyclopean watchtowers that even today call brave, enlightened souls across the treacherous Abyss. Should a soul survive this journey and carve its name on one of these watchtowers, that Sleeper Awakens and inherits humanity's forgotten legacy: magic. When he does, it's up to him to find those others like himself who have broken free from humanity's shared dream and try once again to find the truths behind the Mysteries of Creation. And should they uncover the lingering fragments of lore about lost, fabled Atlantis, mages must decide whether to re-create the enlightened civilization those earliest dreamers forged or build something even better, founded on the highest ideals of this Fallen World.

You've had the sense at some point in your life that there is more to this world than you can see. You've always known that sinister truths hide behind a façade of normality, veiled by the rational, orderly "natural laws" we call science. When night falls, as the shadows grow long and

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the wind whistles through the trees, you shudder and remember the truths of your ancestors, who were right to fear the dark. In those times, you realize just how alone and ignorant you've always been. You feel this way because you've just entered the World of Darkness, where the shadows hide unimaginable secrets.

In **Mage: The Awakening**, the third World of Darkness Storytelling game, you and your friends tell stories set in this world, in which you reveal these secrets and unravel the Mysteries of Creation. Those who do so successfully Awaken to the greatest mystery of all—that the rules of reality are not as hard and fast as everyone thinks. By forging mystical paths to realms beyond the material world, the Awakened (known as wizards, sorcerers, and mages) can impose the laws of those higher realms on this world. Doing so, they can shed light on what hides in the World of Darkness and work great wonders tempered only by their wisdom.

Yet for all their power and insight, the Awakened are still human, subject to the same failings and shortsightedness all humanity suffers. They *must* temper their wonders with wisdom, lest the friction between opposing laws of disparate realities cause an uncontrollable Paradox. Nor can they cavalierly expose the secrets their Awakenings reveal to them. Some secrets are hidden from Sleeping humanity for good reasons, and it is only the proud, foolish mage who casts into the light those things best exiled to shadow. What's more, a mage does well to keep his pride in check, as pride goeth before a fall. There's always another mage out there with just a bit more power or who knows just a little more about what's hidden in the darkness...

THE GAME

Mage: The Awakening is a Storytelling (or roleplaying) game. In it, a group of players cooperates to tell a story. Each player takes on the role of a single mage, except for the Storyteller. This player essentially takes on every other role,

describing the world to the other players, acting out the parts of other characters, and determining what challenges the players' characters face. Players roll dice to determine if their characters can overcome the challenges before them. In a typical exchange, the Storyteller describes the scene in which the players' characters find themselves. ("You see five beings taking shape right in front of you, materializing from nowhere. It takes you just a moment to realize that they look exactly like you and your companions. What do you do?") The players then describe their characters' actions, usually in the first person. The Storyteller then describes the results of the action, going back and forth until the scene is resolved. Dice are rolled when players have their characters try things that aren't guaranteed success. Jumping on top of a moving car without getting hurt would require a dice roll; climbing out of a stationary one wouldn't.

This introductory package contains everything you and a small group of friends will need to play your first game of **Mage: The Awakening**, except for some pencils and paper (for notes) and several 10-sided dice. (These specialty dice are available in most hobby shops and are sometimes called "d10s.") Those of you who are going to be players should read over the character backgrounds included in this package and choose the one you want to play. The Storyteller should read the rest of the booklet in preparation before playing.

THE RULES

Mage: The Awakening uses a set of rules called the Storytelling System. Many of the rules are introduced in the scenario proper or on the character sheets (special powers and so on), but there are a few basics to go over first.

- **Rolling Dice:** When rolling dice in the Storytelling System, you do not add the numbers together. Instead, any single die that comes up 8 or better is considered a success. You usually need only one success to accomplish a task, but more is always better (causing more damage in

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combat, for example). Any die that comes up a "0" (considered a 10) counts as a success *and* can be rolled again (and potentially get another success). If you manage to roll five or more successes, you get an *exceptional success*. If you roll no successes at all, your character has failed that action.

- **Dice Pools:** The number of dice you roll to attempt something is called your dice pool. It usually consists of the total of two traits on your character sheet (one Attribute and one Skill) and modifiers imposed by any special equipment your character uses or adverse conditions.

- **Modifiers:** The Storyteller determines what modifiers apply to any dice pool. Modifiers either add to or subtract from the dice pool (the number of dice rolled). These modifiers usually come from tools used (a bonus is listed with the tool), Merits that the character has (described in the character description), or other general circumstances. The Storyteller should grant or impose a bonus or penalty (usually ranging from +2 to -2) if the circumstances are especially favorable or deleterious. For example, an attempt to climb a wall that is slick with rain and slime would suffer a -2 penalty, whereas climbing a wall with plentiful handholds and ledges would gain a +2.

- **Chance Die:** If modifiers reduce your dice pool to zero dice (you can't have a negative dice pool), you should instead roll a single die (called a *chance die*). A 10 rolled on a chance die generates a single success, while any other result is a failure. And yes, if you manage to roll that 10, you get to roll again and try for another success. As long as you keep rolling 10s, you keep generating successes. Rolling anything other than a 10, however, is not a success. In fact, rolling a 1 on a chance die (just on the first roll, not subsequent rolls after getting that first 10) indicates a *dramatic failure*. The Storyteller should describe especially troublesome results for a dramatic failure, such as a gun jamming or a tire blowing out during a car chase.

- **Actions:** Almost anything a character does is considered an *instant action*. You determine the dice pool, roll the dice, and see if you succeed or fail. In combat you can perform one instant action per turn. Sometimes, you'll be asked to take an *extended action*, which represents doing something over a period of time, such as searching a room or casting an especially complex spell. In this case, every roll of the dice represents a fixed amount of time (usually 10 minutes, but it varies for some more involved actions). You accumulate successes from roll to roll until you get a certain number (described in the text), at which point either something happens or you run out of time. Some actions can also be *contested*, which means that two people are working against each other, such as in an arm-wrestling match, or when a character tries to sneak past a watchful guard. In a contested action, each player (or the player and the Storyteller) rolls the dice pool for his character and the person with the most successes wins. Finally, some actions are *reflexive*, which means that they happen automatically and don't take up any time—you can perform them and still perform an instant action in that turn.

- **Turns and Scenes:** A *turn* is a three-second period and is used in combat. A *scene* is a longer period (usually an hour or as long as it takes for everyone to do what they want in a particular place). Some mage powers or spells function for a single turn, while others last the whole scene.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

The end section of this packet contains character sheets for the five characters that players can use in *Gloria Mundi*. These sheets contain all the game numbers that define a character's capabilities, divided into a variety of types of traits. Most traits are rated from one dot (•) to five dots (•••••), much like a star rating system for movie reviews. Different traits represent different things:

- **Attributes** represent inherent capabilities, such as Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.

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- **Skills** represent learned abilities, such as Firearms or Medicine. A word or phrase in parentheses next to a Skill indicates a Specialty, an area of the overall Skill in which the character is particularly talented. If you are asked to roll a dice pool in which your character doesn't have the right Skill, you suffer a penalty of either -1 (for a missing Physical or Social Skill) or -3 (for a missing Mental Skill). If, on the other hand, you have a relevant Specialty in the Skill in your dice pool, you get a +1 modifier.

- **Health** determines how wounded your character is, and it has both dots and points. Your character's dots are filled in on your character sheet, and they represent the total number available to him when he is uninjured. His Health points are recorded in the corresponding boxes, denoting his current state of health. (See "Health and Damage" for how to mark off Health points and the effects of wound penalties.)

- **Willpower** represents your character's reserves. You can spend one point (and one point only) of Willpower on any roll, which gives you three additional dice in that dice pool. Alternatively, you can spend a point to raise your Defense trait by two against a single attack. Willpower is valuable, and you regain it only for acting in accordance with your character's Virtue or Vice (see individual character descriptions). Willpower is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most other traits.

- **Gnosis** represents the inherent higher understanding of reality a mage has achieved.

- **Mana** is the amount of distilled magical power that currently suffuses the mage character's body. You spend Mana to cast or modify certain spells.

- **Arcana** are special degrees of understanding of the Mysteries of reality. The accompanying handout explains what fundamental forces each Arcanum affects.

- **Rotes** are specialized spells mages can cast, based on their mastery of the Arcana.

- **Merits** are special natural edges a character has, such as Contacts, Resources, or Striking

Looks. The effects of each Merit are explained in the character's description.

- **Defense** and **Initiative Modifier** are traits used in combat and are explained in that section.

- **Speed** is the number of yards a character can move in one combat turn and still perform an action. A character can run up to twice that distance in a turn if he sacrifices his action. Speed will most likely come into play in a chase.

- **Wisdom** is a measure of your character's morality, of how well he tempers his growing power over reality with reason. Your character can lose Wisdom over the course of play. Wisdom is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most other traits.

COMBAT

Surrounded by supernatural creatures who would rather remain hidden, as well as jealous hoarders of secrets, mages sometimes attract violence. When a fight breaks out, it can be important to keep track of who is doing what, and how badly they are hurting each other. When that happens, follow these steps:

First tell the players that their characters are entering combat. Until the combat ends, everyone acts turn-by-turn, with each character getting one chance to act each turn.

Next, have everyone roll Initiative, which is the result of the roll of a single die + the character's Initiative modifier as listed on the character sheet. (This is a rare case where you add the number that comes up on a die to the value of your trait, instead of rolling a dice pool and looking for a success.)

Starting with the character with the highest Initiative result and continuing on to the lowest, each character gets to take a single instant action (usually an attack). The player can choose to yield her character's action until later in the Initiative queue, or until the next turn if she wishes. Resolve each character's action before asking the next player what his character does.

If one character attacks another, the attacker's player rolls the appropriate dice pool:

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- **Unarmed close combat:** Strength + Brawl, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

- **Armed close combat:** Strength + Weaponry, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

- **Ranged combat (guns and bows):** Dexterity + Firearms, minus target's armor (if any)

- **Ranged combat (thrown weapons):** Dexterity + Athletics, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

Add bonus dice based on what weapon is being used or what effect is being performed, then subtract penalties for circumstance conditions. (Using an improvised weapon such as a garbage can lid or a broken table leg, for instance, levies a -1 penalty on the attack roll.) The player rolls the remaining pool. Each success equates to one Health point of damage inflicted, the type of which is determined by the nature of the attack. The Storyteller describes the attack and wound in narrative terms.

Once everyone has acted, a new turn starts and the player with the highest Initiative gets to act again. Players *do not* make new Initiative rolls every turn.

COMPLICATIONS

- **Avoiding Damage in Close Combat:** Your character's Defense trait represents his instinctive ability to duck and weave and make close-combat attacks harder, so it serves as a penalty to incoming attacks. If your character hasn't yet acted this turn and is willing to forgo that action, he can dodge, which doubles his Defense for the rest of the turn. If your character is attacked multiple times in the same turn, however, it becomes harder for him to avoid being hurt. For every attack targeted at him after the first, reduce the character's Defense by one (to a minimum of zero). If your character is dodging, the doubled Defense still decreases by one for each additional attack.

- **Avoiding Damage in Ranged Combat:** Defense doesn't apply to ranged combat unless a ranged attacker is either close enough that he could just as easily attack in close combat (a few

feet) or throwing a weapon. To avoid damage in a firefight you can either find cover (hide behind something solid) or fall prone (drop flat to the ground). Falling prone constitutes a character's action for the turn but levies a -2 penalty on ranged attacks. Anyone within close-combat striking distance (a few feet) gets a +2 bonus to hit a prone character, though.

- **Concealment and Cover:** If your character is partially concealed behind an object, she is harder to hit with ranged attacks. The penalty goes from -1 (crouching behind an office chair) to -3 (poking up out of a foxhole). If you are *completely* concealed, the attacker suffers no dice pool penalty but has to score enough successes to shoot through the intervening object (called the cover). Piercing an object reduces the number of success rolled by a number based on the durability of the cover: from 1 (for wood or thick glass) to 3 (for steel). If this penalty reduces the number of successes to 0, the attack fails to penetrate the cover and you take no damage.

- **Range:** Every ranged weapon has three ranges listed in yards in the format short/medium/long. An attacker suffers no penalty when her target is within the short range. If the target is at medium range, she suffers a -2 penalty. At long range, this penalty goes to -4.

HEALTH AND DAMAGE

- **Damage Types:** There are three types of damage—bashing, lethal, and aggravated—and each is more serious than the last. *Bashing damage* generally results from blunt or stunning attacks. *Lethal damage* generally results from cuts, gunshots, and other more serious attacks (such as an animal's bite). *Aggravated damage* generally results from especially vile supernatural attacks.

- **Marking Damage:** When a character suffers damage, the player marks off that number of Health points, starting with the box under the leftmost dot of his Health trait and proceeding left to right. The symbol used depends on the type of damage.

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• **Resonance:** Everything has a subtle side, an esoteric spiritual or magical nature that defines it just as much as its physical aspect does. In the case of places, this ethereal element is called resonance. Resonance is marked by certain *qualities*, most often characterized by emotions (hate, anger, joy, sorrow), or more rarely by concepts (logic, chaos, fascism, democracy). Spirits in the Shadow Realm are attracted to resonance in the physical world that has qualities similar to their own natures. Magic cannot directly affect the resonance of a place (at least not for long), so sorcerers must work to alter it indirectly over time to achieve the qualities they want.

• **Hallows & Sanctums:** Where the pure force of magic, Mana, filters down from the Supernal World (or where that energy is regularly trapped and recycled), it saturates the local area, turning the place into a "Hallow." For those who know how to harness them, such places are invaluable. Hallows often have a strong allure for both Awakened and Sleeper, although the latter don't really understand why. Hallows vary a great deal from one to the next, but they all share a single tendency: They don't feel like mundane space. Fertile or fetid, holy or hellish, there's no mistaking a Hallow for any mundane place. Any mage standing in a Hallow can sense its ambient Mana with a successful Wits + Occult roll.

A sanctum is a mage's stronghold, a place where he can practice his Art away from the eyes of Sleepers and spies. Such strongholds are usually built on Hallows when mages can find those places and snatch them up quickly enough. Legends tell of wizard's towers, witch's huts, and sorcerer's caves, but the reality is usually more prosaic: a penthouse apartment, an old estate, or even a nondescript suburban tract house. In *Gloria Mundi*, the characters all share a beach house sanctum on a Hallow by the coast. Normally having a Hallow and a sanctum is a function of Merit dots, and those dots have been factored invisibly into the characters' backgrounds for simplicity's sake.

• **Mage Society:** Certain recurring factors make mages who they are, and recognizing those factors has influenced the formation of magical society as it stands today. Every mage who Awakens travels in spirit to one of the five Supernal Realms along a certain *path*, and that path informs the style and type of magic he is able to perform. No two mages of the same path are exactly alike, but they stand to be more alike than mages of different paths. Yet no mage is an island, and no mage can solve all of Creation's mysteries himself, so mages tend to work together in groups called *cabals*. Cabals can consist of mages of different paths, as their group goals tend to be personal and temporal rather than driven by metaphysical ideology. Mages do come together into larger, looser groups based on ideology, though, and those groups are called *orders*. Many harking back to the ideals of lost Atlantis, the orders are global in scope and driven by broad agendas locally. Orders take in mages of any path, and likewise, many cabals include members of different orders. The most influential and knowledgeable body of local governance over the Awakened is known as a Consilium. Like a local senate, a Consilium consists of all the local representatives of the orders and cabals at work in a given area, and it works to see to the best interests of the Awakened who live in that area.

• **Shadow Names:** Names have power, and none know that better than the Awakened. A mage's soul writes his true name forever on the walls of his chosen watchtower in the Supernal Realms when he Awakens, and doing so imbues his name with powerful sympathetic resonance. Should another mage learn his name, that mage can use magic against him more easily. Therefore, most mages who are part of Awakened society take on "shadow names" to protect themselves.

• **Hubris:** When a mage's hubris outstrips his morality, he risks losing his Wisdom. The more heinous sins he commits in the name of ego, the more quickly his Wisdom falls. At Wisdom 7

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(where almost all characters start), laying a curse on someone, shoplifting from a store, or any worse misdeed can cause moral degeneration (a loss of Wisdom). When the character commits such an act, the player rolls a number of dice based on the severity of the sin. The worse the sin is, the *fewer* dice are rolled. (Committing grand theft is three dice; using magic to murder someone is two dice.) If the roll fails, the character loses a point of Wisdom. (Willpower can't be spent on this roll.)

Characters with reduced Wisdom justify their behavior to themselves instead of repenting, and they become that much more blinded by hubris. It will now take a worse sin to cause another roll to degenerate. At Wisdom 6, binding a human being to a place or task can spark such a roll. At Wisdom 4, you can bind a person to do anything you want as long as you don't use your magic to actually harm him. At Wisdom 2, you can harm him to your heart's content as long as you don't actually let him die. At Wisdom 1, you can even go so far as to kill a victim as long as you don't steal his soul.

Characters who do lose Wisdom naturally risk becoming unhinged mentally. If a player fails a degeneration roll, he should immediately roll his character's reduced Wisdom as a dice pool. If he fails that roll, the character gains a derangement. This derangement can be any form of minor but pervasive mental disorder, such as depression or a phobia. The player should roleplay this new character quirk, but it has no mechanical effect.

- **Mana:** Mana is the formless Supernal energy filtered down into the Fallen World. Some of it is residual energy left trapped when the Abyss opened, recycled over the millennia into a thousand forms, but some of it is fresh, brought into the world by a mysterious form of grace from on high. The mage characters in **Gloria Mundi** can hold up to 10 points of Mana in their bodies at a time. Players spend points of Mana to allow mages to perform various feats of magic. Casting an improvised spell requires

the expenditure of a point of Mana, unless the primary Arcanum used is one of the mage's ruling Arcana (as indicated in the character write-ups). Casting a spell on a target beyond sensory range requires the expenditure of a point of Mana, as does inflicting aggravated damage with a spell. Also, certain spells that significantly alter the laws of nature or physics might require the expenditure of Mana.

To regain spent Mana, a mage can do one of several things. He can perform an *oblation* (a ritual function associated with his path) at a Hallow. Doing so requires an hour of uninterrupted ceremony and a Gnosis + Composure roll. Each success provides one Mana. Mages cannot gain more Mana per day, however, than the Hallow's rating. (The Hallow in **Gloria Mundi** is rated 3, so no matter how many mages perform oblations on the same day, only three points of Mana are available from sunrise to sunrise.) Mages can also *scour* their bodies to free up Mana. A mage elects to degrade one of his Physical Attributes by one dot in return for three Mana points. The lost Attribute dot is restored 24 hours later. Scouring takes one full turn. A mage could elect to scour his Health instead. He suffers one lethal wound and gains three Mana points. Magic cannot protect against this damage, and it cannot be healed by Pattern restoration or any known Awakened magic. It heals naturally at the normal rate. Unlike the scouring of Attributes, there is no limit to the number of Health scourings a mage can perform in the same day.

Finally there is one last and unsavory practice that can also yield up Mana to a mage: the death and blood sacrifice of a living creature. Animals as big as a cat provide one Mana each, although only one such killing per day provides Mana. Sacrificing a human provides one Mana per Health dot. The victim must die; he cannot be bled until he is close to death. Only the one mage who performs the sacrifice gains the ill-gotten Mana. This practice is sure to cause a Wisdom degeneration roll.

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• **Mage Sight:** Mages have a number of means by which they can open their eyes to the supernatural, seeing (or even hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting) the subtle currents of supernatural powers at work in the world. While all mages have an innate sixth sense to detect the presence of *active* powers, it does not allow them to identify or analyze such powers. For that, they need to enchant their senses. Although such spells come in many forms, they are collectively called Mage Sight. Besides revealing magic and other supernatural powers, these spells make resonance obvious to the senses. Once a Mage Sight Spell is active, the player should can Intelligence + Occult to analyze the resonance. This is an extended action with each roll representing a single turn of scrutiny; it takes 5 successes to determine the basic nature of the resonance. More successes can provide more information at the Storyteller's discretion.

Finally, some Arcana can be used to sense or analyze certain powers better than others, although all Arcana can be used to sense supernatural power. If the power is mystically concealed, however, successes rolled for the mage must equal or exceed the Potency of the magic used to conceal the source. Note that Mage Sight does not allow a sorcerer to see or interact with entities in the ephemeral state called Twilight (see "Crossing Over" on page 12). That requires other spells (usually Death for ghosts and Spirit for spirits).

• **Pattern Restoration:** Mages can infuse Mana into their bodies to heal wounds. (Doing so is called restoring or repairing the mage's metaphysical Pattern.) The cost is three Mana points per one bashing or lethal wound. This is an instant action. Those mages unable to spend more than three Mana per turn (e.g. all the characters provided in *Gloria Mundi*) can take as many *consecutive* turns performing only this action as they need, until they've spent all three points. The number of times a mage can spend Mana to restore his Pattern within the same 24-hour period depends on his Gnosis.

At Gnosis 1–4, he can do so only once per day. With Gnosis 5 or 6, he can perform two Pattern restorations per day.

MAGIC

What sets the Awakened apart from Sleepers is not only their deeper understanding of the Mysteries of reality, but their ability to impose the laws of Supernal reality on the Fallen World. The only word Sleepers have to describe such effects (inasmuch as they can even comprehend them) is magic. Awakened mages are capable of literally anything they can conceive as they mature and grow in power, and the magic system of **Mage: The Awakening** accounts for as many possibilities as are humanly possible. This booklet offers a somewhat stripped-down version of that magic system, offering a glimpse of the wonders that are possible. For your character to cast a spell, follow these steps.

STEP ONE:

DECLARE THE SPELL

The simplest way to perform acts of magic is to choose one of the rites provided in the character write-ups. Those descriptions tell what sort of action casting the spell is (whether it's instant or extended), as well as how long the effect lasts if the roll to cast it succeeds. Instant spellcasting actions take only a single turn to perform, but extended actions take far longer. For a character with Gnosis 1 (i.e., all the provided characters), each roll of an extended action requires an entire hour's worth of spellcasting work in game time (*not* session time).

The descriptions also list each spell's *aspect*. The aspect defines how well the mage can hide the Supernal wonder among the events of the Fallen World. If a mage tries to do something subtle (such as make a building go dark while he's hiding inside), he can cast a subtle spell of darkness that knocks out all the lights in the building. Bearing witness to that effect, Sleepers might only think that a power transformer is

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busted or that some glitch just kicked off in the city's power grid. That sort of spell is considered *covert*, and it slips into the reality of the Fallen World seamlessly. Some spells are slightly more noticeable, though. For instance, a mage might choose to make a single room in an office building go dark, then make another one go dark, then another, and so on (all to make the people he's hiding from wonder which of those dark rooms he's *actually* hiding in while he sneaks away down the stairwell). While such random power-outages are technically possible in the everyday reality of the Fallen World, they're not very likely, so the spell raises questions in the disbelieving minds of Sleepers. Such a spell would be considered *improbable*. Finally, there are some spells that are in no way possible by the fundamental laws of our reality, and they can't be rationalized away as luck or coincidence. If a mage is standing on the hood of a speeding car frying the driver with lightning from his fingertips, then he jumps off, turns a one-and-a-half twist in the air, and skids safely to a halt on the soles of his Chuck Taylors while the car swerves into a newsstand and explodes... Well, that's just not possible. Such a spell is considered *vulgar*. Vulgar and improbable spells have consequences in terms of cost and side effect, which are explained in Step Three.

Magic is a dynamic and tricky thing, though, and mages are not restricted to casting rites. Their Arcana represent not only specific achievements and ranks of rites learned, but a more general understanding of the broader laws of nature. The more dots he has in the various Arcana, the better he understands and can subsequently change the world around him. Changing the world thus with magic is called *improvised* spellcasting, and it works somewhat differently than simple rote spellcasting. It's a little bit harder (represented by a smaller dice pool), and the costs involved are different. The Arcana Handout that came with this packet details what sorts of effects and changes are possible at the provided characters' levels of understanding.

Also, at various points in the following story are offered certain "Magic Suggestions" that show how one might use improvised magic to its best effect in the story.

STEP TWO:

SPELLCASTING DICE POOL

For a rote spellcasting, you simply add the specified Attribute + Skill + Arcanum to determine the caster's base spellcasting pool. These dice pools have been listed with the character write-ups. For an improvised casting, you roll Gnosis + Arcanum to determine the caster's base spellcasting pool. Several mitigating factors that affect the spellcasting dice pool have been listed under "Mitigating Factors" on p. 11.

STEP THREE:

PARADOX

Paradox is the friction that exists between the Fallen World and the Supernal Realms when a mage casts a spell to impose a conflicting set of natural laws over our preexisting one. The more often a mage works magic, and the more overtly he does so, the more likely he is to invoke the force of Paradox. If the spell is vulgar or improbable, the Storyteller checks for a Paradox, rolling a base dice pool based on the caster's Gnosis and modified by various conditions. For the characters in **Gloria Mundi**, the characters all have Gnosis 1, which means the Storyteller rolls a base of one die.

The number of successes the Storyteller rolls on the Paradox roll determines the nature of the Paradox that occurs when the mage casts his spell. With only one Paradox success, the mage loses control of his spell, affecting a different target of the same type somewhere else in his sensory range. With two successes, the mage gains a derangement appropriate to the circumstances for one scene. With three successes, an anomaly of unreality occurs for one scene (hail might fall from a clear blue sky, or the streets might crack

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and bleed upward into air). With four successes, the mage is branded as vaguely inhuman in some subtle way for a scene (be it a witch's mark or an indescribable aura of otherness). With five successes, a twisted spirit from the Abyss enters the Fallen World.

Other effects of Paradox are listed under the "Aspect" subheading of "Mitigating Factors".

Finally, bear in mind that the Storyteller rolls Paradox *before* the player rolls for his mage's spell. Also, no matter how many successes the Storyteller rolls, the player cannot call off his magical effect just because the very laws of reality have turned against his character.

MITIGATING FACTORS

Certain environmental or inherent factors affect how a desired spell works. These factors might affect the cost of the spell, the dice pool of the spell, or the likelihood of a Paradox.

Range: If the mage cannot see, hear, or otherwise detect the target of his spell with his normal senses, he cannot affect it with a regular spell unless he has and adds Space 2 into the spell. (Of the provided characters, only Ogma has this degree of mastery over the Space Arcanum.) A spell cast outside sensory range thus (known as a *sympathetic* spell) suffers a penalty based on the vagueness of the mage's connection to the target. If the target is a close friend or if the casting mage has a sample of the target's blood or hair, the penalty is only -2. If the target is someone you know only in passing (say you've passed him on the street), the penalty is -8. If you know nothing at all about a target outside your sensory range, you can't affect it with a sympathetic spell at all. If you don't know the real name of a person who's the target of a sympathetic spell, the roll is penalized an additional four dice. (This is why most mages adopt shadow names in mage society, because a shadow name does not alleviate that penalty.)

Aspect: When a mage attempts an improbable of vulgar spell, the Storyteller rolls for a Paradox. Successes on that roll subtract successes from

the player's spellcasting roll (which is why the Paradox roll comes first). What's more, the more improbable or vulgar spells the mage attempts in the same scene, the higher the Paradox dice pool climbs. For every additional improbable or vulgar spell a mage casts in a scene, the Storyteller begins to add additional Paradox dice to his pool.

If one or more Sleepers witness a mage casting a vulgar effect, add *two* dice to the Storyteller's Paradox dice pool on top of everything else. Therefore, if the mage is casting only one improbable or vulgar spell in a scene but it is witnessed by Sleepers, the Storyteller rolls three dice against the spell.

Magic Resistance: Some rote spells allow the target protection against magic, either a reflexive contested roll or a Resistance Attribute that is subtracted from the spellcasting dice pool. Where that is the case, it has been noted in the character write-ups.

Mana Costs: For improvised spellcasting, the mage must spend one Mana if the highest-rated Arcanum required for the spell is not one of his ruling Arcana. (The provided characters' ruling Arcana have been noted in their write-ups.) If the spell affects a target sympathetically, the spell costs one Mana. Inflicting aggravated damage with a spell also costs one Mana. Other Mana costs might be associated with certain spells, and those costs are listed in the spell write-ups.

Bear in mind that the characters can spend only so much Mana in a turn. If a spell is listed as an instant action, the character must be able to spend the entire requisite amount of Mana he needs *in that same turn*, or his spell will not work.

Reducing Paradox: If a player doesn't want his mage to run the risk of a severe Paradox problem, he can have his character mitigate the Paradox by spending Mana. For every Mana spent (bearing in mind his total allowed expenditure per turn), he removes one of the dice from the Paradox pool the Storyteller rolls.

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A mage can also reduce the amount of a Paradox by suffering a Backlash. Rather than applying the successes on the Paradox roll to his spellcasting roll or having a Paradox occur, the mage suffers a number of bashing wounds equal to the successes on the Paradox roll. This damage can only be healed normally: Pattern restoration and magical healing do not work against it.

SPRITS

Some mages deal with spirits a great deal, and spirits have slightly different traits than material beings.

- **Attributes:** Rather than having nine Attributes like characters, spirits and ghosts have only three. Power is used for Intelligence, Strength, and Presence. Finesse is used for Wits, Dexterity, and Manipulation; Resistance is used for Resolve, Stamina, and Composure. If the spirit wishes to attack, roll Power + Finesse (the target's Defense is applied normally), with each success inflicting one point of lethal damage.

- **Corpus** is the spiritual equivalent of Health. If a spirit loses all of its Corpus, it discorporates and vanishes. It will re-form in the spirit world in two days with one dot of Corpus, and then heal one dot of Corpus every two days. Physical attacks can only erode a spirit's Corpus if it has somehow become material or the attacker benefits from a spirit power of some sort. If a

spirit loses all of its Essence and Corpus, it is destroyed permanently.

- **Influence** represents a spirit's ability to control or manipulate the very concept that created it. The greater the dots in an Influence, the more power the spirit has over that concept.

- **Numina** are the various supernatural powers of spirits. Many are only usable in the physical world once the spirit has manifested (see below).

- **Essence** is a spirit's lifeblood, the spiritual power without which it cannot exist. Sprits use Essence for many activities, but every spirit spends one point every moonrise simply to survive. Spirits who slip into the physical world must spend one Essence point every hour until they can possess a host or bind themselves to an inanimate object using their Numina.

- **Crossing Over:** Unless they have a special Numen, spirits can only cross into the physical world at a Hallow, or some other place where the boundary between worlds is frail and thin. (They can also be summoned into the physical world by certain spells.) Once across, the spirit remains ephemeral, invisible, and intangible—in a state called "Twilight"—until it chooses to manifest. Doing so requires a successful roll of Power + Finesse, in which case the spirit may become visible at will and may be able to speak or send messages depending on its nature. Even in this state, it remains immaterial and largely immune to physical attacks.

GAZING INTO YOU

This is the first scenario in an eight-part chronicle called **Gloria Mundi**, which will be released online at www.worldofdarkness.com. The chronicle takes the characters deep into the World of Darkness, revealing some of the secrets of the Awakened and, ultimately, the fate of the characters. But before any such grandiose concerns, the characters have to come to grips with a more immediate threat to their minds and souls, combating their own inner demons and those of a powerful, but incautious mage. Pride goes before the fall, and the characters are about to see that truism illustrated.

This scenario is meant for the Storyteller's eyes only. If you are planning to take on the role of one of the characters in "Gazing into You," please stop reading now. Storytelling games are much more enjoyable if you experience the plot twists and surprises along with your characters, so don't spoil the fun for yourself.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

First, read through the rules at the beginning of this document, just to get an idea of how the mechanics of the game work. Then, have a look at the character sheets beginning on p. 38, and note the characters' different capabilities and advantages. We don't expect you or the players to memorize everything right out of the gate, but if you give the characters a quick once-over in conjunction with the rules, the numbers will make more sense in game play.

Let the players read over their characters' backgrounds, roleplaying hints and traits, and

answer any questions they might have. Help them understand how the rules work with regard to the dots and numbers on the character sheets.

Also, read through "Gazing into You" once before attempting to act as Storyteller. We've tried to make it as easy as possible on you, but you should have an idea of what's coming up. Plus, players will always make decisions that you—and we—didn't see coming. That's a great part of roleplaying, but it requires you to think on your feet. This is especially true given that all of the characters have a brief list of *rotes* (magical effects that they can perform easily and skillfully) but are also capable of broad, dynamic uses of their magic. If you know how the plot progresses, you can take what the players do and allow those decisions to steer the game toward the conclusion, rather than having to say, "No, Jim, you can't do that because it would take us too far off track."

Throughout this scenario, you will find blocks of italicized text for you to read aloud to the players. You will also find occasional sidebars labeled "Magic Suggestions." Getting the hang of the magic system in **Mage** can be a challenge, as most other roleplaying games that incorporate magic require that a character choose from a list of spells rather than using a sphere of influence. These sidebars allow you to suggest effects that these characters can perform, but the players might not consider. As the chronicle progresses, you'll see fewer of these sidebars, since you and the players should be coming to grips with how the system works and what the parameters of the different Arcana are.

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STORYTELLING TECHNIQUE: EXISTING GROUPS

Most pre-written scenarios, such as “Gazing into You,” revolve around the characters coming together for the first time and forming a cohesive group. This is sometimes handled elegantly, with characters being given several reasons to bond with each other, and sometimes through various clichés of roleplaying, such as bar fights where all the characters are (for some reason) on the same side. In some games, a powerful character simply tells the characters what to do.

Those clichés are standards for a reason, though. They’re quick and easy to understand, and they allow the Storyteller to put the characters together and get on with the story, and that’s fine. **Gloria Mundi**, however, does things a little differently by stipulating that the characters are part of an established cabal before the chronicle starts. Merit dots have been taken from each character to comprise the cabal’s Sanctum and Hallow (see p. 16) and the characters’ descriptions include brief notes on how they came to join the cabal. This method of putting the characters together allows for empowerment to the players—they already have a support network with each other and can look to shared history for strength.

Of course, since you haven’t played through that shared history, it’s a good idea to devote a few minutes before the story actually starts to discussing it. Here, we present three methods of fleshing out the characters’ relationships with each other.

Hot Seat: Have each player take a turn in the “hot seat” while you and the other players fire questions at her. These questions should be about the character but not directed at her. That is, if Sarah is taking on the role of Niamh in the chronicle, you might ask “How does Niamh feel about Ogma?” rather than “How do *you* feel about Ogma?” This allows the player more freedom in answering sensitive questions about the character. Don’t be afraid to ask about seemingly innocuous topics (favorite foods, pastimes, etc.) as well as

important topics such as childhood experiences and the Awakening. Note, too, that not everyone thinks well on their feet, so it’s perfectly acceptable for a player to answer, “I don’t know, let me think about that.”

Q&A: Similar to hot seat, Q&A involves each player writing down two questions and passing them to you. You then pose all 10 of the questions, in addition to any others you feel are necessary, to each player in turn. You might want to jot down the responses or have the players do it, since this information might shape the way you present facets of the chronicle later. Appropriate questions here are much the same as for hot seat, but because each player is answering the same questions, they can get a bit more in-depth. The questions can be about straight facts (“Does your character have any living family?”) or more intangible (“What song or work of art best represents your character?”).

Anecdotes: People who live together for any length of time eventually develop in-jokes and anecdotes about each other. Have each player choose another and make up a quick anecdote about that player’s character. The player in question has veto power, of course, if someone tries to paint her character in a truly inappropriate way. Remember, though, that no one behaves in a truly consistent way all the time. Even if, for instance, Morrigan’s player has decided that she’s a teetotaler and Ogma’s player tells a story about that time he saw Morrigan stumbling drunk down by the seashore, that anecdote isn’t immediately invalid. Maybe Morrigan *is* usually sober, but that one instance was an exception (one she regrets). Maybe she wasn’t drunk, but reeling from the effects of a Paradox. Maybe that simply wasn’t Morrigan.

Use any or all of these three techniques to develop some sense of the history of the cabal before play begins. If the players see their characters as a unit, as a group of colleagues (if not friends), they will be more inclined to cooperate and to meet challenges as a united force—which is an edge they may well need.

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THE SETTING

"Gazing into You" (and most of the larger chronicle) is set in Quincy, Massachusetts, about 10 miles south of Boston. The city contains just under 90,000 people and dates back to the 17th century. The city boasts miles of coastline, so it houses a number of summer homes and rental cottages—few of which see year-round residence. One of these seaside houses, however, serves as the sanctum of a cabal of mages—the characters the players portray in **Gloria Mundi**.

Looking It Up

Quincy (pronounced "quin-zee" by the locals) is a real city. Storytellers and players interested in doing further research into the area can start with the city's official website: <http://www.scstest.com/quincy/default.asp>.

Although **Mage: The Awakening** and the World of Darkness takes place in our own modern world, the presence of the supernatural has changed many of the details (and dramatic license is taken with all real-world locales portrayed in these books). **Gloria Mundi** isn't intended as a travel guide to Quincy.

The cabal doesn't have a name for itself yet. Four of the five members claim Irish ancestry and take their Shadow Names from Irish mythology, which lends itself to a cabal name and heraldry along those lines. The fifth member, Anthony "Tyrrhenus" Licavoli, is Italian-American, though, and proud of it. As such, discussions on what, if anything, to name the cabal have stalled. (This is a challenge that your troupe could perhaps take up.)

The cabal is the only one in Quincy, at least as far as the characters know. The only member with any influence in the Consilium of Boston is Tyrrhenus, and he has "influence" only insofar as

the Consilium acknowledges him. Other mages do indeed live in the city, however, and on the night that this story begins, the characters are going to meet one of them.

FACTIONS, CONSILII, CABALS, AND SOLITARIES

The World of Darkness is a dangerous place, even (perhaps especially) for mages. As such, mages band together in groups. A small group of mages, usually formed around a symbolic theme, is called a *cabal*. A *Consilium* is the highest political body among the Awakened in a region. Councilors from various local cabals serve, making collective decisions as necessary that concern the Awakened as a whole. Most mages also belong to *orders*, overarching groups of mages that have been handed down since the fall of Atlantis (with the exception of the Free Council, which is a new development).

The power base of Awakened in the Quincy area isn't very well formed. The most powerful mage in the city is probably Paul Kresham (known among the Awakened as Adam), but he doesn't belong to any cabal or order, and hasn't involved himself with Consilium affairs in years. Mages without cabals are called *solitaries*, and they are uncommon. Most such mages are either powerful enough to take care of themselves or have left preexisting cabals for personal reasons.

Other mages (and stranger things still) call Quincy home, and the cabal will encounter them in future installments of **Gloria Mundi**. For now, we need be concerned with only these few characters.

THE CHARACTERS' CABAL

The characters collectively maintain a sanctum in Quincy, near the seashore. They all contribute money and time toward the upkeep of the house, although Niamh actually owns it. The house is large enough for all five characters and encompasses enough land for the Hallow

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(see below), but beyond that we aren't providing much in the way of details about the sanctum. That's for you and your players to envision. It does have some security measures, however. Anyone trying to break into the house suffers a -2 penalty on any attempt to do so, and the cabal members receive a +2 bonus while inside the house.

The grounds also include a Hallow. Hallows suffuse their immediate area with magical power and allow mages within that area to draw on the Mana they produce. The Hallow on the cabal's property is located near the sea on a small hill. The area in a circle around that hill (roughly 30 feet in diameter) is saturated with magic. Any magic cast within that area requires one less point of Mana than it normally would. That is, any member of the cabal can cast improvised magic using non-Path Arcana near the Hallow and avoid the normal Mana expenditure. Also, the Hallow produces three points of Mana per day, which any of the characters can absorb. The cabal has, in all probability, developed some sort of schedule for who can go "walking on the beach" on what day. This is, again, something that your players should figure out as part of fleshing out the cabal's dynamics.

SISYPHUS

Jack can contact his thrall, Sisyphus, at any time during this story to demand help or information from him. Sisyphus is only slightly older than Jack, but Awakened young and is powerful and intelligent. He isn't terribly wise, though (as became obvious when he tossed his soul stone into the pot at a poker game), and he trusts in his luck a little too much. His game traits aren't defined in this story because he is likely to play only a supporting role, if any. (He will play a more substantial role in future installments of *Gloria Mundi*, though.) In particular, his Arcana aren't provided, but as an Acanthus mage he has some proficiency in Fate and Time, equivalent to or greater than Jack's level of skill.

Appropriate places in the text note the information and aid that Sisyphus can best provide. If Jack's player wants Sisyphus to rush out and lend a hand directly, Sisyphus is honor-bound to do, but Jack will burn through his three favors in short order at that rate. Feel free to remind Jack's player that it might be better to exhaust other options before falling back on this Merit.

THEME AND MOOD

The theme of "Gazing into You" is *self-reflection*. The title of the story is from *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche. The full quote is "He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you." The Abyss has special meaning in *Mage*. It is the gulf that separates the magical from the mundane, the Fallen World from the Supernal Realms. Adam sought to purge the Abyss—which saw as the base desires of his mortal frame—from his soul, and in the process unleashed something dangerous into the world. Over the course of this story, and indeed the whole chronicle, the characters are forced to examine the darkest, most embarrassing and yet most basic aspects of their minds and personas. They might decide to change those facets, or they might decide that these foibles are part of what make them human. The answer to the question varies, but the characters have to *ask* the question to find the answer.

The mood of this story is *discomfort*. The spirits that Adam's spell unleashed can see the character's darkest secrets and aren't afraid to let them know it. Every character in this chronicle has committed acts of hubris of one degree or another, and now those acts are coming back to haunt them as the spirits make them relive their moments of weakness. Throughout this story, you can reinforce this mood by having strangers stand too close for comfort, stare a little too long, or lower their voices when the characters draw near.

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ACT ONE: DEMONS COME CALLING

In this act, the characters find themselves targeted by hostile spirits, spirits that have an uncanny and unsettling knowledge of their magic, their personalities, and even their true names. They can fend off the spirits' attacks, but clearly these spirits present a grave danger. Therefore, the mages must track the spirits back to their source.

WHAT'S GOING ON

In an attempt to remove all base impulses and temptations from his own soul, a powerful mage called Adam opened a gateway into the spirit worlds, allowing a spiritual force into the Fallen World. Unable to find the urges it needed in Adam, this presence possessed his Sleeper servant, Allan. The presence split into seven distinct parts, each taking on a facet of the servant's desires. (These forces are roughly analogous to the seven deadly sins of Christian theology, but this distinction is simply for an easy frame of reference; the creatures are not demons, nor is Adam a particularly pious mage.) The spirits then tore the unfortunate servant's body asunder, looking for a way to ground themselves in the Fallen World.

Adam tried to stop the spirits from escaping, but they fought him and left him crippled in body and soul before fleeing his Sanctum. They require human hosts to anchor them to our world, and they learned from their experience with Adam's servant that Sleepers' minds do not possess the energy (Mana) that they need. As such, they spread out to look for Awakened minds that resonated with their specific desires. In game terms, each spirit needs to find a mage with the appropriate Vice. One of the spirits (Sloth) found

a substitute—it possessed a Hallow—whereas the Wrath spirit has already found and possessed a mage. (The characters will meet this unfortunate soul in the next story.)

SCENE ONE: HOME INVASION

The story begins on a Monday night in late April. The characters are all at home. The players can decide what exactly the characters are doing. They might be practicing magic, walking on the beach or engaging in more mundane pastimes like surfing the Internet or playing cards (although playing cards with the likes of Jack might become an exercise in frustration, given his prowess in manipulating probability). Ask each player what his or her character is doing tonight. Also, ask them if they have any spells such as Unseen Aegis or Mage Sight active at the moment. Many mages activate shielding spells for the day, so it's fine if the players choose to have such spells cast ahead of time. Remember that shielding spells like Unseen Aegis or Fortune's Protection only last the day if the player spends a point of Mana for the character, but if such spells are cast at a Hallow, the mage avoids this cost. As such, if the characters wish to have a shielding spell up for the entire day, the only thing you need to nail down is when the spell was originally cast. Twenty-four hours from that point, the spell falls and the character needs to reactivate it.

If the characters are together for whatever reason, let them interact for a few minutes. When you and the players are ready, proceed from this point.

Read the following aloud:

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After a warm weekend, the temperature has dropped sharply. The wind from the ocean is chill, and it rattles the windows of the house every so often. Every now and again, you catch what you imagine to be a voice in song, one single melodic note, echoing from the hill near the sea. You've grown accustomed to that sound, if not entirely comfortable with it. You know it's an effect of the Hallow near the house, but it's still haunting.

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player roll Wits + Composure. Characters whose players fail the roll don't perceive anything special.

Read the following to any player who succeeds on the roll:

The sea's song cuts off abruptly. You feel a ripple of power pass through you. Something magical is nearby, closing in on the Hallow.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters have time to take one action before the spirits find them. During this time, players might wish to have their characters cast spells such as Mage Sight, Fortune's Protection or Spatial Map in order to aid in a coming battle. They might wish to run out to the Hallow or to group together in the main room of the house. Regardless, allow each player to state what his character is doing, make any necessary dice rolls and resolve any actions such as spellcasting, then proceed from this point.

Magic Suggestions— Perceiving the Spirits

Each of the characters knows a rote that grants Mage Sight. All 10 Arcana are capable of activating Mage Sight, but each Arcanum does so in a different way. The characters might activate Mage Sight once they know something is happening, and this can grant them information about the spirits. If a character activates Mage Sight (or already has this spell active), have the player roll Intelligence +

Occult. Success indicates that the mage can sense the spirits' resonance (envy for the Envy-spirit, lust for the Lust-spirit and so on). An exceptional success (five or more successes on the roll) means that the character knows that these spirits are parts of a greater spiritual presence that has fractured somehow.

Complications: If Tyrrenus uses Supernal Vision on these spirits, he knows that they have recently been attacked by magic, though he doesn't recognize the magical "signature" of the mage responsible. If Morrigan or Niamh use the Spirit Arcana to activate Mage Sight (Niamh knows this rote, and Morrigan can do so as an improvised spell) their players receive +1 to the Intelligence + Occult roll. Finally, if Ogma uses Third Eye on these spirits, he knows that they are rapidly adapting their resonance to match that of the characters. Regardless, the characters are about to find this out anyway.

Read the following aloud.

You feel a presence near you. You cannot see it. You hear no (creak on the floorboards/rustle in the sand) [depending on whether the character is indoors or not]. Your time among the Awakened has sharpened your sense of the unseen, and you feel the hairs on the back of your neck rise as the presence draws closer. A spirit? A ghost? You barely have time to consider the question when thoughts rise in your consciousness, unbidden. You find yourself dwelling on memories.

Read this to Jack's player

Watching from the sidewalk as people rode by in their warm, dry cars, and hating them.

Read this to Morrigan's player

The sense of accomplishment as a week-old corpse rose under your power for the first time.

Read this to Tyrrenus' player

Taking a handful of bills from your uncle, in exchange for telling the cops he'd been at home all night.

Read this to Ogma's player

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Loosening your belt after a seven-course meal.

Read this to Niamh's player

Waking up on the beach, pressed between two warm bodies, trying for a moment to recall their names before giving up and walking away.

Continue reading to everyone

The memories are comfortable, if somewhat shameful. Along with them, though, you find your name—your true name—rising in your mind like a bubble in water. The presence you felt is searching for it, looking for a handhold in your mind.

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player roll Resolve + Composure while you roll the spirits' Power + Finesse (seven dice). The spirits are attempting to possess the mages. If the player rolls as many or more successes than you do, the spirit cannot possess the mage and materializes to attack more directly. If you roll more successes, the character is possessed and the spirit tries to flee with the body in order to use its Claim Numen in privacy. The other mages can help their possessed comrade, however.

If the characters are currently involved in an activity that feeds their Vice (Ogma might be enjoying a bottle of wine, for instance) that player suffers a -1 penalty on the Resolve + Composure roll for his character to avoid possession.

Possessed mages can't do anything except try to break free of the possession. Doing so requires the player to spend a point of Willpower and roll Resolve + Composure. You roll Power + Finesse for the spirit, just as before. Although breaking free in this manner isn't guaranteed, the spirit can only force the body to stumble a few feet during a turn in which it is fighting for control.

If it becomes obvious to the spirits that they cannot escape in a mage's body, they abandon possession and instead materialize. If a spirit does manage to leave the house with the body, the mage is on his own and must fight his way out of the possession as described previously, or hope that his comrades come looking for him. This shouldn't take long, of course, but you might need to suggest to players that they find and rescue any of their missing compatriots.

Magic Suggestion— Avoiding and Combating Possession

Obviously, the Mind Arcanum is of greatest utility here. If Ogma has shielded himself mentally before the fight begins, the Gluttony-spirit suffers a -2 penalty to the Power + Finesse roll to possess him. If he has already been possessed, he can attempt to use magic to stave off the possession by forcing his mind away from focus on his Vice. This spell is improvised for Ogma, but if it succeeds, the spirit can no longer draw enough strength to keep the possession going and manifests.

Free mages can help their possessed housemates in a number of ways. Niamh can use Spirit magic to coax a spirit out of its host. Ogma can use Mind magic to emotionally push a mage away from the state of mind that nourishes the spirit possessing him. If all else fails, inflicting a point of bashing damage to the victim shocks her system enough that the spirit is jarred free.

Once the spirits have tried to possess the mages and failed, they move to a more direct approach. They materialize and try to sap the mages' Mana. Normally the Materialize Numen would require you to make a Power + Finesse roll for each spirit, but for purposes of this scene you can assume that the spirits manifest automatically (you should still spend the three Essence for the each spirit, though).

Read the following aloud.

Your minds are your own once again, but you are not alone. A human figure shimmers into being in front of each of you. At first it's just a shadow, a mirage, but becoming more solid every second. It looks... like you. You stare at your doppelgangers for a few seconds, your minds trying to resolve the bizarre sensation of looking into a mirror and watching the reflection act on its own whim. And then these doubles reach out for you, grabbing at your throats.

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Stop reading aloud.

The spirits attack with their Mana Drain Numen (see Dramatis Personae for their traits). They are fully solid and can attack and be damaged normally. Roll the spirits' Power + Finesse – the character's Defense to attack. They are not trying, initially, to damage the characters, but simply to touch them in order to steal their Mana. If the characters prove too difficult to grab, they try to beat them senseless and drain them in peace.

Any attack the characters perform on the spirits, magical or otherwise, cut away chunks of their materialized "bodies." The spirits do not bleed, but lose Corpus from the attacks. In addition, the spirits emit small signs of their true natures when attacked. For instance, if the Gluttony-spirit loses Corpus, it might give off the scent of food, probably unnecessary dessert or snack food, while loose change falls to the ground if the Greed-spirit takes damage. (This money disappears when the spirit flees.) The sound of applause might fill the air when a character harms the Pride-spirit, while shrieks and moans accompany the Lust-spirit's wounds. The Envy-spirit might grow small upon being struck, or the area damaged might turn a poisonous green for a moment.

During the fight, the spirits don't acknowledge each other or any mage except the ones who share their individual Vices. They plead with those mages, however, asking them to surrender and help them. The spirits beg the mages not to "make them return" or "send them back," and what's worse, they call the mages by their birth names rather than by their Shadow Names. The Envy-spirit also whistles as it attacks Jack, which means you can (and should) take advantage of the bane dice from his Destiny Merit.

Each spirit disincorporates and flees after it has taken five points of damage. All of the spirits flee after two turns of combat in any event, *unless* no spirit has taken any damage by that point, in which case they keep fighting until one of them takes five points of damage. When the characters have won the fight, proceed from this point.

Read the following:

The spirits fade into nothing. You wait for a moment, tense, waiting for them to reappear or strike at your minds again, but the attack does not come. They seem to have retreated. You are all shaken, however. Those creatures at least know your true names, and that is enough to make them dangerous.

Stop reading aloud.

This scene ends when the characters regroup and start to discuss their options. If no one has taken Mana from the Hallow today, characters might want to avail themselves of this option. Remember that only three points of Mana are available per day.

SCENE TWO: FINDING ADAM

In this scene, the characters regroup and plan their next move, eventually tracking the spirits back to Adam.

Let the players discuss what just happened. They will probably note that each of the spirits seemed to reflect a negative quality present in that spirit's target, and this might lead players to the very logical conclusion that these spirits were sent specifically to find and attack them. The cabal has no enemies that it knows of, however. If Ogma noticed that the spirits were adapting themselves to fit the characters, he might surmise that the creatures didn't hunt down the cabal specifically, but just imprinted on the first group of mages they came across.

The following are a few examples of tactics and directions the characters might take, along with their results. Be aware, though, that players invariably come up with courses of action that you (and we) can't anticipate, so be prepared to improvise a bit.

- **Contact the Consilium:** Tyrrhenus might decide to contact the Boston Consilium and let them know what has occurred. He is only acknowledged by the hierarchy there, though, so he doesn't have enough clout to get through to anyone terribly important. His contact in the Consilium is an acolyte, a woman named Frances. Frances serves

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as an assistant to a mage in the Consilium. Her job is to take correspondence from mages outside the Consilium's court (which is actually in Salem rather than Boston proper) and forward it along to the appropriate people. Tyrrhenus is a member of the Consilium, but he doesn't have a way to reach the higher-ups on short notice.

If Tyrrhenus contacts Fran to explain to her what has happened (and perhaps request help or advice), have his player roll Presence + Persuasion + his Consilium Status (six total dice). If this roll fails, Fran takes Tyrrhenus' information but misunderstands what he's trying to tell her and doesn't bother contacting her employer until the next day. If it succeeds, Fran says she will contact her employer immediately and relay the message. If the player rolls an exceptional success, she impresses up her employer how important this matter is, and the Consilium aids the cabal from afar using Space and Fate magic. (In game terms, give each player a +1 bonus to a roll of your choice sometime during this story. This bonus takes the form of a lucky coincidence or turn of fate.)

In any case, if Tyrrhenus *does* contact either the Consilium or his order (the Silver Ladder), make a note of it. Even if it doesn't net immediate results, this action has benefits in the next story.

• **Contact the Orders:** Each of the characters belongs to a magical order and has a way to contact that order in the case of an emergency. For the most part, however, the characters aren't respected enough within their orders to merit immediate assistance. Any of the orders can tell the characters that they know of no other cabals in Quincy, but the Silver Ladder, the Mysterium, and the Adamantine Arrow have no further information. If Ogma or Jack makes contact with his respective orders, however, have the player roll Presence + Persuasion + 1 (for Status). Apply a -3 modifier to Jack and -4 to Ogma, as this information is extremely obscure (this gives Ogma a chance die). If the roll fails, the order has no special information (no special effect for dramatic failure). If the roll succeeds, however, the representative mentions that a mage named Adam used to live

in the area, but he has been out of contact with Awakened society for years. The Guardians of the Veil know this because he was involved in some magical practices they considered unsafe at the time (but apparently not so dangerous that they kept tabs on him). The Free Council knows his name because he used to be a member. Neither order has an address for him, however.

• **Sisyphus:** If Jack contacts his thrall with the intent of using a favor for information, have his player roll Presence + Persuasion. Apply positive or negative modifiers based on how polite Jack is during this exchange. If the roll fails, Sisyphus agrees to help, but counts answering questions or giving assistance as one of the three favors. If the roll succeeds, Sisyphus mentions that with Jack's knowledge of Fate, he could find a path for the cabal to follow quite easily by himself. He considers this piece of advice to be simply something he would say to any mage in trouble, and doesn't count it against the three favors.

• **Seven Deadly Sins:** The characters might note that the spirits correspond to five of the seven deadly sins, and thus wonder why Wrath and Sloth were not present. (Feel free to supply the missing sins to the players if they're having trouble remembering all seven.) This might well prompt the characters to look into their personal libraries or check the Internet for information on the seven deadly sins. Characters pursuing this line of research find information on religious texts and other mundane discussions of these vices, but nothing particularly relevant to their situation.

• **Spirits:** Niamh knows enough about spirits to come to some conclusions, if she considers what she's seen. She already knows that the spirits have vanished back into the Shadow Realm, because if they were still present but invisible and intangible (in a state called "Twilight") the mages would be able to sense them. Have her player roll Intelligence + Occult (four dice). If the roll succeeds, she realizes that she could probably track the spirits' movements through Twilight and perhaps trace them back to their point of origin.

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In order to find the spirits' origin, the characters need to use magic. The spirits don't leave mundane tracks, nor did any of them interact with the physical world in a way that facilitates tracking. As such, the characters must turn to their knowledge of the Arcana to trace the spirits, but they have a number of options on the particulars:

- **Space:** Ogma is capable of scrying—using Space magic to find a particular being or person. Sympathetic magic normally costs a Mana point, but since he can cast the spell at the Hallow, he can avoid this expenditure. He cannot scry to find the Vice-spirits. They have disappeared back into the Shadow Realm, and Ogma doesn't possess the necessary magic to find them there. He can, however, look for a mental resonance similar to the ones the spirits produced, which can lead him to Adam. Roll Space + Gnosis – 4 (because the resonance is weak), or a *chance die*. If the player spends a Willpower point, the dice pool becomes two (Space (2) + Gnosis (1) + 3 for the Willpower point – 4 = 2).

- **Time:** Niamh or Jack can look forward in time to find the characters' next move. Since the destinies of Adam and the characters have become inextricably linked through the Vice-spirits, this is easier than it would be otherwise. This is an improvised spell for both Niamh and Jack, and Niamh's player must spend a Mana point or perform the magic at the Hallow (because Time is not one of Niamh's Path Arcana). Roll Time + Gnosis (three dice).

- **Fate:** Jack can find Adam's house randomly, either by getting into a car and driving aimlessly or throwing a dart at a map. Roll Fate + Gnosis (three dice).

- **Prime:** Tyrrenus can trace the energy left by the spirits as they traveled to the cabal's sanctum. To do so, he must use the Supernal Vision rote, then he can track the spirits' resonance. Doing so requires an extended roll of Wits + Occult (four dice), with each roll taking 10 minutes. Once the player reaches 10 successes, Tyrrenus has traced the spirit's "tracks" to Adam's house.

- **Spirit:** Niamh or Morrigan can trace the spirit's resonances back to Adam. Doing so requires using Spirit to activate Mage Sight (an improvised spell for Morrigan, and one for which her player must spend a point of Mana, except at the Hallow) and then following the "trail" of spiritual energy back to Adam's house. Roll Spirit + Gnosis (two dice) for Morrigan to activate Mage Sight. Use the Second Sight rote for Niamh. Then roll Intelligence + Occult as an extended action to track the resonance. Each roll takes 10 minutes, and it takes 10 successes to find Adam. If the player rolls five successes or more in one roll, however, she notices that the spiritual resonance grows stronger and more complex at one point. (This, of course, is where Wrath and Sloth split off from the other spirits.)

If the players come up with other methods of using their magic to find Adam, and you feel their ideas are within the character's power, allow them to try it. Make sure to remind the players of the benefits of casting magic at a Hallow. This is a lesson that will serve them well in later stories. Also, if the characters wish to cast shielding spells that require a point of Mana for longer duration, they would be advised to do so at the Hallow.

Once the characters have found Adam's house, continue to the next scene.

SCENE THREE: A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

In this scene, Adam explains what happened and begs the characters to help him. When the characters arrive at the house, after finding it with whatever means they favor, proceed from this point.

Read the following:

You turn left into a street lined with old houses. Most of them are well-kept, flower gardens just beginning to show signs of life and lawns not quite recovered enough from winter to demand mowing. As you slowly cruise down the street, looking for the house you saw in the vision (adapt to fit whatever

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means the characters used to find Adam's house), you feel a rush of magic. The house is nearby, and as you approach, it seems to fairly glow with Supernal energy. The energy is chaotic, though, not focused and directed as the abode of a powerful mage would indicate. Instead, magic seems to be flowing, almost bleeding, from the house's structure.

The house's physical structure, however, is intact. It is white with blue trim, and looks as well-kept as any other on the street. It has two stories and a high, peaked roof with a triangular window—probably an attic. You notice a late-model sedan in the driveway but do not see any lights on in the house.

Stop reading aloud.

Have the players roll Intelligence + Occult. Success means the character realizes that the strange magic flow is due to a number of protective wards on the house being shattered from the *inside*.

The characters might take any number of actions at this point. Srying into the house is impossible because the characters do not have a strong enough sympathetic connection to do so. Other magical methods of gleaning information exist, however, as do some mundane ones.

- **Death:** If Morrigan has Grim Sight active, ask her player to roll Intelligence + Occult (seven dice). If the roll succeeds, tell the player that Morrigan has the distinct feeling that someone died in this vicinity very recently. The player might wish to put out a general summons for any ghosts in the area. This is possible at Morrigan's level of the Death Arcanum, but the person who died (Adam's servant) did not linger as a ghost, so no spirits respond to such a call.

- **Life:** Niamh can use the Life Arcanum to detect living things in her immediate area. She might wish to use this power to scan the house for any living creatures. She can choose to ignore any given type of life, scanning for "humans only" or "humans and dogs," so that she isn't overwhelmed by sensing every cockroach, spider, and mouse in the house during the scan. This is an improvised spell (the roll is Life + Gnosis), and the player needs four successes on the roll (from the front door) or five successes (from the street) to detect Adam's

presence. Even then, all Niamh can unearth is that there is one living human being in the house.

- **Matter:** Morrigan can touch a wall or a door and make it transparent, allowing the characters to see into the house. Adam is currently on the floor in the front hallway, so making the front door transparent allows the characters to see him. This spell is *vulgar*, however, and so risks a Paradox. The roll is Matter + Gnosis.

- **Mind:** Ogma can use Mind to detect a sentient mind in the house in much the same way that Niamh can use Life. Ogma, however, can combine Mind with Space and find the mind's exact location within the building, as well as what condition that mind is in. The spell is improvised, of course, but if it is successful, Ogma knows that the only sentient being in the house is in the front hallway, that he is in a great deal of pain, and that he is ashamed and afraid. Ogma also senses the remains of wards around the house, but they have been shattered from the inside. Roll Gnosis + Space (three dice).

- **Spirit:** Morrigan or Niamh can check the area using the Spirit Arcanum (or Death, to check for ghosts), but they find no spirits in the immediate area.

- **Prime:** Tyrhenus can use the Prime Arcanum to build a clearer picture of what happened at this house, magically speaking. He must first activate Supernal Vision, and then the player can roll Intelligence + Occult (three dice). If the roll succeeds, Tyrhenus realizes that there was a battle here involving much the same resonance as at the characters' sanctum, but the magic used here was more powerful and concentrated. The power was contained for a time, but then the Vice-spirits burst out of the protective wards and fled.

- **Time:** Jack or Niamh can use the Time Arcanum to look at the past and find out what happened here. In either case, this is an improvised spell, but there are some other variables to consider. The player must state how far in the past she wishes her character to look, and then from that point the character sees and hears one turn's worth of time per success. Guessing how long ago to look

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back can be difficult, but Jack can use Time and Fate together to gauge how long ago something significant (for the characters' purposes) happened here. This would normally require a spell, but you can waive that roll in the interest of keeping things moving along.

If the mages use only the Time Arcanum, they see and hear the events with their physical senses only. That is, they hear shouting and crashes from inside, and then hear a horrific scream and a sound of tearing fabric. They hear a man's voice scream "No!" and then hear a body collapse near the front door.

If Niamh combines Time with Spirit, she sees the house ablaze with spiritual activity. She sees a sudden dimming of this power before the first scream, and just as the man screams "No!" she sees the Vice-spirits—all seven of them—fly through the house's walls and away into the night. If she uses Life as well, she notes two living beings inside up until the first scream, at which point one of those lives flickers out.

If Jack combines Time with Space, he gains a rough perspective on where all of this takes place—on the first floor, in a large enclosed room. He has no familiarity with the house, however, and cannot see anything beyond that.

Remember that Time is not a Path Arcana for Niamh, so any spell which uses Time as the primary Arcanum costs her a Mana point.

- **Check Mail:** The characters might look in the mailbox on the porch to see who lives at the house. They find mail addressed to "Paul Kresham" and "Allan Flynn." Paul is the mage known as Adam, and Flynn was his ill-fated acolyte.

- **Walk Around House:** If the characters walk up the driveway and around the house, proceed from this point.

Read the following:

You find a back door to the house, but it is locked. A small, one-car garage sits at the end of the drive, which is odd, since you had to walk around a car to get this far. The house has a small back yard that shows no signs of ever having been gardened or treated—the grass is yellowed and stunted. A four-foot-high chain-link

fence surrounds the yard, but since it doesn't prevent anyone from entering the yard by walking up the driveway you wonder what it's meant to do.

Stop reading aloud.

- **Knock:** If the characters take the direct approach and knock on the door, they hear a weak voice ask for help. If they simply try the door, it is locked, but any character can easily rectify that (have the player roll Dexterity + Larceny). If mundane methods don't work, a character can kick in the door with a successful Strength + Athletics roll, or, of course, use magic to open the lock. (Fate 2 for a fortuitous jiggle of a hairpin, Matter 2 to simply unlock it, Death 2 to corrode the lock.)

ADAM

Once the characters have gained entry to the house, proceed from this point.

Read the following:

A man lies on the floor in the hallway near the front door. He is wearing a pair of black slacks and a white shirt stained with blood. His hair is gray and his hands tremble slightly. He raises his head a bit as you enter the house and weakly asks for help.

A quick glance around reveals a staircase leading up and two doorways side by side. The one closest to the front door leads to a small sitting room, while the next one leads into a large, windowless room. This second space is completely suffused with magic. The walls are marked with Atlantean runes, and you see pieces of brass, perhaps from a shattered bowl or cup, on the floor.

[If Tyrrenus has Supernal Vision active, read the next paragraph. If not, skip it and go to the one following it.]

This room is a Hallow, about as strong as the one your cabal shares. The resonance here is subtle, but concentrating, you begin to sense its flavor. This Hallow gives off energy best described as "patient." The power is potent, but tempered.

Glancing further into the room, you see a large pool of blood. In a darkened corner, you see a human being... or what remains of one. The unfortunate man seems to have been torn to pieces and left in a pile.

Stop reading aloud.

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The characters probably want some answers, and this involves reviving Adam. None of the mages has enough expertise in the Life Arcanum to help him, but Niamh and Morrigan both have a bit of medical knowledge. Have the player of any character who wishes to aid Adam roll Intelligence + Medicine. Success means that the character binds his wounds and helps him to a seat, reviving him enough that he can speak. If Niamh wishes to use the Life Arcanum to assess Adam's health, she finds that he has been battered and is suffering from internal bruising but is not in any danger of death from his injuries.

Searching the House

The characters might wish to search Adam's house. You can allow this to take as much or as little time as you wish, and include as much detail as you wish, extrapolating from the description given thus far. Since the house is going to burn at the end of this story, however, it doesn't make much sense for us to spend time detailing it here.

Once the characters have revived Adam, he becomes agitated and tries unsuccessfully to stand. He calms down after a moment and asks the characters what happened. When he hears their tale, tears fill his eyes and he begs the characters to forgive him.

Adam explains that he has, for some years now, followed a magical philosophy called *goetia*. This philosophy involves calling forth one's own inner demons and vices, giving them spiritual form, and besting them. Have the players roll Intelligence + Occult. Success means that character has heard of this practice, and knows that it is not widely accepted or favored. An exceptional success means that the character knows that such magic isn't forbidden or even "evil" by nature, but that corrupt goetic mages have been known to enslave Sleepers by manipulating vice and weakness.

Adam insists that he meant no one any harm. He is a Warlock, like Ogma, and claims that his

visions of Pandemonium during his Awakening led him to the belief that there were creatures from the Supernal Realms that would be dangerous to the entire Fallen World should they ever cross the Abyss. He maintains, though, that Sleepers have the capacity to fight those creatures if they are given the tools, and only mages are fit to teach them. For mages to undertake such instruction, though, they must first best their own vices. Adam claims to have spent the last several years calling forth and besting any aspect of himself that the demons might use to manipulate him, finally deciding he was ready to take on something more dangerous.

At this point, Adam starts shaking, obviously trying to hold back tears. He slowly explains that he was horribly wrong, that no human being is capable of facing down the personifications of vice and surviving, no matter how powerful a mage he might be. The spirits burst forth into our world, he says, but lacked form and definition (which is why, as Jack might have noticed earlier, the spirits were originally one being). Since Adam's mind was free of vice, they set upon Allan Flynn, his assistant, and tore his mind and body asunder. They then defined themselves in terms of seven base urges and, since they could not take what they needed from Adam, they beat him into unconsciousness and fled.

Magical Suggestion—Verification

Any character with Mind 1 or higher can cast a simple spell to tell if Adam is lying. He isn't. Everything he says is true as far as he knows it.

At this point, or any time during the scene, the characters can ask Adam questions. He answers to the best of his ability. The following are some of the more important/obvious questions the players might think to ask.

- **Why did the spirits try to possess us?** Adam isn't sure exactly what the spirits want, but the characters' information adds some crucial pieces to the puzzle. Apparently the spirits are only capable

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of possessing or stealing energy from mages (since they passed up hundreds of Sleepers on their way to the mages' sanctum). Adam does not know exactly what the spirits hope to accomplish by possessing mages, but he suspects it will enable them to stay in the Fallen World and interact with its denizens.

- **What order do you belong to?** The characters might be curious to know Adam's position in Awakened society (Tyrrhenus especially). Adam was once a member of the Free Council, but he renounced his membership years ago. If Tyrrhenus calls Fran, his contact in the Boston Consilium, he can verify this information.

- **How can we destroy the spirits?** Adam does not know. Most spirits (as the characters know) simply disincorporate and re-form later if they suffer too much damage. He suspects that, like all spirits, these creatures have bans which could be used to dispel or destroy them, but the Vice-spirits are beyond his ken and he doesn't know what their bans might be.

- **Where are the other two?** Adam is too disoriented to notice unless the characters mention it, but two of the spirits (Wrath and Sloth) were not present at the characters' sanctum. When Adam realizes this, he grows even more agitated and tries to stand up again, saying that those other two spirits must be accounted for. Adam is far too weak to find the spirits, though, and begs the characters to hunt down Wrath and Sloth before they find hosts.

- **What about the first five?** The mages might justifiably be concerned that the spirits they fought will simply find other victims. Adam reluctantly informs the characters that the spirits have "marked" them now, and that the spirits will return for them at some point. Adam is unsure how intelligent the spirits are, but he does know that the characters are in danger. He pledges to help them in any way that he can, but he reiterates that if the Wrath- and Sloth-spirits have found victims already, the characters have a duty to their fellow Awakened to assist them.

- **Why should we help?** Adam never threatens or bullies the characters. He does not attempt to

hold his magical prowess over their heads, but by the same token, he doesn't try to bribe them, either. He simply states that even if the characters aren't interested in helping him to rectify his mistake (for which he doesn't judge them, though he does mention gently that *all* mages make mistakes and that one reason the orders and Consilii exist is to provide something of a safety net), their fates are bound up in this matter now. The spirits will return for them, and they stand to save themselves pain and suffering by being proactive.

- **How can you help us?** Adam promises to do what he can to find the spirits' bans, but he is too weak to perform magic at the moment. He pledges to look through his library and try to find clues as to what went wrong and what the spirits' bans might be. He gives the characters his phone number and tells them to call as soon as they find the spirits, and he will do what he can to instruct them.

Off the Beaten Path

The characters might be angry with Adam for unleashing these spirits upon the world, and rightly so. He accepts full responsibility for his actions, but if the characters press the issue, he gently reminds them that regardless of how monumental his mistake, it is in the past and there are greater problems at hand. He is fully willing to submit to judgment before the Boston Consilium once the crisis has been averted, but in the meantime he needs the characters' help.

If the players refuse, though, there isn't much you can do to force them. (Well, Adam is a master of the Mind Arcanum and probably *could* force them, but he isn't strong enough to attempt such magic or willing to command others' minds.) The spirits have fixated on them, however, and will begin to torment them within the next few days. The players can feel free not to follow the plot of the story, but their characters are bound up in these events now whether they like it or not.

ACT TWO:

SLOTH

In this act, the characters track down one of the two unaccounted-for Vice-spirits, that of Sloth. The characters will meet Amelia, the Wrath-host, in the next installment of **Gloria Mundi**. Instead of possessing a mage, the Sloth-spirit has possessed an untended Hallow not too far from Adam's home. This sinkhole of magic doesn't present a danger to the mages in the same way that the other spirits will, but it can prove deadly nonetheless.

SCENE ONE: FINDING THE SPIRIT

Finding the Sloth-spirit isn't as easy as it would seem. The spirit, true to its nature, is subtle and insidious, and its resonance is extremely difficult to track. Using magic to track it doesn't work well, because the Sinkhole sucks in any magic that comes near it, including magic meant to unveil or detect it. Characters using Space, Time, Fate, Prime, or Mind in the same manner as described previously when searching for Adam find that their limbs feel heavy for a few seconds, and then they lose their bearings as though drunk. The character can snap himself out of this state easily enough, but he cannot get a bead on the Sloth-spirit.

The characters can apply logic to find the spirit, however. Allow them to discuss where the spirit might have gone. They should realize fairly quickly that the spirit probably didn't flee too far, being a spirit of inaction and laziness. (You can allow a player to make a Wits + Intelligence roll to figure this out if no one realizes it.) It still needs a source of energy, of course, but given its nature, it would probably prefer to let its food come to it rather than go out "hunting." As such, the characters should look for any sources of Mana in the immediate

area. Adam knows of no other mages, but then, he didn't know about the characters, either. He mentions that the spirit might be able to take power from a Hallow if it found one with a similar enough resonance.

With all of this in mind, the characters have a few options in trying to find the Sloth-spirit.

What About Wrath?

The characters might well point out that Wrath has the potential to cause more damage than Sloth, and is apt to be easier to find in any case. They can look for Wrath if they like, but they find that their magical attempts to find this spirit are swallowed up in the Sinkhole, just as if they were searching for Sloth. The Sinkhole is greedy for magic, and since the Vice-spirits are all linked, they all share the knowledge of the characters' names and resonances, allowing the Sloth-spirit to absorb their magic, now that it has had time to settle into its new home.

- **Find nearby mages:** None of the characters know about any other local mages, but Tyrrenus can contact the Boston Consilium to find out if any others are known to live in Quincy. He discovers, however, that the Consilium does not know of any.

- **Find nearby Hallows:** The characters have several options for finding Hallows near to Adam's home. Most orders of mages keep track of Hallows in a given area, though the Mysterium has the most extensive records. Niamh can ask, but finding the information requires some convincing on her part. Have her player roll Manipulation + Persuasion

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+ 1 (for her Status Merit). If she explains the situation to her order, add another die, since this is an important matter. If the roll fails, she is told that someone will check the order's records and contact her in the morning. If it succeeds, she is put on hold for a few minutes and then told that the Mysterium has records of a recent Hallow just over a mile east of Adam's house.

The characters might also decide to leave the house and search for a Hallow rather than a spirit. Tyrrenus, as the only character with any skill in the Prime Arcanum, has the best chance of finding it. This works on the same system given for finding Adam, except that the Hallow's resonance makes it difficult to find (this translates to a -3 penalty to the Intelligence + Occult roll). If Tyrrenus wishes, of course, he can use Prime 2 to bestow Supernal Vision on another mage, allowing that character to search as well (and allowing the players to take advantage of someone like Morrigan, who has a much better dice pool). The only other issue is which direction to travel in. The Fate Arcanum can help here, or the characters might reason (correctly) that the spirits started traveling in the same direction, and the Sloth-spirit simply stopped before the others.

DISTANCE

Just for some sense of perspective, the mages' sanctum is on the east side of the city, near the coastline. Adam's house is only about five miles west of the sanctum, and the characters might be taken aback by how little they know about the arcane truths of their own surroundings. In any event, the Sinkhole is only about a mile from Adam's home, going east. As mentioned, the spirits were all going in the same direction, but the Sloth-spirit simply found a home nearby.

SCENE TWO: SINKHOLE

In this scene, the characters find the Sloth-spirit in a Hallow, and must contend not only with how to dislodge and confine or destroy it, but the effects of its resonance on their own minds and bodies.

The characters can find the Sinkhole using any of the methods in the previous scene. Once they are on the right track and approach the Hallow, proceed from this point.

Note: This scene assumes the characters are driving. If this is not the case, obviously the scene requires some revision. Be sure to stress the feeling of lethargy as the characters grow closer to the Sinkhole. They don't feel sleepy, they simply feel that movement and action isn't worth the effort. Characters on foot, therefore, should find it very difficult to continue on toward the Hallow.

Read the following:

As you drive east, conversation halts for a moment. Everyone stares languidly out the window and then yawns in unison. You feel as though you are riding downhill, although this road is flat and level.

Stop reading aloud.

Have the driver's player roll Wits + Drive (this is probably Morrigan's player, since Morrigan owns an SUV capable of transporting the entire cabal), then proceed from this point.

If the roll succeeds, read the following to the driver:

You snap your eyes open just as the car starts to wander to the right, toward a telephone pole. You jerk the wheel and right the car, but even that action is an effort. Up ahead on the right, you see a parking lot—you are near Faxon Park.

If the roll fails, read the following to the driver:

Your eyes focus in front of you and you realize you are heading straight for a telephone pole. The vehicle crashes into the pole and stops dead. Everyone in the car pitches forward.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters were wearing seatbelts, they suffer no damage. Likewise, any character with an armor spell such as Unseen Aegis currently active suffers no damage. Anyone not wearing a seatbelt suffers two dice of bashing damage; the car wasn't going fast enough to cause any real injury. Once any damage rolls have been resolved, proceed from this point.

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Read the following after the crash:

The front of the car is dented, but not damaged enough to render it inoperable. The telephone pole is cracked and splintered, but doesn't look to be in danger of falling. A passing car slows as the driver stares, appears to consider calling the police, and then shrugs and drives off.

Glancing around, you see a parking lot nearby. The telephone pole sits on the edge of Faxon Park.

Stop reading aloud.

Faxon Park is a public recreation area that contains two little league fields as well as many walking paths and bike trails. For the most part, the park is a well-maintained and popular spot for Quincy residents (the characters might even avail themselves of the area occasionally). One of the baseball fields, however, has become a Hollow in a most disturbing fashion.

Last spring, a homeless man began sleeping under the bleachers at one of the baseball diamonds. When little league games took place, he'd sit in the stands and watch. Many of the citizens knew him by sight, but no one ever asked his name or whether he had someplace to go. It was clear to anyone who saw him that he was hungry and probably mentally ill, but no one sought help for him. He died at the end of August, sitting beneath the bleachers, largely because no one could be bothered to help him. (Any of the characters remembers this story if the player succeeds on an Intelligence + Streetwise roll.)

The collective feelings of guilt and shame crystallized into a weak Hollow, and this Hollow provided a suitable home for the spirit of Sloth. Much like the other Vice-spirits attuned themselves to the characters, the Sloth-spirit has imprinted itself onto this Hollow and would be content to slowly drain the life (and Mana) out of the area. Since all seven of the spirits are linked and share knowledge, however, it knows about the characters and can drain their personal Mana if they succumb to its lethargy.

Sensing the Hollow requires Mage Sight. Any player whose character has Mage Sight active must roll Intelligence + Occult to sense the

Hollow. If the character has activated Mage Sight with the Prime Arcanum, the player receives a +1 on the roll. If this roll succeeds, the character can sense that the Hollow is centered in the bleachers of the nearby baseball field, but even if the roll fails, the characters can find the Hollow by simply walking. The feeling of heading downhill persists, leading the characters toward the Hollow.

Once the characters arrive at the Hollow, either by magical perception or simple inertia, proceed from this point.

Read the following:

The baseball field has yet to be trimmed. The base lines are still visible from last season, but are faded and pale. The bleachers stand as the lonely testament to a cipher's death, and looking at them, you know you should feel disturbed, or at least moved. Instead, you feel... It's all you can do to avoid sitting down on those bleachers and waiting.

Stop reading aloud.

The Sloth-spirit knows the characters are here and can sense their Mana, but it can't simply drain their energy as the other spirits did. (Rather, it can, but it doesn't because of the effort involved.) Instead, it begins making the characters comfortable. The temperature rises slightly, the wind slows down, and the sweet smell of spring flowers fills the air. If the characters sit down on the bleachers, the spirit can attempt to drain their Mana.

Have each player roll Resolve + Stamina in a contested roll against the spirit's Power + Finesse (seven dice). If the player wins, the character keeps her wits about her and can act normally. If the spirit wins, the character is overcome by the power of the place and sits down on the bleachers. Note that such characters don't feel compelled to sit, as though an outside force is controlling them. They simply feel that walking around and searching the area is too much effort.

Any character who sits on the bleachers, whether by choice or by compulsion, is subjected to the spirit's Mana Drain Numen. (Normally, the Vice-spirits can only drain Mana from mages of

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the appropriate Vice, but this spirit's connection to the Hallow gives it the power to affect the area rather than individuals. In essence, the spirit is using the Hallow as a filter through which it draws and "flavors" the mage's Mana for its own use.) As before, roll the spirit's Power + Finesse in a contest roll against the mage's Resolve + Gnosis. If the spirit wins, the mage loses three points of Mana. The spirit can attempt to use this Numen *each turn* as long as the mage remains on the bleachers.

Mages who lose Mana to the Sinkhole don't notice anything untoward, however. They don't feel pained or weakened, simply comfortable. Mages who do not sit on the bleachers, though, might notice their compatriots losing energy. Doing so requires a successful Intelligence + Occult roll. Success means that the character sees the drained character(s) lose color from their cheeks, becoming pale and sallow.

If the characters don't stand up or find another way to end the effect, things only worsen. Once a character runs out of Mana, the spirit starts scouring the mage's body for energy. Instead of losing Mana, the character suffers one level of lethal damage, and the spirit gains three points of Essence. It is possible for a mage to die thus, the life energy drained away by the Sinkhole.

The mages aren't powerless at any stage of this scene, though.

PROTECTION

The following are some ways that the mages can protect themselves from the Sinkhole's influence.

- **Mind:** Ogma can shield himself from the effects of the Sinkhole by means of an improvised Mind spell. Roll Mind + Gnosis (three dice). If successful, Ogma is immune to the spirit's compulsions (i.e., his player does not need to worry about being forced to the bleachers). Though the feeling of lethargy is still present, it has no game effect.

Also, Ogma can use the Emotional Urging spell on his fellow mages to instill feelings of

motivation or energy. This works as described in Ogma's character write-up. If he casts this spell on a character *before* she sits on the bleachers, the player gains a +3 bonus on the Resolve + Stamina roll made to resist the spirit's powers. If he does so after a character has already been seated, the character's player can immediately roll Stamina + Resolve. If this roll succeeds, the character can stand up and thus free herself from the possibility of losing Mana (and her life).

- **Death:** Morrigan or Ogma can use the Death Arcanum to find the ghost of the homeless man who died at the field. The ghost is present but barely self-aware due to the Sloth-spirit's influence. (Ghosts have Essence just as other types of spirits do, and this one has lost much of his.) Either of these mages can attempt to talk with the ghost, but he is so weak that he cannot do much more than nod.

Morrigan, however, has the potential to heal the ghost. This spell is improvised as well as vulgar, meaning that she risks Paradox by casting it. Roll Death + Gnosis (four dice). If the roll succeeds, Morrigan restores enough energy to the ghost that it can use one of its own Numina. The ghost fills Morrigan (or another character of her choice) with a sudden burst of fear and revulsion. While the experience is by no means pleasant, it does prevent the character from succumbing to the Sinkhole's power. If used on a character who's already seated on the bleachers, it allows a Resolve + Stamina roll to stand up, but adds two dice to the roll.

- **Forces:** Tyrrhenus can lower the area's temperature enough to make characters uncomfortable. This spell is improvised. Roll Forces + Gnosis (three dice). If the spell succeeds, the chill in the air grants a +2 on any attempt to resist the Sinkhole's powers, and allows a Resolve + Stamina roll to get up off the bleachers.

- **Spirit:** Niamh can shield herself from the spiritual urging of the Sinkhole by surrounding herself with spiritual energy of opposing resonance (much like Ogma's use of opposing emotion with the Mind Arcanum). Roll Gnosis + Spirit (three

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dice). If she succeeds, she gains two dice on the Resolve + Stamina roll to avoid sitting or to stand up after sitting.

In addition, both Niamh and Morrigan can use Exorcist's Eye to verify that the Sloth-spirit has indeed possessed the Hallow. They can even find the spirit's exact location—it is, of course, lurking beneath the bleachers. This is an improvised spell for Niamh.

- **Time:** Jack or Niamh can look ahead to the future of the area and see that sitting on the bleachers should be avoided at all costs. This translates to a +2 on the Resolve + Stamina roll to avoid sitting down, but only a +1 to the roll if they have already taken a seat. Roll Time + Gnosis.

Bottomless Pit

Most of the Vice-spirits can hold only 15 points of Essence. The Sloth-spirit can hold and use only 15, but it has no limit on how much Essence it can absorb. It simply spreads any extra out over the surrounding area, letting the energy of apathy suffuse the baseball field. Given enough time and Essence, it could increase the Hallow's rating and perhaps even begin to scour the bodies of Sleepers for Essence.

Any character can come to this conclusion with a successful Intelligence + Occult roll; Niamh and Tyrrenus receive +1 to this roll for their greater understanding of spirits and Mana, respectively. Only grant players this roll if you feel they need additional motivation to dislodge the spirit, though.

DISLODGING THE SPIRIT

The next section presents methods for actually disposing of the Sloth-spirit, but before the characters can do that, they need to force it to leave the Hallow. The thing that the characters need to remember (and uses of the Dream Merit or the Fate Arcanum to gain hints should provide

this reminder) is that the spirit is one of sloth, not sleep. It isn't looking for rest, it is looking to avoid effort. It will therefore take the path of least resistance in *everything* it does, even if doing so ultimately proves to be detrimental to its own well-being. The characters can use this to their advantage in a number of ways. Some suggestions follow on how the characters might coax or force the spirit out of the Hallow.

- **Make the Area Inhospitable:** The Sloth-spirit wants everything to remain calm and subdued. Chaos is antithetical to it, because chaos forces constant reevaluation and action. If the characters can introduce a suitably chaotic element to the area, the spirit will end its possession of the Hallow.

Probably the easiest way to do this is to burn the bleachers. Fire is wild and unpredictable, and serves as a superb symbol of chaos with which to frighten the spirit. If the characters burn the bleachers, the spirit gives up its position in the Hallow immediately (and the atmosphere of apathy and fatigue immediately lightens).

- **Lure the Spirit:** The spirit possessed a Hallow because it was less work than finding a mage with the appropriate Vice, but given the choice, it would rather inhabit an Awakened soul. The mages don't know anyone with the Vice of Sloth, but they do have another option. Ogma can use Mind 2 to alter his mental state so that he appears to exude the Vice of Sloth. This is an improvised spell, but Ogma's player receives a +1 to the roll due to the resonance of the Hallow. If the spell succeeds, the spirit leaves the Hallow and immediately tries to possess Ogma (so the characters had better be ready to act).

- **Paradox:** Another possibility, should the characters think of it, is to create a Paradox near the Hallow. The hunger of the Abyss frightens the spirit into leaving the Hallow, no matter the strength of the Paradox. Of course, this puts the characters at some risk, as well.

- **Enlist the Ghost's Aid:** The ghost of the man who died here despises the apathy that ultimately led to his demise, and he wants the

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Sloth-spirit gone. If Morrigan can help him (as described previously), he can engage the spirit directly, pulling it free from the Hallow. This would normally involve contested rolls, but you can simply assume that the ghost pulls the spirit free, since both the ghost and the spirit are Storyteller characters. (It's not much fun for the players to sit and watch you roll dice against yourself.)

COMBATING THE SINKHOLE

The characters have many options at their disposal for ridding the Hallow of the Sloth-spirit. Four methods follow for getting rid of the Sloth-spirit. The players might well come up with other ideas, and you must adjudicate whether or not the characters have the resources and skill to make them work.

- **New Home:** Probably the best option is for the characters to have somewhere for the spirit to go once it leaves the Hallow. If it doesn't have anything easy to possess when it flies free and it can't re-enter the Hallow, it simply fades into the Shadow Realm and out of reach of the characters. Like its fellow Vice-spirits, it can possess living people, but the Sloth-spirit is unique in that it possesses a Numen called Fetter. This Numen simply anchors the spirit inside an object. (You need to spend a point of Essence for the spirit, but it probably has Essence to spare.) The characters, therefore, just need to find an object that appropriately embodies apathy and avoidance. Some suggestions:

- a TV remote control
- a couch (difficult to transport, but Morrigan *does* have an SUV)
- the SUV itself (although Morrigan might object)
- an empty pizza box
- a portable video game

Once the characters have this object at the Hallow, they need to dislodge the spirit and then make sure the object is sufficiently enticing to it. This can be accomplished by surrounding the object with an appropriate magical "vibe," which

can take the form of magical energy (Prime), emotion (Mind), or spiritual power (Spirit). In any case, doing so requires two dots of the Arcanum in question and an improvised spell. If successful, the spirit possesses the object using the Fetter Numen, and it remains there until dislodged or taken to a more appropriate locale.

- **Call Friends:** The characters might contact their orders, the Consilium or other characters (such as Sisyphus) for help with the spirit. The extent of the aid these characters can grant is up to you, and it might range from help in discerning the spirit's ban, suggestions about dislodging or combating the spirit, or even undertaking one of these tasks for the characters. Beware of letting Storyteller characters hog the spotlight, but if the players ask for help and truly seem stumped, don't be afraid to let other mages help them. Of course, these mages will take credit or demand favors in return. The following are some of the characters the mages might contact, as well as the aid and price the cabal can expect:

- Sisyphus can help the characters find the spirit's ban, and can suggest using fire or Paradox to dislodge it and giving it a new home. He considers this aid to be repayment of one of the favors he owes Jack (maybe two favors, if he has to help too extensively).

- If the characters call Adam, he can make suggestions to the characters on any topic presented here, except for the ghost (Adam knows little about such matters). He expects no recompense, of course, since his goals are the same as the cabal's.

- The orders or the Consilium don't provide much in the way of direct intercession. If the characters are persistent, any of the orders can put the characters in touch with someone who can provide advice. Once they become involved, though, they expect to be fully updated on the proceedings and for the characters (at least the character who is a member of the order) to check in before taking any action in the matter.

- **Diplomacy:** Niamh and Morrigan can use Spirit 1 to converse with the Sloth-spirit. (Niamh

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can also use Spirit 2 to bestow this ability on the other characters.) They characters can then attempt to convince the spirit to inhabit an object or to simply go back to wherever it came from. The spirit is initially repulsed by this idea, but if the characters can convince it that surviving in its own environment is better than flitting around the physical world from host to host, and subsequently being chased and damaged by mages, it will consent. Have the players of any characters trying to convince the spirit roll Manipulation + Persuasion. Add or subtract dice based on how well they convey their points and how much they play to the spirit's nature. This is an extended roll, with each roll representing one minute of conversation. The characters have three minutes to reach 10 successes, after which the spirit becomes bored and reenters the Hallow (if possible) or vanishes into the Spirit Realms (if not).

• **Direct Approach:** The characters can become ephemeral themselves and attack the spirit. This method is dangerous and difficult, but for martially inclined troupes, it might well be the notion upon which they fixate. If the characters wish to attempt this, be sure the players understand that much of the magic involved is vulgar, and that combating the spirit directly involves not only finding a way to damage it, but a way to keep it from escaping.

Taking on the ephemeral "Twilight" state requires Morrigan to cast an improvised spell creating a gateway. Have her player roll Death + Gnosis (four dice). The player must accumulate three successes to open the gateway, and this spell is an extended action, meaning that each roll takes Morrigan three hours of casting time. (Her player does receive +1 to the roll, however, because this spell is easier at a Hallow.) Once the gateway opens, one person can step through it, thus becoming Twilight, per turn. Every success in excess of the three she needs allows one additional person to slip through per turn. (If the player rolls five successes, three characters

can use the gate in a single turn.) This spell is *vulgar*, so the Storyteller should roll for Paradox before casting begins.

Niamh can weaken the barrier between worlds before Morrigan begins. This spell is improvised (the roll is Spirit + Gnosis) and it is also vulgar. If the spell succeeds, Morrigan needs only 2 successes to open the gateway.

Once the characters have taken on the Twilight state, they can attack or speak with the spirit. Anything the characters carry also crosses over with them, meaning they have their respective weapons. These weapons function normally against the spirit. The Sloth-spirit fights back if attacked. It doesn't take on a human form, but appears as an amorphous blob, striking at opponents with long pseudopodia.

In order to destroy the spirit, the characters need to reduce its Corpus and Essence to 0. The spirit begins with 10 Corpus and 10 Essence + any it has drained from the characters. Any attack that would damage a living being causes Corpus damage, but causing the spirit to lose Essence is a little trickier. Its ban is one method of draining its Essence (see sidebar), but the characters will need some other avenues of approach, too.

The Sloth-Spirit's Ban

All of the Vice-spirits have bans reflecting what they most hate and fear. While the five spirits that have bonded with the cabal have bans that are emblematic of the characters and their unique personalities, the Sloth-spirit is still "pure." Its antithesis is energy, drive, and ambition. As a spirit of laziness and avoidance, confrontation and purpose frightens and weakens it.

The characters can exploit this ban by acting in a forceful and decisive manner, and by not succumbing to laziness. If the characters form a distinct plan that involves every member of the cabal and

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they enact that plan consistently (not necessarily flawlessly, though—mistakes don't equate to avoidance), the Sloth-spirit loses five points of Essence. The Storyteller needs to adjudicate whether the characters have acted in such a manner or not.

Also, if the players come up with a different notion of the spirit's ban that isn't quite what's presented here but makes sense and has support in what they've seen so far, let it work. This spirit's ban, unlike some other entities, isn't as simple as burning leaves from a specific tree or dripping a few drops of blood on the ground. (Since they are more grounded in the physical world, the other Vice-spirits have more concrete bans.) As such, be lenient in interpreting this ban. The players will enjoy solving the puzzle, and if an idea that they developed on their own works, the victory will be all the more satisfying.

—Ogma can use Emotional Urging on the spirit to infuse it with resonance antithetical to its nature. Ogma's player must subtract the spirit's Defense rating from the spell's dice pool, but every success he achieves drains a point of Essence. The spirit singles out Ogma for exclusive attack once he successfully uses the spell in this manner, though.

—Niamh can put out a general summons to nearby spirits of movement and ambition (this is an improvised spell; roll Spirit + Gnosis). If she succeeds, such spirits arrive the following turn and begin to pick apart the Sloth-spirit, which loses one Essence per success on the roll.

The ghost of the man who died at the park does not attack the spirit directly, but he helps keep the characters from succumbing to the Sloth-spirit's Influence. The characters feel a constant undercurrent of fear and discomfort, the product of the ghost's powers. While this is not a pleasant experience, it does keep the characters alert enough that the Sloth-spirit can't simply make them too lazy to fight.

Magical Suggestions— Preventing Escape

The spirit tries to escape as soon as it becomes clear that the characters can harm it. The mages have some options for preventing this, though. The spirit won't cross fire, so a ring of fire around the bleachers will contain it. (A small fire must already be burning, but Tyrrhenus can cause it to spread. Roll Forces + Gnosis—this spell is improvised and *vulgar*.) Niamh can use Spirit 2 to summon the Sloth-spirit back. (Roll Gnosis + Spirit in a contested roll against the spirit's Resistance. If Niamh's player wins the spirit must remain in the area.) Ogma can use Space 2 to lock the spirit into the general area, preventing it from discorporating willingly (Space + Gnosis).

If the characters drain the spirit's Essence before exhausting the last of its Corpus, it melts away into nothingness. If they destroy its Corpus while it still has Essence remaining, however, it bursts in a shower of warm water. Have Morrigan and Niamh's players roll Intelligence + Occult. If this roll succeeds, they know that the spirit is not gone for good, but merely out of their reach for the time being.

Once the spirit is gone, the characters need to quickly slip through the gateway and become material beings again before it closes.

FAILURE

If the spirit escapes, the characters have failed in their task and allowed a potentially dangerous being to get away from them. Have each player roll four dice. If this roll fails, the character loses a dot of Wisdom (Morrigan's player is exempt from this roll, since her character is not morally bothered by the spirit's escape). Any character who loses a dot of Wisdom runs an additional risk; have the player roll the new Wisdom rating. If *this*

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roll fails, the character gains a derangement, a minor personality disorder based on her failure. In this case, the character might obsess over anyone she sees loafing, thinking that the spirit is nearby, or she might become manic-depressive for a few weeks.

Players may *not* spend Willpower on either of those two rolls.

AFTERMATH

After the characters have finished with the Sloth-spirit, they probably either return to Adam's house or call him. They do not receive an answer on his phone, however. If they venture to his home, proceed from this point.

Read the following aloud:

You can see the smoke from down the block. Adam's house is burning, flames shooting out the front windows. A crowd of neighbors gathers on the sidewalk, and from far away you can hear sirens. Over the flames and the chatter, you hear Adam's voice in your mind, calling to you weakly.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters choose to return to their own sanctum before contacting Adam, one of the characters' cell phone rings on the way home. Proceed from this point.

Read the following aloud:

The voice on the other end of line is monotone and distracted, as though reading the information off of a cue card. "Hello," he says. "I'm an orderly at Quincy Medical Center. We've just admitted Paul Kresham to our ICU. His house caught fire. He would like you to visit him as soon as possible." The orderly then hangs up.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters also receive this cell phone call if they decide to chase after the Wrath-spirit, despite being tired and drained from their ordeal.

This cliffhanger ending is deliberate. Hopefully, it will entice the players to return for the next installment of *Gloria Mundi*. Don't allow the characters to take any action once they hear

the news or find the house burning. The session ends either with them standing outside Adam's burning house or hanging up the phone after hearing about the fire.

Make sure to note the characters' wounds, current levels of Willpower and Mana, and what spells they currently have active and how long those spells will last. The next story in the chronicle picks up exactly where this one leaves off, so the characters won't have time to rest or heal (but also still have access to any lingering magical effects).

THE SLOTH-SPIRIT

The characters might be carrying the Sloth-spirit with them in some form, it might have escaped them, or it might have gone back to whatever realm spawned it. In any case, the spirit doesn't appear again in *Gloria Mundi*. If it escaped the characters, though, you might consider having it show up again in a later story, just so the players know they didn't complete their task.

The rest of the chronicle will be released online at www.worldofdarkness.com, where you can download new scenarios, play them online, and find out more about **Mage: The Awakening** and the World of Darkness. Then, on August 17th, you can pick up the **Mage: The Awakening** rulebook, which reveals everything you need to tell your own stories of the Awakened.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Following are descriptions of Adam and the Vice-spirits. We've provided full traits for Adam even though he isn't likely to need them in this story, just to give the Storyteller a frame of reference for how powerful a mage he is and therefore how powerful the Vice-spirits are when working together.

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The Vice-spirits share a common set of traits, but they each have specific powers as well. These will be revealed in future installments of the chronicle.

ADAM

Background: Paul Kresham was born in Connecticut in 1957, and he Awakened while serving a stint in the US Army. His journey through Pandemonium wasn't a pleasant one, and although he managed to keep his sanity and to join and participate in the Free Council (once his tour of duty was up), he never forgot the maddening images he saw in the Supernal Realm. He lived in fear that the creatures from Pandemonium would find a way to cross the Abyss. As he grew older and more disgusted with the pride and hubris of other mages, he wondered if such demons were already present. Paul vowed to eradicate the influence of the base, selfish desires in his soul, reasoning that if he could conquer inner demons he would be better prepared to conquer those from outside the Fallen World. He turned to a style of magic called *goetia*, and he eventually summoned and defeated most of his own personal flaws. He took the name "Adam," imagining himself to be forged from dust and inspired—infused with the breath of life—anew by virtue of his actions.

This process took him many years, but recently, he finally felt ready to summon creatures from outside his own mind and soul and do battle with them. As this story indicates, though, he was woefully unprepared for how insidious the creatures were. He now must rely on others to help him contain the spirits, and he is wracked with guilt over his actions.

Description: Normally a tall, strong, and confident man, Adam is now broken and bent. He is actually in his late 40s, but the spirits' attack left him looking much older. His hair has changed from dark brown to light gray, he walks with a pronounced limp, and he speaks

slowly and indistinctly. He possesses the magical capability to heal some of this damage, but he cannot summon the courage to try.

Note: The traits marked with an asterisk (*) are reduced due to the battle with the spirits. As Adam heals from this fight, his traits improve, as will be noted in future installments of *Gloria Mundi*. Also, due to physical injuries he currently suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls.

Path: Mastigos

Order: None (formerly Free Council)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 1*, Dexterity 2*, Stamina 1*

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 4, Computer 1, Medicine 2, Occult (Summoning, Goetia) 4, Politics (Awakened) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1*, Brawl 1*, Drive 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Desires) 4, Intimidation 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Eidetic Memory, High Speech, Library 3, Sanctum 3

Willpower: 8

Wisdom: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: None

Initiative: 6*

Defense: 2*

Speed: 8*

Health: 6*



Gnosis: 4

Arcana: Life 2, Mind 5, Prime 2, Space 3, Spirit 3

Rotes: Adam knows a great number of rotes, but as he cannot cast magic during this story, there is no need to detail them here.

Mana/per turn: 13/4

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VICE-SPIRITS

Background: The spirits' origins are discussed in the text of "Gazing into You." Their game traits are presented here.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 4, Resistance 5

Willpower: 8

Essence: 10 (15 max)

Initiative: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 17

Size: 5

Corpus: 10

Ban: Each of the Vice-spirits has a specific ban. The ban for the Sloth-spirit is discussed in Act II of this story, and the other spirits' bans will be revealed as the chronicle progresses.

Influence (Vice ••): Each Vice-spirit can instill feelings appropriate to the trait it embodies. The Gluttony-spirit, for instance, can instill the desire to eat or drink, but it cannot make someone actually feel *hungry* (as gluttony is typified by eating to excess, not satiety). The spirits can also intensify these feelings where they are already present. Weak-willed people (that is, Sleepers) normally act on these urges, but mages are composed enough to resist. Using Influence requires you to spend a point of Essence and roll Power + Finesse for the spirit.

Claim: This Numen is a more powerful version of Possession; if successful, the possession is permanent. Spend three Essence points and roll Power + Finesse in an extended and contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure—each roll represents one hour. If the spirit gains 50 successes between dusk and dawn, it gains permanent control of the victim's body. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to the spirit's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action the spirit wishes to take. If the spirit fails

to accumulate 50 successes within the required period of time, the attempt fails. If a possessed body is killed, the spirit is forced out and must possess another victim if it still wishes to act.

Mana Drain: The Vice-spirits can siphon away Mana from mages who resonate with their chosen urges (in game terms, that have the appropriate Vice). The spirit must touch the mage (normally requiring the spirit to materialize, but some mages can cast spells to touch spirits). Roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the mage's Resolve + Gnosis. If the spirit wins, it drains three points of Mana from the mage and converts it into Essence. If the mage's player rolls as many successes as (or more than) you do, the spirit receives no Mana from the attack.

Materialize: The spirit can transform its ephemera into matter and temporarily become a physical being. Spend three Essence and roll Power + Finesse. The spirit remains material for one hour per success. Doing so allows the spirit to make physical attacks (bashing damage), manipulate objects, and leave the immediate area of its fetter (if any). It can still use its other Numina, but it is vulnerable to physical attacks.

Possession: The spirit can attempt to possess a living human being and control his or her body for a short time. Spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure. If the spirit wins, it gains control of the victim's body for the duration of a single scene. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to the spirit's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action the spirit wishes to take. If the mortal wins or ties the roll, the spirit fails its possession attempt. As long as the spirit has Essence points remaining, it can continue to make possession attempts against a target. If a possessed body is killed or knocked unconscious, the spirit is forced out and must possess another victim if it still wishes to act.

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OGMA/BENJAMIN KENT

Quote: *Tell me everything.*

Background: Psychologist Benjamin Kent took a job with the Boston PD, counseling traumatized victims. He kept his job after Awakening, but as a Guardian of the Veil, he now works to conceal magic from Sleepers.

When he joined Lira Hennessy's cabal, he chose the shadow name Ogma, the Irish god of eloquence and learning. He's the cabal's window to the Fallen World.

Description: Ogma is a big man, a bit overweight. He's in his late 30s, favoring tan or gray clothes.

Roleplaying Hints: You condescend somewhat to the un-Awakened. You're a gourmand and connoisseur of beer and wine, topics on which you'll happily converse.

Equipment: PDA, edged cards, cell phone, laptop

Virtue/Vice: Ogma's Virtue is *Prudence*. He regains all spent Willpower whenever he refuses a tempting course of action by which he could gain significantly. His Vice is *Gluttony*. He regains one spent Willpower at the end of any scene in which he indulges his appetites at some risk to himself or a loved one.

MAGICAL ABILITIES

Path: Ogma is a Mastigos mage. Such mages are extremely willful, viewed as manipulative and untrustworthy.

Order: Ogma is a member of the Guardians of the Veil. He gains +1 to any magical rote that involves Investigation, Stealth, or Subterfuge.

Mana: Ogma can spend a single Mana per turn. He begins play with seven Mana.

Pattern Scouring and Restoration: Ogma can use Mana to heal himself, and conversely draw Mana from his very flesh, as an instant action. See pp. 8-9.

Unseen Sense: Roll Wits + Composure as a reflexive action for Ogma to sense the presence of an active supernatural force.

Spellcasting: Ogma's ruling Arcana are *Mind* and *Space*. To cast an improvised spell, roll Gnosis + the relevant Arcanum and spend one Mana unless it is a *Mind* or *Space* spell. (See the "Arcana Capabilities" sheet for possible effects.) Ogma also knows the following rites:

- **Emotional Urging (Mind ••):** Ogma can project emotions that last for one scene. He does so to encourage fear and forgetfulness in Sleepers. Roll Wits + Empathy + Mind (seven dice), while the Storyteller rolls the target's

Composure + Gnosis; you must get the most successes for the spell to work. This spell is *Covert*.

- **Interconnections (Fate •):** Ogma can read the sympathetic connections between things and sense manipulations of destiny and their causes. This includes any supernatural effect that could result in a person's destiny unfolding other than how it "should." Roll Intelligence + Investigation + Fate + 1 (seven dice) for this spell. This spell is *Covert*.

- **Shadow Sculpting (Death •):** Ogma can shape a one-yard radius area of shadows or darkness, or he can thicken its gloom, even amidst bright light for one scene. The Storyteller assesses the quality of existing shadows, ranking them from light to dark to complete darkness. Each success deepens the darkness by one degree. In complete darkness, additional successes levy penalties to perception rolls for anyone peering in. Roll Wits + Occult + Death (six dice). This spell is *Covert*.

- **Spatial Map (Space •):** Ogma mentally creates a perfectly accurate local spatial map. Every success on the roll eliminates one penalty die to a ranged attack. Roll Intelligence + Occult + Space (seven dice). This spell is *Covert*.

- **Third Eye (Mind •):** Ogma senses when others nearby use exceptional mental powers, such as telepathy, psychometry, or ESP. He can also feel the mental processes created resonance, effectively detecting its context within reality. Roll Wits + Empathy + Mind (seven dice) to cast the spell and Intelligence + Occult (five dice) to analyze what it reveals. This Mage Sight spell is *Covert*.

MERITS

Enhanced Item: Ogma carries five magically enhanced steel cards. As thrown weapons, they add two dice to his pool. Each success inflicts one point of lethal damage. Ogma also uses them to draw blood for sympathetic magic.

High Speech: Ogma knows the rudiments of Atlantean High Speech. High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened.

Quick Draw: Ogma can draw and throw a card as one instant action.

Resources: At any given time, Ogma has roughly \$500 to burn.

Status (Boston Police): Ogma has access to police records and personnel, and he can enter police precincts without question. He is not licensed to carry a firearm.

Status (Guardians of the Veil): Ogma is a member of the Guardians of the Veil.

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NAME: *OGMA/BENJAMIN KENT*

CONCEPT: *KEEPER OF SECRETS*

PATH: *MASTIGOS*

PLAYER:

VIRTUE: *PRUDENCE*

ORDER: *GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL*

CHRONICLE: *GLORIA MUNDI*

VICE: *GLUTTONY*

ATTRIBUTES

<i>POWER</i>	Intelligence	●●●●●	Strength	●●●●●	Presence	●●●●●
<i>FINESSE</i>	Wits	●●●●●	Dexterity	●●●●●	Manipulation	●●●●●
<i>RESISTANCE</i>	Resolve	●●●●●	Stamina	●●●●●	Composure	●●●●●

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	<i>(PSYCHOLOGY)</i>	●●●●●
Computer		●●●●●
Crafts		●●●●●
Investigation		●●●●●
Medicine		●●●●●
Occult		●●●●●
Politics		●●●●●
Science		●●●●●

PHYSICAL

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	<i>(THROWING)</i>	●●●●●
Brawl		●●●●●
Drive		●●●●●
Firearms		●●●●●
Larceny		●●●●●
Stealth		●●●●●
Survival		●●●●●
Weaponry		●●●●●

SOCIAL

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken		●●●●●
Empathy		●●●●●
Expression		●●●●●
Intimidation		●●●●●
Persuasion		●●●●●
Socialize	<i>(BEER & WINE)</i>	●●●●●
Streetwise		●●●●●
Subterfuge		●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

ENHANCED ITEM (THROWING CARDS)	●●●●●
HIGH SPEECH	●●●●●
QUICK DRAW	●●●●●
RESOURCES	●●●●●
STATUS (BOSTON POLICE)	●●●●●
STATUS (GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL)	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

FLAWS

	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
Size	●●●●●
Defense	3
Initiative Mod	5
Speed	9
Experience	

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

■■■■■■■■■■□□

GNOSSIS

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARCANA

DEATH	●●●●●
FATE	●●●●●
MIND	●●●●●
SPACE	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

ROTES

EMOTIONAL URGING (MIND 2)	
INTERCONNECTIONS (FATE 1)	
SHADOW SCULPTING (DEATH 1)	
SPATIAL MAP (SPACE 1)	
THIRD EYE (MIND 1)	

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

TYRRHENUS/ANTHONY LICAVOLI

Quote: *Let's think this through again.*

Background: Tony is the youngest scion of the Licavoli crime family. He grew up with stories about the days when made guys were street royalty, but sitting in Mass at the age of 21, he Awakened to his true calling.

Ambitious and enthusiastic, he gravitated toward the Silver Ladder to become a sort of "made man" among the Awakened. When he joined Lira Hennessy's cabal, he chose the shadow name Tyrrhenus, one of the two brothers who founded the Etruscan league of cities.

Description: Anthony has olive skin and thick black hair. He dresses in slacks and plain shirts and wears a gold crucifix necklace.

Roleplaying Hints: You used to feel lost, and neither family nor religion helped you find your place. The Awakening showed you you're a builder and a leader.

Equipment: blackjack, butane lighter, cell phone, address book with "emergency" numbers

Virtue/Vice: Tyrrhenus' Virtue is *Hope*. He regains all spent Willpower when he refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming his own goals or wellbeing. His Vice is *Greed*. He regains one Willpower point whenever he gains something, both at someone else's expense and at some risk to himself.

MAGICAL ABILITIES

Path: Tyrrhenus' path is Ombros. Such mages see themselves as manifestations of some Divine will.

Order: He belongs to the Silver Ladder. Tyrrhenus gains +1 to any magical rote that involves Expression, Persuasion, or Subterfuge.

Mana: Tyrrhenus can spend a single Mana per turn. He begins play with seven Mana.

Pattern Scouring and Restoration: Tyrrhenus can use Mana to heal himself and conversely draw Mana from his very flesh, either as an instant action. See pp. 8-9.

Unseen Sense: Roll Wits + Composure as a reflexive action for Tyrrhenus to sense the presence of an active supernatural force.

Spellcasting: Tyrrhenus' ruling Arcana are *Forces* and *Prime*. To cast an improvised spell, roll Gnosis + the relevant Arcanum and spend one Mana unless it is a *Forces* or *Prime* spell. (See the "Arcana Capabilities" sheet for possible improvised spell effects.) He knows the following rites.

- **Counterspell Prime (Prime ••):** Tyrrhenus can counter spells that he cannot cast, and he can counter covert spells without identifying their components. Roll Resolve + Occult + Prime (five dice) and spend 1 Mana. If you achieve the most successes, the caster's spell fails. This spell is *Covert*.

- **Kinetic Blow (Forces ••):** With this spell, the blackjack Tyrrhenus carries can cut like a blade. Roll Strength + Weaponry + Forces (seven dice). Each success translates to one attack that scene with a blunt weapon that inflicts lethal damage instead of bashing. This spell is *Vulgar*, so casting it risks Paradox.

- **Supernal Vision (Prime •):** Tyrrhenus gains a +1 dice bonus on perception and scrutiny rolls to sense Awakened magic of any kind, as well as Mana, enchanted items, and Hallows. He can also concentrate to determine if a person is Awakened or not. Roll Wits + Occult + Prime (six dice) to cast the spell and Intelligence + Occult (three dice) to analyze resonance. This Mage Sight spell is *Covert*.

- **Winds of Chance (Fate •):** Tyrrhenus can evade or attract good or ill fortune for one scene. (If he wants to find someone interesting to share a beer with on a Saturday night, such a person happens to come along.) Roll Wits + Subterfuge + Fate + 1 (seven dice). This spell is *Covert*.

MERITS

Contacts (Mafia): Tony can find information about Boston's criminal underworld, although he's not tight enough with his family to get physical aid.

Dream: Once per game session, Tony can lose himself in prayer. Roll his Wits + Composure (five dice). If the roll succeeds, the Storyteller must give two clues on whatever topic Tyrrhenus is praying about. They must be interpreted, however, unless the Storyteller rolls an exceptional success, in which case she will offer some clarification.

High Speech: Tyrrhenus knows the rudiments of Atlantean High Speech. High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened.

Iron Stamina: Tyrrhenus is resilient and hard to hurt. His wound penalties are reduced (as shown on his character sheet).

Status (Consilium): Tyrrhenus is a known figure in Boston's Consilium. He can speak for the cabal and find information without being ignored or patronized.

Status (Silver Ladder): Tyrrhenus is a member of the Silver Ladder.

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NAME: TYRRHENUS/ANTHONY LICAVOLI CONCEPT: LIAISON TO THE CONSIGLIUM PATH: OBRIMDQ

PLAYER: VIRTUE: HOPE

ORDER: SILVER LADDER

CHRONICLE: GLORIA MUNDI VICE: GREED

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence	●●●●●	Strength	●●●●●	Presence	●●●●●
FINESSE	Wits	●●●●●	Dexterity	●●●●●	Manipulation	●●●●●
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●●●●	Stamina	●●●●●	Composure	●●●●●

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	●●●●●
Investigation	●●●●●
Medicine	●●●●●
Occult	●●●●●
Politics	●●●●●
Science	●●●●●

PHYSICAL

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	●●●●●
Larceny	●●●●●
Stealth	●●●●●
Survival	●●●●●
Weaponry	●●●●●

SOCIAL

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

CONTACTS (MAFIA)	●●●●●
DREAM	●●●●●
HIGH SPEECH	●●●●●
IRON STAMINA	●●●●●
STATUS (CONSIGLIUM)	●●●●●
STATUS (SILVER LADDER)	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

FLAWS

	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
Size	●●●●●
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	4
Speed	10
Experience	●●●●●

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

■□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARCANA

FATE	●●●●●
FORCES	●●●●●
MATTER	●●●●●
PRIME	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

ROTES

COUNTERSPELL PRIME (PRIME 2)
KINETIC BLOW (FORCES 2)
SUPERNATURAL VIGOR (PRIME 1)
WIND OF CHANCE (FATE 1)

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

MORRIGAN/CECELIA ARTHUR

Quote: *Rise.*

Background: While studying pathology in college, Cecelia Arthur spent her time reading about death and alchemy. One day while walking through a cemetery, she found herself on a long, winding path that led to an immense tower. She didn't have the strength to complete the journey alone, so she called up the bodies of the dead to carry her. They transported her to the Watchtower of Stygia, where she inscribed her name.

Cecelia then joined the Adamantine Arrow until a conflict of interest led to a falling out with her mentor. She cast about the Boston area looking for someplace to continue her studies. She joined Lira Hennessy in forming a cabal, taking the shadow name Morrigan, the Irish war-goddess.

Description: Morrigan is lanky, with a sallow complexion. She smiles easily, though, and rarely wears black.

Roleplaying Hints: Nothing gives you greater satisfaction than watching one of your undead servants perform its tasks. Your former mentor warned you about the price of hubris, but you're used to getting your way.

Equipment: SUV, digging equipment, pistol, extra clip, police scanner, ready cash, dirt-stained notebook

Virtue/Vice: Morrigan's Virtue is *Temperance*. She regains all spent Willpower when she resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, despite any rewards it offers. Her Vice is *Pride*. She regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which she exerts her own wants (not needs) over others at some risk to herself.

MAGICAL ABILITIES

Path: Morrigan is a Moros (or Necromancer), and such mages are typically interested in transformation and transition.

Order: Morrigan is a member of the Adamantine Arrow. She gains +1 to any magical rote that involves Athletics, Intimidation, or Medicine.

Mana: Morrigan can spend a single Mana per turn. She begins play with six Mana.

Pattern Scouring and Restoration: Morrigan can use Mana to heal herself and conversely draw

Mana from her very flesh, either as an instant action. See pp. 8-9.

Unseen Sense: Roll Wits + Composure as a reflexive action for Morrigan to sense the presence of an active supernatural force.

Spellcasting: Morrigan's ruling Arcana are *Death* and *Matter*. To cast an improvised spell in any of these Arcana, roll Gnosis + the relevant Arcanum and spend one Mana unless it is a Death or Matter spell. (See the "Arcana Capabilities" sheet for possible improvised spell effects.) She knows the following rites.

- **Exorcist's Eye (Spirit •):** Morrigan can detect a ghost or spirit possessing a terrestrial being or object. Roll Wits + Occult + Spirit (six dice). This spell is *Covert*.

- **Grim Sight (Death •):** Morrigan sees the weight of death around a person—i.e., if he has suffered the loss of many loved ones or killed many people. This sight also applies to things or places. Roll Wits + Occult + Death (eight dice) to cast the spell and Intelligence + Occult (seven dice) to analyze the resonance it reveals. This Mage Sight spell is *Covert*.

- **Quicken Corpse (Death •••):** Morrigan can raise a human corpse as a zombie and force it to do her bidding. Such creatures obey Morrigan's will without pain or fatigue (or abstract thought). The Storyteller makes any rolls for zombies, assuming a 2 in any Physical Attribute and 1 in any other. Roll Presence + Persuasion + Death (six dice). This spell is *Vulgar*, so it carries the chance of a Paradox.

- **Unseen Aegis (Matter ••):** This spell subtly defend a mage. Air forms a "cushion" to blunt the inertia of an incoming fist, for instance. This spell lasts for one scene, but if you spend a point of Mana when it is cast, it lasts for one day. Using it, Morrigan has an armor rating of 2, meaning that all incoming *physical* attacks suffer an additional -2 penalty. Roll Intelligence + Occult + Matter (nine dice). This spell is *Covert*.

MERITS

High Speech: Morrigan knows the rudiments of Atlantean High Speech. High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened.

Resources: Cecelia has easy access to \$10,000 a month.

Status (Adamantine Arrow): Morrigan is a member of the Adamantine Arrow.

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NAME: MORRIGAN/CECELIA ARTHUR CONCEPT: TAGMISTRESS

PATH: MOROG

PLAYER:

VIRTUE: TEMPERANCE

ORDER: ADAMANTINE ARROW

CHRONICLE: GLORIA MUNDI

VICE: PRIDE

ATTRIBUTES

<i>POWER</i>	Intelligence	●●●●○	Strength	●●●●○	Presence	●●●●○
<i>FINESSE</i>	Wits	●●●●○	Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●●●○
<i>RESISTANCE</i>	Resolve	●●●●○	Stamina	●●●●○	Composure	●●●●○

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●○
Computer	●●●●○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●●●●○
Medicine	●●●●○
Occult	(UNDEAD) ●●●●○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	(CHEMISTRY) ●●●●○

PHYSICAL

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive	(OFF-ROAD) ●●●●○
Firearms	●●●●○
Larceny	●●●●○
Stealth	●●●●○
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

SOCIAL

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●●●○
Persuasion	●●●●○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise	(CEMETERIES) ●●●●○
Subterfuge	●●●●○

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

HIGH SPEECH	●●●●○
RESOURCES	●●●●○
STATUS (ADAMANTINE ARROW)	●●●●○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

FLAWS

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
Size	
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	5
Speed	10
Experience	

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

■□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARCANA

DEATH	●●●●○
MATTER	●●●●○
SPIRIT	●●●●○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

ROTES

EXORCIST'S EYE (SPIRIT 1)
GRIM SIGHT (DEATH 1)
QUICKEN CORPSE (DEATH 3)
UNSEEN ARGUMENT (MATTER 2)

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

JACK/CODY GUNN

Quote: *I'll be gone soon.*

Background: Although Cody never had it easy, everything worked out for him. Homeless, he drifted across the country, and one day saw a magnificent tower at the end of the road. That was the beginning of this Awakening.

In Boston, Cody got into a card game with some of the local mages. Toward the end, the last player bet a beautiful, glimmering stone—his soul stone. Cody won and chose to stick around. When Cody joined Lira Hennessy's cabal, he took the name "Jack," for the wanderer Jack o' the Lantern.

Description: Jack is short and slim, with a winning smile and an endearing bounce to his step. He wears clothes from local thrift stores.

Roleplaying Hints: Destiny has something in store for you. Once you've finally used the three favors you're entitled to, you're going to leave Boston. Maybe...

Equipment: soul stone, pocketknife, worn sneakers

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Faith*. He regains all spent Willpower points whenever he forges meaning from chaos and tragedy. His Vice is *Envy*. He regains one Willpower point when he gains something from a rival or has a hand in harming that rival's wellbeing.

MAGICAL ABILITIES

Path: Jack is an Acanthus mage. Such mages are often fickle and difficult to tie down.

Order: Jack is a member of the Free Council. He gains +1 to any magical rote that involves Crafts, Persuasion, or Science.

Mana: Jack can spend a single Mana per turn. He begins play with seven Mana.

Pattern Scouring and Restoration: Jack can use Mana to heal himself and conversely draw Mana from his very flesh, either as an instant action. See pp. 8-9.

Unseen Sense: Roll Wits + Composure as a reflexive action for Jack to sense the presence of an active supernatural force.

Spellcasting: Jack's ruling Arcana are *Fate* and *Time*. To cast an improvised spell, roll Gnosis + the relevant Arcanum and spend one Mana unless it is a *Fate* or *Time* spell. (See the "Arcana Capabilities" sheet for possible improvised spell effects.) He knows the following rites:

- **Exceptional Luck (Fate ••):** Spend one Mana and roll Manipulation + Occult + Fate (six dice). For each success, you may designate one roll in the scene as "lucky" and re-roll 9s as well as 10s. Spellcasting rolls cannot be designated lucky, nor can rolls of chance dice. This spell is *Covert*.

- **Fortune's Protection (Fate ••):** Jack weaves a safety net of probability about himself. Roll Composure + Athletics + Fate (six dice). If the roll succeeds, Jack has two points of armor for the rest of the scene. (For one Mana, the spell lasts for a day.) This spell is *Covert*.

- **Nightsight (Forces •):** With this spell, Jack can perceive the infrared or ultraviolet spectrum and detect electromagnetic radiation, or sonic or kinetic energy, for one scene. A sudden burst of light or other stimulus might blind or deafen him momentarily, however. Roll Wits + Composure + Forces (seven dice). This spell is *Covert*.

- **Temporal Eddies (Time •):** Jack perceives resonance by how it "snags" things moving through the timestream. He can also tell perfect time, anywhere. Roll Wits + Occult + Time (six dice) to cast the spell and Intelligence + Occult (three dice) to analyze the resonance it reveals. The effects last for one scene. This Mage Sight spell is *Covert*.

MERITS

Destiny: You have a pool of four dice per game session that you may add to any roll you make for Jack. You might choose to use all four on one roll, or split them up. Also, the Storyteller may impose penalties every game session totaling four dice on any roll she chooses, but only when Jack's *bane* is present. When the wind kicks up and causes a whistling sound, or when he hears someone whistling a tune, Jack's *bane* is present.

High Speech: Jack knows the rudiments of Atlantean High Speech. High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened.

Status (Free Council): Jack is a member of the Free Council.

Thrall: Jack won a *soul stone* in a card game from an Acanthus mage called Sisyphus. Although Jack could use the stone to harm or outright control Sisyphus, he wouldn't do so. Tradition grants Jack three favors of Sisyphus—anything within the mage's power. Once these favors are used, Jack must return the stone.

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NAME: JACK/CODY GUNN

CONCEPT: PAWN OF FATE

PATH: ACANTHUS

PLAYER:

VIRTUE: FAITH

ORDER: FREE COUNCIL

CHRONICLE: GLORIA MUNDI

VICE: ENVY

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence	●●●●●	Strength	●●●●●	Presence	●●●●●
FINESSE	Wits	●●●●●	Dexterity	●●●●●	Manipulation	●●●●●
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●●●●	Stamina	●●●●●	Composure	●●●●●

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	●●●●●
Investigation	●●●●●
Medicine	●●●●●
Occult (LUCK CHARMS)	●●●●●
Politics	●●●●●
Science	●●●●●

PHYSICAL

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	●●●●●
Larceny	●●●●●
Stealth (CROWDS)	●●●●●
Survival	●●●●●
Weaponry	●●●●●

SOCIAL

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●
Expression (SINGING)	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

DESTINY	●●●●●
HIGH SPEECH	●●●●●
THRALL	●●●●●
STATUS (FREE COUNCIL)	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

FLAWS

	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
Size	●●●●●
Defense 2	●●●●●
Initiative Mod 5	●●●●●
Speed 9	●●●●●
Experience	●●●●●

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

■□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

WISDOM

10	●
9	●
8	●
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARCANA

FATE	●●●●●
FORCES	●●●●●
SPACE	●●●●●
TIME	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

ROTES

GLIMPING THE FUTURE (TIME 2)
MOMENTARY FLUX (TIME 1)
SECOND SIGHT (SPIRIT 1)
SELF-HEALING (LIFE 2)

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NIAMH/LIRA HENNESSY

Quote: *Why did people ever move inland?*

Background: Lira Hennessy was born and raised in Boston. Sitting outside her seaside home one night, she saw the moonlight change the water into a silver road leading to a distant tower. She followed its song, and woke on the beach later, Awakened. She later joined the Mysterium, hoping to find what secrets the water held.

When Lira met and befriended Cecelia Arthur, she took the shadow name Niamh, after the Irish sea god's daughter. She offered her house—and its Hallow—as a sanctum, and the two mages formed their cabal.

Description: Niamh is willowy and ethereal, with fair skin, dark brown hair, and deep blue eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are grateful for your cabal's support and happy to share the house. Another year alone there might have driven you mad.

Equipment: miniature tape recorder, house keys, comfortable clothes

Virtue/Vice: Niamh's Virtue is *Fortitude*. She regains all spent Willpower when she withstands tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions, only pressure that might cause her to abandon her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Lust*. She regains one Willpower point whenever she satisfies her lust in a way that victimizes others.

MAGICAL ABILITIES

Path: Niamh walks the Thyrsus Path. Such mages are often highly focused and intense, yet vaguely distracted as they commune with spirits.

Order: Niamh belongs to the Mysterium. She gains +1 to any magical rote that involves Investigation, Occult, or Survival.

Mana: Niamh can spend a single Mana per turn. She begins play with seven Mana.

Pattern Scouring and Restoration: Niamh can use Mana to heal herself and conversely draw Mana from her very flesh, either as an instant action. See pp. 8-9.

Unseen Sense: Roll Wits + Composure as a reflexive action for Niamh to sense the presence of an active supernatural force.

Spellcasting: Niamh's ruling Arcana are *Life* and *Spirit*. To cast an improvised spell, roll Gnosis + the relevant Arcanum and spend one Mana unless it is a *Life* or *Spirit* spell. (See the "Arcana Capabilities" sheet for possible improvised spell effects.) She knows the following rites:

- **Glimpsing the Future (Time ••):** Niamh quickly scans the immediate future and adjusts to improve her chances of success. Spend one Mana and roll Wits + Investigation + Time + 1 (seven dice). Success allows you to roll twice for a single instant action that Niamh performs in the next turn and take the better result. This spell is *Covert*.

- **Momentary Flux (Time •):** Niamh can judge an ongoing event, one about to take place (within the next five turns) or one that has just taken place (again, within five turns) and discover whether it will be beneficial or adverse for her. If all options are based entirely on chance, she instead gains a rough idea of the odds. This reveals only if the event will lead to good or ill for *her* in the immediate future. Roll Wits + Investigation + Time + 1 (seven dice). This spell is *Covert*.

- **Second Sight (Spirit •):** Niamh gains a +1 bonus on rolls to sense spirits and the use of their Numina. Roll Intelligence + Occult + Spirit + 1 (seven dice) to cast the spell and Intelligence + Occult (four dice) to analyze the resonance it reveals. This Mage Sight spell is *Covert*.

- **Self-Healing (Life ••):** Niamh can heal herself (but not to others). Roll Dexterity + Medicine + Life (six dice). Each success heals one point of damage (bashing or lethal only), starting with her rightmost wound on the Health chart. This spell is normally *Covert*.

MERITS

High Speech: Niamh knows the rudiments of Atlantean High Speech. High Speech can be spoken and comprehended only by the Awakened.

Status (Mysterium): Niamh is a member of the Mysterium.

Striking Looks: Lira is beautiful. She adds one bonus die to any Presence or Manipulation roll to entertain, seduce, distract, or otherwise get her way by using her looks. People also tend to remember her.

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

NAME: NIAMH/LIRA HENNESSY

CONCEPT: SIREN

PATH: THYRSUS

PLAYER:

VIRTUE: FORTITUDE

ORDER: MYSTERIUM

CHRONICLE: GLORIA MUNDI

VICE: LUST

ATTRIBUTES

<i>POWER</i>	Intelligence	●●●●●	Strength	●●●●●	Presence	●●●●●
<i>FINESSE</i>	Wits	●●●●●	Dexterity	●●●●●	Manipulation	●●●●●
<i>RESISTANCE</i>	Resolve	●●●●●	Stamina	●●●●●	Composure	●●●●●

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	●●●●●
Investigation	●●●●●
Medicine	●●●●●
Occult	●●●●●
Politics	●●●●●
Science	●●●●●

PHYSICAL

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	(<u>SWIMMING</u>)	●●●●●
Brawl		●●●●●
Drive	(<u>BOAT</u>)	●●●●●
Firearms		●●●●●
Larceny		●●●●●
Stealth		●●●●●
Survival		●●●●●
Weaponry		●●●●●

SOCIAL

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken		●●●●●
Empathy		●●●●●
Expression		●●●●●
Intimidation		●●●●●
Persuasion	(<u>SEDUCTION</u>)	●●●●●
Socialize		●●●●●
Streetwise		●●●●●
Subterfuge		●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

<u>HIGH SPEECH</u>	●●●●●
<u>STATUS (MYSTERIUM)</u>	●●●●●
<u>STRIKING LOOK</u>	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

FLAWS

	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
Size	●●●●●
Defense	<u>2</u>
Initiative Mod	<u>6</u>
Speed	<u>10</u>
Experience	●●●●●

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

■□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

WISDOM

10	●
9	●
8	●
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARCANA

<u>LIFE</u>	●●●●●
<u>SPIRIT</u>	●●●●●
<u>TIME</u>	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●
	●●●●●

ROTES

<u>GLIMPING AT THE FUTURE (TIME 2)</u>
<u>MOMENTARY FLUX (TIME 1)</u>
<u>SECOND SIGHT (SPIRIT 1)</u>
<u>SELF-HEALING (LIFE 2)</u>

MAGE

THE AWAKENING

ARCANA CAPABILITIES

Following are descriptions of what the 10 Arcana can accomplish at the levels at which your characters currently possess them. These are examples and guidelines only. Feel free to dream up additional applications of these Arcana, but of course any use of magic beyond the rote the characters know is *improvised* magic, which is more difficult to perform. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what your characters can accomplish with their Arcana. Vulgar effects are noted with an asterisk (*), but again, the Storyteller needs to judge whether an effect is covert or vulgar.

Remember, too, that characters can use the rote listed in their write-ups as improvised effects. For instance, Jack can use the Glimpsing the Future spell, he simply must do so as improvised magic, since (unlike Niamh) he doesn't know the rote.

Universal Effects: All of the Arcana include versions of the following effects: activate Mage Sight (•), bestow Mage Sight (••), creating a shield (••; grants Aracenum dots in armor for a scene; spend one Mana for effect to last a day).

- **Death:** Discern how someone died and how long ago (•), speak with ghosts (•), assess the strength of someone's soul (•); cause shadows to move* (••), corrode or rust material* (••), mask the cause of death (••); command a ghost* (•••), destroy a material object* (•••), enter a state of death-like stasis (•••), open a gateway into Twilight* (•••).

- **Fate:** Mitigate dice penalties (•), cause simple good fortune (•); swear a binding oath (••), cause more overt turns of luck (••, 1 Mana).

- **Forces:** Listen to radio or cellphone transmissions (•), manipulate existing heat, light, or sound (•); raise an area's temperature (••), brighten or dim light (••), redirect fire or electricity from an existing source* (••), make an immobile object invisible for a scene* (••, 1 Mana).

- **Life:** Cleanse the mage's body of toxins (•), sense specific life forms nearby (•), discern age, sex, and health of living things (•); control own metabolism and breathing (••), cleanse others of drugs or poison (••), heal self of bashing or lethal damage (••, 1 Mana), heal plants or animals (••).

- **Matter:** Alter the conductivity of matter (•), discern an object's function (•), detect a specific substance (•); alter the accuracy or balance of a weapon for a scene (••, 1 Mana), change one liquid into another* (••), make a transparent surface opaque and vice versa* (••).

- **Mind:** Detect nearby sentient minds including spirits (•), perform two extended actions at once (•); alter own aura (••), mentally communicate with others in line of sight (••), improve first impressions (••), protect against mental control or attack (••).

- **Prime:** Analyze enchanted items (•), dispel existing magic (if the mage has at least one dot in the Arcanum used to create the spell) (•, 1 Mana); alter aura to look like a Sleeper (••), counter spells of any Arcana (••, 1 Mana), hide from other mage's Mage Sight (••).

- **Space:** Measure distance between objects effortlessly (•), see 360 degrees (•), track any item in the mage's area flawlessly (•); cast other spells sympathetically (••; 1 Mana), remotely view a location (scrying) (••), create wards against Space magic (••).

- **Spirit:** Hear, see, and speak with spirits (•); touch spirits in Twilight (••), call specific spirits or a general type of spirit without compelling them to appear (••), raise or lower Gauntlet at a Hallow* (••).

- **Time:** Detect temporal flow (•), act as perfect clock or stopwatch (•), discern if an immediate choice will have good or bad results (•); see the future in a very general sense (••), automatically succeed (or fail) at one action with only two possible outcomes (••, 1 Mana).

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