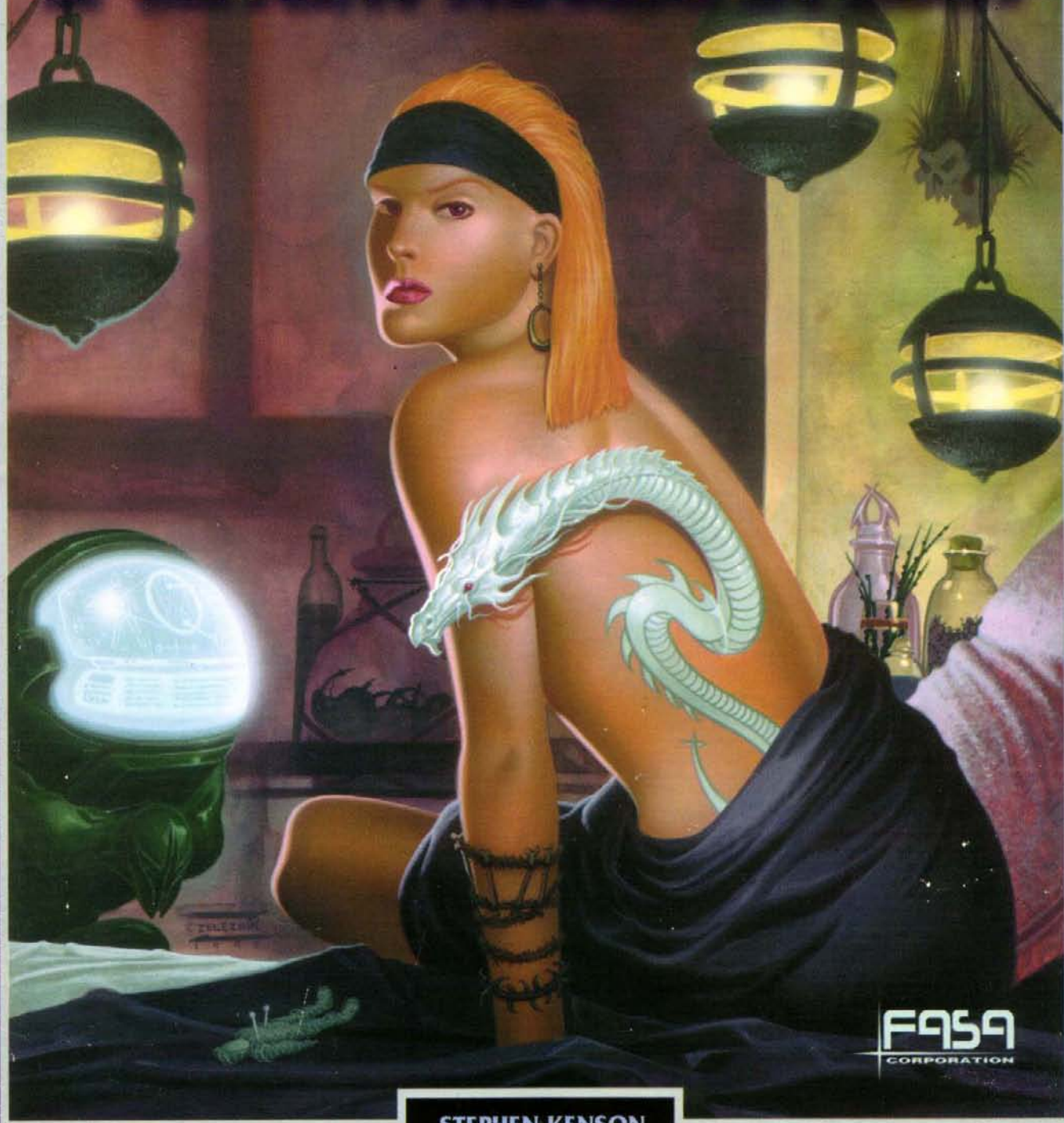


AWAKENINGS™

NEW MAGIC IN 2057



FASA
CORPORATION

STEPHEN KENSON



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4	Erzulle: Mistress of Love	62
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAGIC	8	Legba: Old Man at the Crossroads	62
THE WAYS OF MAGIC	12	Ghede: Corpse, Clown and King	62
Beyond the Odd Coven	12	Loco and Ayizan: The Priestly Parents	63
Becoming Prairie Dog	15	Ogoun: Warrior, Hero, Politician	63
Growing Up Magical	18	Calling the Loa	63
Street Magic	19	Work Loa	65
Unorthodox Traditions	21	Bought Loa	65
Azroth the God: Case Notes	21	Guinee	66
Psionics	22	Honfours	66
Magic as Miracle	23	Bocors	66
All Dressed Up and No Place to Go	25	Sorcery	66
THE MAGICAL ARSENAL	26	Petro Rite	67
Spells	26	Zombies	67
Physical Spells	28	Awakened Voudoun	67
Mana Spells	28	Voudoun Glossary	69
Countering Spells	30	MAJOR MOJO	70
Foci	30	Lone Star's Wizboys	70
Spirits	31	Fun with Combat Mages	72
Nature Spirits	31	Fun with Physical Adepts	74
Elemental Spirits	32	Fun with Regular Cops	75
Magic and Healing	33	The Disembodied Fuzz: Astral Patrol Cops	77
Healing Magicians	34	Corporate Magicians	77
Paranormals	35	Aztechnology	78
More Tricks of the Trade	36	Saeder-Krupp	79
Cybermancy	36	Other Corps	80
THE ASTRAL ADVANTAGE	38	Special Forces and Other Tough Guys	81
ADEPTS	48	Magical Threats	83
Discovery	50	Toxic Spirits and Shamans	83
Training	50	Insect Spirits and Shamans	85
Finding the Way	51	The Infected	87
Way of the Warrior	51	Other Threats	87
Way of the Athlete	52	RULES	90
Way of the Artist	52	Adept Rules	110
The Invisible Way	53	Voudoun Rules	120
The Spirit Way	53	STREET GRIMOIRE	132
Way of the Animal Powers	54	ARCHETYPES	142
The Twisted Way	54	TABLES	146
Losing the Way	54		
Adopting Geasa	54		
Initiation	55		
Ordeals	55		
Using Metamagic	55		
Masking	56		
Foci	56		
Physical Magicians	56		
VOUDOUN	58		
Major Loa	60		
Agwe: Sovereign of the Sea	61		
Azaca: Master of the Corn	61		
Damballah: Good Serpent of the Sky	61		

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—To my parents for always knowing that I could do it,
to my friends for all the Shadowrun games, and to
Christopher for believing in Magic.

INTRODUCTION



Awakenings is a sourcebook for the **Shadowrun** game system. Intended as a resource for gamemasters and players, it discusses in-depth the vast variety of magical manifestations in the Sixth World from the point of view of the people who live there. **Awakenings** provides a complete picture of the current state of magic in the Sixth World: how people see it, how shadowrunners and others use it, how physical and other adepts fit into the **Shadowrun** world, and what the latest developments are. It also includes extensive material on voodoo, a form of shamanic magic drawn from outside Native American and druidic traditions. In addition, the book includes new spells and archetypes, as well as clarifying and expanding on existing rules from **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, and **The Grimoire, Second Edition**. No other sourcebooks are necessary to use **Awakenings**, though gamemasters will find **The Grimoire, Second Edition** useful.

Like other **Shadowrun** sourcebooks, **Awakenings** is formatted as an electronic document from that fictional world. Scattered throughout the document are comments and additions from readers anxious to correct, expand, corroborate, or contradict the information it presents. Because this "black" information comes from characters within the game universe, players or characters cannot safely assume that these comments are truthful, accurate, considered, or clearly thought out (though they may be all those things). As usual, individual gamemasters may determine the accuracy of the information contained in this book.

The **Gamemaster Information** section contains new rules for various magical phenomena described in the fictional sections, as well as expansions and clarifications of existing rules. Many of the new rules are optional, and gamemasters should carefully consider their potential impact on game play before using them in a **Shadowrun** campaign. As always, the gamemaster is encouraged to use this new material in the way that best fits the needs and capabilities of his gaming group.



SHADOWLAND V2.0

"I have taken all knowledge to be my province."—Francis Bacon

"Human kind cannot bear very much reality."—T. S. Elliot

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR:

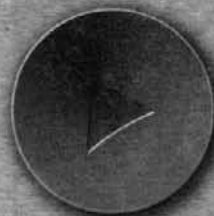
Welcome to Shadowland version 2.0—our new world of secret info, stolen documents and the news that keeps you alive. You demanded more and we provided it. Okay, Fuchi helped a bit with their new interface software. We borrowed it and improved it and you're looking at it. And our thanks go out to a handful of boys and girls who helped defend us from some rogue wage deckers who wanted to prove to some Big Man that they were hot drek. They weren't. I don't want to name names (privacy is a virtue here at Shadowland), but you all know who you are and we all thank you.



THE BACK STOCK

Knight Errant Download (The Boys in Blue)
Fields of Fire Download (Guns, Guns, Guns, & Guns)
Cybertech Download (Man, Machine and Magic ...)
The Big A Download (Sorry, it ain't here)

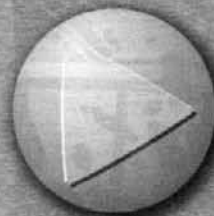
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THE DAILY SPECIAL

New Magic In 2057 (Awakenings, Major Mojo, and Voodoo)

Talon did some kick-butt research and pulled together some excellent sources to bring this download to you. He called in some favors and discovered some interesting facts, factoids and just plain frighteningly bizarre stuff about our spell slingin' brethren.



COMING SOON

Threats (Secret stuff)
California Free State (It's a really freakin' big place)
Campaign 2057 (Vote early, vote often!)

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“BUG CITY”

It's still news and it's full of bugs. That's the truth, not what the UCAS spin doctors tell you. Read up on Chicago, Home of the Bugs (as much info as we can get, anyway!).

Special Note: Need help locating people behind the wall? Go to Private Room 5 (alpha) 9.



CONTACT WEB

The corps don't tell you who's in and out of favor, but we do. Find out if your contact is riding high or hanging low—updated after every business day. Today's pick: Jill “Grout Queen” Lucas wins presidential seat at entertainment giant. Call in those favors!



CORP NEWS

We have the best corp spies in the business. Click here to find the latest dirt they've dug up. New rumor: Ares has been talking with UCAS officials about using Chicago as some sort of “test range” for their new weapons. Bye-bye, Windy City.



WEIRD STUFF

On the eve of Pres. Steele's inauguration, UCAS investigators uncover evidence of massive election fraud. Speaker of the House Pritchard has declared the election null and void—we'll try again in August 2057. Click here for all the dirt!

It's 21:37:56. Do You Know Where Your Meat Body Is?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAGIC

Brought to you by the
American Association for the Advancement of Thaumaturgy

Do you believe in magic? It's hard to imagine that only a few decades ago most people would have answered "no" to that question. Since the Awakening in 2011, magic has become as much a part of our lives as the weather and trideo. Nonetheless, for many people magic remains a somewhat mysterious force, shrouded in centuries of folklore and misconceptions.

This public-access file is designed to clear up the confusion about the magical arts and those who practice them. To help you better understand magic as a part of our world, it provides basic information and answers the most commonly asked questions about magic. By dispelling some of the misconceptions surrounding the magical arts, we hope to promote understanding among magicians and non-magicians, so that we can all be better neighbors.

Welcome to the Age of Magic!

What is magic?

Many modern magical theorists define magic as "the art and science of causing change in conformity with the will." In other words, a magician uses his willpower and imagination to effect changes in the physical world. The magician accomplishes this feat by connecting with a parallel universe known as the astral plane. Through this connection, the magician draws mana from the astral plane. He then uses his willpower to shape the mana, which creates an effect in the physical

the Awakening: The period marked by the emergence of magic, metahumans, and paranormal creatures. The Awakening is generally accepted to have begun following the sighting of the Great Dragon Ryumyo in Japan on December 24, 2011.

parallel universe: A universe that co-exists with the physically observed universe and remains undetectable by existing means of observation and perception.

astral plane: A theoretical parallel universe that is the source of all magical energy and the medium through which it travels. See articles on **Kano, Aikiko** and **White Eagle, Arthur**.

mana: An impersonal supernatural force that permeates the universe. According to the theories of Kano and White Eagle, mana is the primary energy that comprises astral space and powers all magic.

endanger the magician's health: Channeling excessive amounts of magical energy can lead to physical exhaustion, headaches, and dizziness. In extreme cases, physical injuries such as internal hemorrhaging, neural shock, and muscle spasms may result.

world. To put it more simply, the magician imagines something, then draws on energy from astral space to make it happen. The magician's use of magic, however, is limited by his ability to draw on the energies of astral space and his strength of will. Excessive use of magic is exhausting and can even endanger the magician's health.

What can magic do?

Theoretically, magic can do *anything*. In practice, the effects of magic are limited by the conditions of the work, the training of the individual magician, and the amount of power available to him. Casting a spell to turn the moon into cheese is theoretically possible—if the magician can form an effective magical link, *if* he can channel enough energy through it to affect such a massive object, *if* he can focus the mind fully on such a large and complex target, and *if* the magician can channel that much power without overloading his system. All those "ifs" make turning the moon to cheddar a virtually impossible task.

Despite these limitations, magicians can use magic to perform amazing feats: sensing things beyond the range of the five senses; healing injuries; creating illusions; and animating, creating and transforming matter and energy. Individual magicians may accomplish even greater feats by joining with other magicians and combining their abilities through ritual magic.

What is the astral plane?

The astral plane is another dimension, separate from but existing in the same space as the physical world. Magicians have the ability to see into astral space and form "bridges" between the astral and physical dimensions that allow energy from the astral to cross over into our world.

The astral plane is a place of energy and emotion. Studies suggest that entropy is reversed in astral space, so that a tiny amount of energy in astral space can generate a tremendous amount of force in the physical world. As a result, the small amount of neural energy a magician uses to cast a spell may release a large quantity of astral energy into our universe.

Astral space has much the same geography as the physical world, but objects in astral space appear as reflections of the life force and emotional energy they contain. Although astral space is similar to the physical world in many ways, it feels quite different to those who experience it. To give just one example, written language cannot be seen in astral space.

What makes someone a magician?

No one is entirely certain why some individuals have magical abilities and others do not. Numerous theories attempt to answer this question, and each magical tradition has its own methods for selecting new students. We do know that the ability to use magic is a talent some people are born with, just like the ability to draw, sing or excel at sports.

This talent can be detected with a fair amount of accuracy by a series of simple tests developed by Dr. Etienne Dumas in 2027. Dr. Dumas is well known for his statement that "magicians are born, not made." He theorized that some genetic basis exists for magical ability, but this theory has not yet been proved.

How can I become a magician?

First, take a reliable test (such as the Dumas test) to determine your level of magical talent. If you have

amazing feats: The results of any application of magic can be calculated with a precise formula known as the Carroll Curve. The Carroll Curve predicts the combined effects of available magical energy, the concentration of the magician, the quality of magical links, any enhancements and distractions, as well as a variety of other factors.

ritual magic: A form of magic requiring extensive props and preparations intended to focus and intensify magical energy, allowing greater feats of magic to be performed without increased risk to the magician.

entropy: The natural tendency of all things toward disorganization and breakdown through the dissipation of energy.

Dumas: Dr. Etienne Dumas (b. 1981), Professor Emeritus of Occult Studies of Sorbonne University, Paris. In 2027, Dumas oversaw a groundbreaking study of the development of magical ability in *homo sapiens*. Subsequently, Dumas developed a series of tests capable of measuring magical aptitude in (meta)humans.

adepts: Adepts are magically capable individuals whose abilities are limited compared to those of magicians. Adepts possess a variety of different abilities and ranges of capability.

rising each year: According to the 2055 World Census, the percentage of magically active persons in the world rose .43 percent since the previous year's survey.

shamans: Shamans are magicians who follow a tradition known as *shamanism*. Shamans believe they

already taken such a test and the results were negative, you should probably consider another career. Just as a tone-deaf person does not have much chance of becoming a successful musician, someone who shows no magical aptitude is likely to do poorly as a magician.

If you have magical aptitude, you may wish to begin formal training. Be aware, however, that learning to be a magician involves long, hard hours of study and mental discipline, just like learning any complex science. Developing magical skills involves a considerable investment of time and effort.

How many magicians are there?

Magicians are fairly rare. Statistics show that about one person in a hundred has enough talent to make active use of magic. Of those individuals, only about one in ten are fully capable magicians, while the others are adepts or untrained individuals. Approximately three to four million fully capable magicians exist today, and studies show their number is rising each year.

Are there different kinds of magic?

Magic is a universal force that works essentially the same anywhere, so the answer to this question is no—there is only one kind of magic. However, there are many different kinds of *magicians*. Although magic itself does not vary, different people practice magic in different ways, just as different musicians may create different music with the same type of instrument. Shamans and magicians are two different types of magicians—each type follows a magical tradition. Many magical traditions exist, but ultimately the abilities of all magicians are basically the same. For the most part the differences are a matter of style.

Are there evil magical cults?

Magic itself is neither good nor evil. It is simply a tool. Like any other tool, an individual can use it to do good or bad. Magicians have the same



human weaknesses and strengths as any other individuals—some may use magic to hurt, while others may use it to heal.

Evil magical organizations such as those depicted in trideo programs are purely fictional. Many magicians belong to magical groups, but only a few magicians belong to "cults." Most cults follow dogma that prohibits magicians, but occasionally a cult will form around magicians who abuse their abilities. Therefore, it is important to recognize the differences between honest professional and social associations of magicians and the few misguided groups that tend to give magicians a bad name.

What are spirits?

More complex than spells, spirits are patterns of magical energy capable of independent action directed by their summoner. Magicians can summon spirits from astral space and "program" them to perform specific tasks.

Some spirits are highly sophisticated entities that possess high degrees of intelligence. This has led many observers to claim that spirits are sentient beings, although many theorists dispute such claims.

What should I do if someone has put a spell on me?

Generally speaking, you are much more likely to be struck by lightning than to be targeted with a magical spell. If you have strong reasons to believe that you are the target of hostile magic, you should seek out the advice of a properly accredited specialist and report the incident to the local authorities immediately.

What are magical items?

Magical items, or foci, are rare and specialized items used by magicians when performing magic. True foci are of no use to non-magicians and should be handled only by capable magicians. The so-called magical items that most non-magicians come into contact with are usually worthless items hawked by unscrupulous conmen. Many people lose considerable amounts of money every year on such swindles, so make sure that anyone from whom you purchase magical goods is properly accredited and licensed.

>>>>(OK, so just because this download has been the only thing in the Magic in the Matrix section of Shadowland for about a year doesn't mean I don't care about our spell-slingin' brethren—I do care. Honestly. So whoever sent that spirit to my house can just call off the damn thing. It's driving me nuts.

Yeah, I know what you chrome-jocks are thinking (I thought the same thing). Magicians on the Matrix? Nulllll ... But I'm here to tell you otherwise, chummer. Contrary to popular wisdom (hahl), not all magic-wielders are technophobes who live in gloomy, isolated towers where they read dusty, leather-bound tomes of arcane lore by candlelight. Truth is, most magicians these days live pretty much like everyone else. I'm good friends with a practicing mage. He lives in an apartment, not a hidden tower. His magical library is on multimedia optical chips, not parchment. He drives a car and for the most part looks like anyone else you might run into on the street (in some of the meaner areas of the metropolis, anyway).

derive their magical power by linking their emotions, will and faith to the natural world through a figure known as a totem. The totem exemplifies the shaman's beliefs and way of life.

magicians: Magicians are magicians who follow the hermetic tradition. A mage sees the universe as a pattern of abstract forces and energies that he can control through complex formulae and symbols of power.

tradition: A magical tradition is a body of beliefs, theories and rituals governing the learning and use of magic. Numerous magical traditions exist in the twenty-first century, and each teaches and uses magic in its own unique fashion.

magical groups: Magicians join magical groups to study, educate others, and advance themselves professionally. *Initiatory* groups exist primarily to help improve the members' magical abilities and are considered separate from other associations.

spells: Spells are magical formulae and processes that cause certain predetermined effects when performed by magicians. Spells enable magicians to shape and manipulate magical energy to produce specific effects in the physical world, such as levitating items or freezing water.

foci: Foci (plural of *focus*) are enchanted items designed to enhance the user's magical abilities. Foci have many functions and take many different forms.

"OK, Cap. But what about shamans? They're all nuts, aren't they?" You're not saying it out loud, but you're thinking it, aren't you? Wrong again, kids. Sure, there are some back-to-the-land-and-our-tribal-heritage shamans, but most of them still have refrigerators, telecomms, homes with indoor plumbing and yes, even trideo sets. Shamans are more connected with the natural world than a lot of us other folks, but don't believe all the stereotypes you see on the trid. Some shamans, you'll discover, are as techno-savvy as anyone.



Which brings me to this post. I know the 'Trix like the back of my hand, but about spells, astral space, and other magical doings I know diddly. So I contacted a friend and asked him to do some digging. I leave the magical research and magical talk to my good friend Talon—he will be your guide through the ins and outs of the magical world of 2056. Sit back and enjoy the ride!

Oh, and treat him with respect. If any of you drek-for-brains out there act up or get in his face, I'll hunt you down and fry your deck. Didn't think I could do that, did you? Well, even us mundanes have a few tricks up our sleeves.<<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (16:20:18/01-05-57)

>>>>>(Thanks, CC. And how about a round of applause for the AAAT and their fascinating file on "everything you want to know about magic"? Now you know what a nose-picking 3-year-old knows about the subject. Congrats! Jeez—whenever I read that drek I think of that old line, "With friends like these, who needs enemies?"

As I went searching through files to find out what you all might be interested in, I kept a few things in mind. First, I chose personal

and professional accounts. Second, I chose drek of interest to magic-slingers and mundanes (hey, we all live in the same world). Third, I made sure this post talked about magic from the street, not from some dusty tome or a bunch of anal-retentive magical "scholars" from some oh-so-prestigious school of thaumaturgy. I wanted the raw stuff. I hope you'll find it useful. Hopefully you'll learn a few things—I did.

For those of you who run in the shadows, remember—magic is the unknown. Sure, you can use it to smite your enemies (as the ancients used to say), but they can also use it to smite you. Magic is the great equalizer—magical or mundane, it don't matter. In a blink you can come so close to death that the River Styx is soakin' your boxers. Face it, even us magicians don't know everything about magic—but the following is what we do know. So pay attention—there'll be a quiz after this.

Oh, yeah—as usual, feel free to add your own three nuyen if you want. Shadowland takes no responsibility for the truth or sanity of anything posted here.<<<<<<

—Talon (16:28:42/01-05-57)

THE WAYS OF MAGIC



>>>>>(Nobody can say for sure what makes one person a magician and another a mundane. We don't really know if it's genetics, environment, training or some combination of all of three that makes someone capable of performing magic. We do know that magicians are different with a capital "D." Frag, magicians might as well be from another planet as far as most folks are concerned. But that doesn't change the fact that magicians—and magic—are a fact of life in the twenty-first century. Like it or not, folks on the streets have to deal with us. You can't deal with something you don't understand, so I asked a few friends to post some drek that may shed a little light on why magicians are the way they are, how they think and what they're like. I also culled some files on my own to give a few more viewpoints. The files are pretty short, so I've made them read-only to keep them readable. Any comments you jokers want to add will show up at the end of each file.)<<<<<

—Talon (16:54:12/01-10-57)

BEYOND THE ODD COVEN

by Finn

Most people who watch the trid can tell the difference between mages and shamans—or so they think—thanks to weekly episodes of *The Odd Coven*. Mages are the fantasy-wizard types with their arcane diagrams, ritual chants, wands and pentagrams. They're hopelessly neat, organized, compulsive control freaks. Shamans are the back-to-nature types dancing around out in the woods and calling up the spirits of the rocks and trees. They're party animals who swill home brew, never bathe and live in tents that look like an Indian garage sale. Well, it ain't necessarily so. The mage/shaman split is true as far as it goes, but it's not as simple as *The Odd Coven's* caricatures make it out to be.

Anyone above the age of eight knows that mages don't all run around in pointed caps and flowing robes, and that not all shamans sport animal skins. In fact, mages and shamans can include people from all kinds of magical traditions: druids, witches, nature magicians, voodooists, santieros, kahunas, kabbalists, tzaddikhs, miko, esoteric elven traditions, and





just about anything else you can imagine. That said, however, there is a real difference between generally hermetic and generally shamanic ways of doing magic.

At its base, all magic is the same. (Plenty of mages and shamans reading this are going to scream at me for saying that, but all the yelling in the world doesn't change the truth.) Magic is ultimately a universal force, and certain things about it are true for every kind of magician everywhere in the world. Magic is as universal an art as painting or writing and as universal a science as psychology. So what's the big squawk about the "hermetic tradition" and the "shamanic tradition"? Just this—magic may be universal, but the ways we see it are not. And because the way we see it determines what we can do with it, up to a point the tradition we follow matters a lot—not in the sense that one tradition lets us do more powerful or "better" magic than the other, but in the sense that a tradition means something specific to each individual magician. A tradition is the source of a magician's training and therefore of his power. Magic depends on faith and force of will, and so the magician has to believe strongly in the ideas of his tradition for his magic to work. No surprise, then, that magicians tend to get attached to their own particular way of doing things.

Most of the differences between the two big magical traditions boil down to style and attitude. Even when it seems like one tradition can do something the other can't, appearances can be deceiving. Take summoning spirits, for example. Hermetic mages like me see magic as a collection of elements that are the essential building blocks of everything, and so we summon spirits that manifest as elementals. Shamans see magic as the forces of nature, and so they get in touch with nature spirits. At first glance, it seems like each tradition can whistle up entities that the other can't—but again, it ain't necessarily so. After all, the difference between a river spirit and a water elemental is largely a matter of opinion. Which one is "more powerful," or somehow works better, is a nonsensical question. They both suit the needs of their summoner perfectly well, and that's all that counts—especially in a tight spot on the streets.

If I had to sum up "the hermetic tradition" in one sentence, I'd say we're the ones who want to know exactly how things work. Hermetics want to see all the puzzle pieces and figure out how they fit together. We like systems, definitions, formulas. It's possible to use magic effectively without having a clue about how it works, but a hermetic finds the "how" of magic endlessly fascinating. Think of the hermetic as the guy who designs the programs on your cyberdeck or terminal. Any slub can make the thing work perfectly well by pushing the right buttons—he doesn't have to know *why* they work. The programmer, though—the mage—knows precisely how and why Joe Slub got the result he wanted. The mage knows the whole process, step by step. That's what draws a magician to the hermetic view of the Art in the first place—an interest in the process as well as the outcome.

As much as we love to figure out processes, we also like to talk about them. Shop talk's got to be the average hermetic's favorite pastime, because debates about the workings of magic enhance our ability to use it. There's a joke that if you put ten hermetics in a room and ask them what magic is, you'll get ten different answers. You'll also get a noisy, lively, wide-ranging debate

about everybody's opinion from every conceivable angle. No hermetic I know has ever told another, "You're just wrong about magic and that's that." We listen to each other. We give and take. We have to—if we're not learning from it, all the talk is just talk. Magic is learning as well as doing, and the learning never stops.

I know some people call us cold and mechanical. They say our preoccupation with systems and workings makes us see the universe as a machine, without life. But that's not really true. If I say a plant's leaves are made up of molecules, which in turn are made up of protons and electrons, and that all these things are arranged in a specific pattern that makes the leaf a leaf, I'm not saying it's any less alive. I'm not saying the plant is like the engine of my Nightsky or the firing mechanism of an FN-HAR assault rifle. The way I see it, being aware of the molecular pattern of a plant leaf makes me appreciate its aliveness even more. The pattern is a beautiful thing, like a fine piece of music, and it helps make the plant what it is. Same thing with magic—perceiving the patterns that underlie a spell or the metaplanes adds to the wonder of experiencing and using it.

>>>>(You want wonder, chummskis, initiation's the way to go. I went through my first initiation just a few months back, and you wouldn't believe the drek I can do now that I used to just dream about. I can quicken and anchor spells, I can center my power so I don't get so fragging drained every time I sling magic, I can even go places in the astral that I didn't know existed! Man, it's amazing! I did my ordeal in Salish—never mind where—going into the woods and surviving all on my lonesome for fourteen days and nights. At sunrise on the fifteenth day, I suddenly felt this incredible ecstasy and I knew I'd made it. I felt my connection with my magic getting stronger right at that moment. I happened to be walking by the edge of a lake, and I sat down on the bank because my meatbod was pretty fragging tired. I looked into the water, at the sun shining on it like rose-colored fire, and the next thing I knew I was swimming through astral space. I mean swimming—it felt like water all around me, and I was a fish. I had a tail and fins and scales and all. I was swimming in the middle of a whole school of fish, and as soon as I saw the other fish around me I could see the patterns we were making in the water. Bright lines of light connected each fish to every other fish, and every time the school moved the pattern changed around—like a kaleidoscope. Then one fish leaped out of the water into the sunlight, pulling the rest of us with him. I saw a drop of water dripping off the fish in front of me, and all of a sudden I was water. I was one of those little droplets, with sunlight shining all through me, making rainbow patterns on the ocean surface below. When I plunged back into the water, I became a dolphin. A bunch of other dolphins came to join me, and welcomed me to the Plane of Water. I'd reached the metaplanes, and boy did it feel good!

When I got back to my body, the sun was just clearing a little copse of trees on the far side of the lake. I didn't feel tired anymore, or hungry, or anything—just happier than I've felt since I was a little kid.)<<<<<

—Queen of Cups (02:16:49/02-08-57)

>>>>(Lack of food and sleep does really bizarre drek to the brain, doesn't it?)<<<<<

—Randi (03:34:32/02-08-57)

>>>>>(Here's an interesting "world view" tidbit on spirits. Shamans tend to treat the spirits they summon as allies and individual, thinking creatures; and that's how nature spirits behave, with their own personalities and wills. Mages, on the other hand, tend to treat elementals as constructs or lesser beings to be commanded, and elementals tend to act more like magical automatons with less individuality and free will. Which came first, the attitude or the reality?)<<<<<

—Talon (00:13:50/02-09-57)

>>>>>(Forget all the Odd Coven drek. Your next-door neighbor might be a high-powered magician for all you know. Nowadays most of them don't advertise the fact with outlandish costumes or crystal balls. Ninety-nine out of a hundred look just like your average slot on the street. And they don't think alike, either. Some are into magic for the money, some for the power trip, some for the greater good (or bad)—the list of reasons goes on and on. Magicians are just as unpredictable, individualistic, and crazed as anyone else (probably more so). Odds are you're not going to spot one unless he whips out a major spell.)<<<<<

—BlackStone (02:37:52/02-15-57)

>>>>>(Whether they sling the drek or not, some people go for "magical fashion" in a big way. Neo-tribals go for the whole shamanic get-up with leathers, faux fetishes and totem jewelry. Goths, spooks and depressed club kids tend to sport a lot of hermetic-looking drek, especially Egyptian pieces—plenty of ankhs, scarabs, hieroglyphs and death-obsessed motifs. I've even seen a new "corporate mage" style, with carefully tailored cloaks and jackets and just the right magical accessories to give new meaning to the words "power suit.")<<<<<

—Fritz (01:28:17/02-16-57)

>>>>>(A fashion trend lately among corporate movers and shakers is wearing real magical accessories to flatter and enhance. Rings, earrings and lapel pins double as spell locks, holding various enhancing spells—the most popular are the ones that promote clear thought, strengthen the will and increase charisma. Some real bigwigs also wear spell locks or anchors with protective enchantments—I encountered one exec who wore an amulet that controlled a spirit bodyguard. Real "killer" accessories.)<<<<<

—Necro (01:32:45/02-17-57)

>>>>>(I did most of my growing up in the '80s and '90s of the past century, so I'm old enough to remember the whole "New Age" movement. Maybe it was some kind of harbinger of the Awakening, maybe it was just millennial weirdness, but people really got interested in alternate consciousness and mystical ways of thinking. Most of it was just bull, of course—new ways to separate gullible saps searching for meaning from their hard-earned money. Along with the little bit of good drek about ancient magical traditions, we got swamped with books, tapes and films pitched to the kind of idiot who wanted to know How to Get Your Heart's Desire in Six Easy Steps. Lighting a red candle and whispering the name of your true love over it, getting rich by putting a dime in a bag along with seven sacred herbs and sleeping with it

under your pillow, that kind of thing. Some of the pop literature actually had valid magical theory in it, but so mixed up with absurdities that it was practically useless.

What's really funny is that since the Awakening, some of the folks who really believed the pop-magic junk turned out to be magically talented. And guess what? They manifested their talents through their junk philosophies. For these people, aromatherapy and crystal healing and all that screwball drek actually works because they believe it will.)<<<<<

—Grandmama (05:33:54/02-18-57)

>>>>>(There's plenty of magical value in the runes and tarot cards that got so popular at the end of the twentieth century—but not when they're sanitized of all meaning, packaged with a little instruction book and sold as parlor games for 20 nuyen at your local StufferShack. Likewise, a lot of Native American shamans weren't real thrilled when wannabe Anglo writers started churning out volumes of their "ancient secrets" for big royalties—but that doesn't mean the secrets weren't valid.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (15:01:53/02-19-57)

>>>>>(Junk occultism is still going strong. Just watch "Doctor" Arnold Ledbetter offer the "Secrets of Ancient Atlantis" for a 25 nuyen donation on the Ancient Wisdom Channel some Thursday night. Worthless trinkets, charms and how-to manuals of magic are also how most talismongers make ends meet. Selling genuine magical gear to real magicians limits you to a small and specialized clientele. Considering the amount of work that has to go into each focus or whatever, making only "the good stuff" is a losing business proposition.)<<<<<

—Talon (23:06:37/02-19-57)

BECOMING PRAIRIE DOG

by Marina

>>>>>(Here's the other half of the mage/shaman divide.)<<<<<

—Talon (21:23:56/01-10-57)

When I was young, I knew nothing of magic. I knew I could speak to the sunflowers that grew outside our kitchen door. I knew how our house cat felt when it bit into a mouse's throat. And I knew that colors blew in every gust of wind. But I didn't know that any of this was magic.

I first knew I had magic when I got lost on a family picnic. Mom had sent me to my cousins' for the summer—we couldn't leave the 'plex because Mom needed her job, but she tried to get us kids out of the Sprawl any chance she could. I was about ten or so, old enough to know better than to wander off. But I wandered off anyway. The sky was calling me, so I kept walking farther and farther away from my aunt and brothers and cousins. They were sleeping, lulled by the warm sun and bellies full of cold chicken and fry bread. I'd lain down to sleep too, but sleep wouldn't come. Instead, I kept hearing the song of the sky. So I followed it.

I don't know how long I walked. I climbed over a few small hills—hardly hills at all, really, more like wrinkles in the earth. Tall grasses waved all around me, and I could just see the top of the

Mile-High Tree. It wasn't really a mile high, of course—it was just tall and older than even our grandparents could remember. That huge old cottonwood marked the boundary of the reserve, and the sight of it should have warned me of how far I'd come. Instead, I just kept walking through the grass.

All of a sudden, the grass fell away. I stepped out into a huge space of bare earth, which was covered all over with deep holes. From the corner of my eye, I saw something pop up out of one of the holes and then vanish. It was gone even before I'd finished turning toward it. Something else flashed out of another hole at the edges of my sight, then disappeared. The same thing kept happening—I would see a flash of movement and turn toward it, only to find myself looking at empty air. Then I heard barking—tiny yipping sounds that seemed to come from the earth beneath my feet. I was getting angry by this time. Something was playing tricks on me, and I didn't like it. So I stamped my foot and yelled, "Come out or go away! Quit teasing me!"

The barking stopped. Then something popped out of the hole right in front of me. It was small and sleek, its head shaped like an otter's and with teeth almost like a beaver's. It stood up in its burrow, stretching tall and thin. Then it jumped out and sat at my feet, suddenly becoming round and fat. It looked up at me with bright eyes, brighter than any ordinary animal's.

"Would you like to play?" it said. It—she—sounded just like me, another little girl.

I was so startled, I blurted out the first thing that came into my head. "I don't know."

The prairie dog—for that is what she was—shrugged. "Take your time," she said. "All my brothers and sisters want to play, too. But we'll wait for you." Then suddenly she looked past me, off to my left, and her gaze grew sharp. She stretched up tall again, then leaped past me and pounced on a beetle.

I watched Prairie Dog eat the beetle, trying not to think of anything but the question she'd asked me. After a while, I made up my mind. I squatted down in front of Prairie Dog, looked into her eyes, and yipped.

Prairie Dog yipped back, then leaped up and dashed across my shoulders. When she touched me I felt myself growing small and fat and furry like she was. My hands and feet stretched into claw-tipped paws, my long black hair turned to short fur of pale brown that flowed all across me. I was becoming like Prairie Dog. Prairie Dog laughed at me and disappeared down her hole. I followed her down deep into the earth, where a hundred brothers and sisters gathered around me and wished me welcome.

My memory gets hazy after that. I know my oldest brother Tomas found me sitting in the middle of the tall grass, right by the Mile-High Tree, and carried me back to our pickup. My aunt scolded me a little, but she could tell something had happened. She had magic herself, though not so strong as mine became. I cried all the way back to the 'plex, frightened that I had left Prairie Dog behind forever.

Three days after we got back, I was crossing the vacant lot next to our apartment when Prairie Dog popped out of a hole in the asphalt. Twenty brothers and sisters popped out of the ground behind her. "What are you staring at me for?" she said. "You didn't really think we'd leave you, did you?"

Then Prairie Dog leaped into my arms and I held her tight. She melted inside of me, becoming a part of my flesh and my bones. When I undressed for bed that night, I saw she had left a pale brown mark in the shape of her small body under my collarbone.

>>>>(Prairie Dog? God's teeth. What's next—the Duck-Billed Platypus totem?)<<<<<

—Randi (01:04:34/01-23-57)

>>>>(I fail to see what you find so amusing about that idea.)<<<<<

—Aussie Boy (03:44:32/01-23-57)

>>>>(Good friend of mine's a Prairie Dog shaman. She's the only person I know in the whole Sprawl who actually makes a point of getting to know everyone in her whole apartment block. And I don't mean just saying "Hol" in the hallways, either. I mean she gets to know you—asks your name, what you do for fun, what your favorite trid show is, that kind of thing. She says her totem is curious, and so is she. The other thing she does is borrow and lend drek—a cup of soykaf, a screwdriver, whatever. That's part of her totem's nature too—just like prairie dogs connect with each other by building tunnels, she connects with people by giving and taking drek. Sounds strange, but it works for her.)<<<<<

—Mistik (21:24:35/01-23-57)

>>>>(Your friend's gonna end up cold and dead. Curiosity killed the prairie dog!)<<<<<

—Muscle (21:45:32/01-23-57)

>>>>(Don't worry your little pinhead over me, Muscle-brains. My totem protects me—plus, I'm not stupid. There's lots of things I can find to talk about other than people's dirty little secrets.)<<<<<

—Dogsbody (22:02:33/01-23-57)

>>>>(Don't anybody be getting the idea that all shamans follow animal totems, or come from Native American cultures. Friend of mine from Tir na nÓg's a druid—she follows the Oak totem, of all things. Don't anybody call her tree-hugger, though, unless you want one powerful lady ticked off at you. (Oak druids are incredibly patient—not a good thing if they don't like you, 'cause they don't mind waiting years for payback.) She says the land of the Tir—Eire, she calls it—carries magic in its bones, in the stone circles and sacred groves and mana lines. The way she scans it, druids have always been around and just keep doing what they've always done—guarding the land, protecting it from harm, restoring it wherever they can. My friend's particular way of doing this is to plant oak trees, among other things—especially on corp-owned land that the Powers That Be are trying to use for other things (which snarks the corps off no end). She gets in trouble a lot, but she deals with it. Boy, does she deal with it.

A while back, a few fools-for-hire made the mistake of attacking my friend near her own sacred circle. They wanted to teach her the error of her eco-conscious ways, and they didn't know as much about druids as they should have. Silly fraggers thought they'd caught her unprotected because they ran her down under



the open sky—no medicine lodge or hermetic library in sight, so they figured she was handicapped but good. So my friend, she steps inside the bounds of her sacred stone circle and uses its big ol' power boost to conjure the biggest motherfragging storm spirit I've ever seen. You know the old cliché about the heavens splitting open? It happened. The skies just tore right across, like so much wet cloth, and jagged lightning bolts ripped toward the poor fraggers on the attack. The spirit killed three outright—three others fled. The last two stood their ground and tried to cast spells, but they couldn't see well enough to do frag all in the driving rain. One of them finally managed to conjure a mountain spirit that might have posed a problem for a garden-variety shaman, but not for my friend. You know what they say about druids and banishing—they can get rid of a spirit faster than a cheap blind date. I can personally tell you it's true. Don't know why they're so much better at it than other kinds of shamans, but I leave that kind of question to people who like to pribble on about magical whys and wherefores. Me, I know what I see and I go with what works.)<<<<<<

—Youngblood (11:38:24/01-26-57)

>>>>>(The truest, deepest magic comes from the nature magic of Germany. We do not follow animals or forces of Nature, but gods. The idols of Wotan the Wild Huntsman, Donar the Dragonslayer, and the Great Mother Froh ... these "totems," as you might call them, give us far greater power than those who do not know them can imagine. They have shown us Sternklarvelt, the star-bright world that the less enlightened call astral space; they have made us their standard-bearers in the great unending war against the corporations, the defilers of German soil and despoilers of the Earth. To serve them is glory beyond price. For the sake of our land, we of the Runenthing will live and die as our idols command.)<<<<<<

—Sturm (01:33:43/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Jeez, who let Mr. Tude on the board?)<<<<<<

—Mistik (01:37:44/01-26-57)

>>>>>(As a member of die Weise—the Wise—I must respond to Sturm's post. He has no right to call himself a practitioner of nature magic, and he shames us all by pretending to serve die Grosse Mutter (in a male aspect! I ask you!). True nature magic is found among the Weise, the hexenweisen—witches, to use the simple English word.

My coven meets every month, sometimes more often if we can manage it. We gather to practice our craft, celebrate our connection with our idols (who are not gods, though they are

powerful and beautiful beings), and affirm our friendship. We are thirteen in number—seven women and six men, which gives us six couples and a priestess. This balance of gender mirrors the balance of Nature, which we all strive to preserve and reinforce. Indeed, maintaining that balance with the help of our idols is the central truth of our existence. Our magic, our "worship," if you will, is about love and caring and healing and joy, not about hating or making war. We do not like the corporations much, but we reserve our anger for their actions. The people themselves—the executives, the wage slaves—are as deserving of our love and care as any other living creatures, and many are in greater need of it because they are so misguided. We use our magic to correct their mistakes as best we can, not to destroy them personally. The Great Mother does not approve of murder—if She wishes someone's destruction, She will see to it.)<<<<<<

—Weisse Rose (02:22:41/01-26-57)



>>>>>(Your German idols are the loa of voodoo, plain and simple—screwed up and misunderstood, just like you pinkles screw up everything. Same goes for the druid totems.)<<<<<<

—Bon Ange (04:33:45/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Hate to burst your bubble, Angelface, but voodoo is a "screwed up and misunderstood" amalgam of West Indian animism and Catholic symbolism. Which doesn't detract from its validity at all, but don't go acting like your group of magical practitioners has the "real" right answer and the rest of us are just pasting together the scraps from your table. Your magical system came along a lot later than mine.)<<<<<<

—Kernow's Daughter (07:55:06/01-26-57)

>>>>>(I'm stopping this right now, before it turns into a name-calling fest. For those curious about voodoo magic, there's a whole file on the subject later on in this post.)<<<<<<

—Talon (08:13:44/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Here's weird for you—shamans who follow totems straight out of mythology. There's an up-and-comer on the Seattle music scene—Lorelei Angel—who's a Phoenix shaman. Her live performances are incredible enough for mundanes, but for us magic types they're spec-fragging-facular. She works magic during the show, using her wailing guitar and incredible singing as centering techniques. Every move she makes across the stage, fire follows her like a shadow. Never burns her, of course, or anything else—we're talking illusion here, not reality. At the peak of her concerts, she slings some kind of spell that makes it look like she's honest-to-

god on fire; only the fire's transparent, so you can still see her clearly through it. You can hear the roar of the flames, and she sings over them no matter how loud they get. You ask me, she could be the next Mercurial.)<<<<<<

—Nacht Musik (04:22:32/08-01-56)

>>>>>(I've seen Lorelei around the bar circuit. Long red hair, likes to dress in bright red or gold. People who see her up close just fall all over themselves to do something for her—buy her a drink, buy her a meal, even light her fragging cigarette. Funny thing is, not a single fight has ever broken out among her fans. Not even so much as a scuffle. They just sit patiently, watching her, waiting their turn for her to notice them. She is unfailingly gracious, even to the skraggiest-looking slub in the joint.)<<<<<<

—Meridew (06:07:22/02-02-57)

GROWING UP MAGICAL

by M

I always knew I was different, even as a little girl. I have distinct memories of moments as a child in school or with my friends when I felt ... *distant*. I suppose, is the best way to describe it. Separate. Apart from the whole scene, like I was watching it all from far away. It's not that I had an unhappy childhood, don't get me wrong. But I wasn't a typical kid. I didn't have lots of friends—not real ones, anyway. I had a lot of imaginary friends as a kid. I used to hold tea parties for them and talk to them all the time. My parents thought it was a cute phase and didn't want to "stifle my imagination," so they didn't try to discourage me. I would play for hours by myself in my own secret world. Now I know those times were my first taste of magic.

In school my teachers didn't know quite what to make of me. One day they'd be labeling me "gifted," the next they'd be telling me I needed to pay attention more. They told my parents I had attention deficit syndrome (or whatever multisyllable name they gave daydreaming at the time) because I'd get so wrapped up in my own thoughts that I'd lose track of what everyone else was doing. Still, I did well in school for the most part and did all the normal childhood things. But I never quite lost the feeling of being different.

I discovered the Art when I was a teenager. I had a few friends over at my parents' house for a sleep-over, and we were talking about all sorts of things—especially boys. We spent half the night discussing such weighty issues as which boy at school was the cutest and who was interested in whom. Somehow we got on the subject of love spells and decided to try a spell from one of those children's books on folk magic. It seems so simple and harmless now, but I remember feeling a funny kind of thrill—as if we were doing something forbidden. As I recited the words of the spell, my skin started tingling and I felt warm.

Suddenly there was a bright flash and a muffled bang. It startled us so much that my best friend Julie screamed bloody murder. My parents came rushing down to see what was going on, and both of them started laughing when we told them about the spell. Nothing really happened, but they took it seriously enough to schedule a magical ability test for me the following week. I waited impatiently for days for the results to come, all the time

wondering if I could possibly have the ability to do magic. When the test results came back positive, my parents were as pleased as if I had won the Nobel Prize. They took us all out to dinner that night. I told my little brother he'd better watch out or I'd turn him into a toad one day.

After that, I started taking special classes at school. That's where I learned the basic magical theory and concepts that helped me understand the changes I began to experience as my talent started manifesting itself. I threw myself into the classes—I loved every minute of them. Only ten kids in our high school attended magic classes, and our teacher said that I had one of the strongest talents of the bunch. I was proud of that.

My friends joked a lot about my being a magician, but I could see it made them nervous. I was becoming more sensitive to what people felt and thought (not reading minds—I didn't know any real spells at that age), and I could sense their discomfort when I talked about learning magic or sensing something that they couldn't. I lost my best friend Julie in my second year of high school. I had just started dating a boy and Julie kept telling me how happy she was for me—but I knew she was jealous and resentful. She couldn't help it, and neither could I. A lot of people I knew didn't care for my increased "sensitivity" either and stopped hanging out with me. I'd never asked to be magically gifted, or ever meant to hurt anyone. But they all started treating me like some kind of monster, or like I was stuck-up. At the same time, a lot of kids who'd never talked to me before started acting like they wanted to be my best friend. Usually they wanted me to cast a spell for them or something. When I'd tell them I didn't know how, they'd call me a fake and laugh nervously, hoping inside that it was true. A couple of guys I knew (real drekheads) started calling me "the witch" just loud enough for me to hear when I passed them in the halls or the lunchroom.

To make a long story short, I ended up hating high school with a passion. I stuck to my own small circle of friends, most of whom were also Talented. Most of my mundane friends eventually drifted away. No one ever treated me like just another kid, and that's all I ever wanted to be back then—just another kid, just like everyone else. I tried really hard to fit in, but after a while I just gave up. I threw myself into my magic studies and spent most of my free time practicing.

By graduation, I had accepted an occult-studies scholarship from a notable university. College was like a whole different world to me. I made new friends and grew fascinated with my studies. Most of my newfound friends were in the OS program, too, and our dorm was nicknamed "the tower" by the student body because it housed most of the magic majors. Some considered it more of a hazard to house us all together, but it usually worked out to everyone's advantage.

After I graduated from college, I took a job with the magical resources department of a certain corporation and began work on my master's degree. My department at the corp was like a smaller version of my college dorm in a lot of ways. We all stuck together pretty close while the rest of the company stepped very quietly around us. I liked the respect we got from the rest of the company, but everyone in the department quickly tired of management's frequent requests that we "magic up" things on a moment's notice to compensate for other departments' failures.



After my younger brother's death, I saw my parents less and less. Once I had become a magician, he got it into his head that he must have the Talent as well—and he couldn't take no for an answer. He took a magical ability test when he entered high school and failed. Within months, he committed suicide. My parents never openly blamed me for his death, but I couldn't help noticing the pain on their faces every time they saw me wearing a fetish or focus or performing the smallest spell. Eventually I saw them only on major holidays. When an opportunity for a better job came along with another branch of the company, I took it. Nowadays I send my parents e-mail on special occasions, and we exchange presents on birthdays and holidays, but we don't really see each other any more.

I guess that's part of the price all magicians must pay. We're different, after all, and once you start down the path of magic there's no turning back. I may sound bitter or cynical, but I have no regrets. I've felt the power as a spell I've woven takes shape before my eyes; I've spoken with spirits as old as time and traveled to worlds filled with wonders that stagger the imagination. I have stared into the face of my own darkness and come away stronger—and I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

>>>>(Is there a point to this fraggin' sob story?)<<<<<<
—Jaxon (02:03:45/01-12-57)

>>>>(A lot of what M talks about is true. Most people have a kind of love/hate relationship with magic and magicians. On the one hand magicians are cool because they can do all kinds of amazing things and have incredible powers, but on the other hand magicians are feared because they can do all kinds of amazing things and have incredible powers.)<<<<<<
—Hex (01:33:20/01-13-57)

>>>>(Yeah, I feel really bad for those poor magicians ...)<<<<<<
—CrashMan (23:45:16/01-17-57)

>>>>(Hey, she never said it didn't have its good side, chummer. Just that mundanes don't really understand us, and that isolates us from so-called "normal" people—even when we're among people as "abnormal" as most shadowrunners.)<<<<<<
—Farley (00:53:12/01-17-57)

>>>>(It's too bad about M's brother. The Dumas test isn't 100 percent accurate. Some people who take it come up as mundanes but develop magical ability later in life. I did. There's always hope, even if an initial test is negative.)<<<<<<
—Starfall (02:34:19/01-20-57)

>>>>(For every mundane with a wish and no talent there's a con man willing to take 'em for every last nuyen. Just lookit those late-night infomercials where they shove every kind of magical scam that ever was right in your face. If those things were for real there'd be no mundanes left in the world.)<<<<<<
—Walker (21:04:43/01-29-57)

>>>>(That's gotta be tough for kids. Look at kid-trid—nearly all the heroes and villains are magical powerhouses, from the noble

young shaman in training to the fantastical golem biocomputer with magical powers. Imagine growing up believing that magic is the best thing in the world, then finding out you'll never have it. For nine out of ten kids it's never gonna happen. No wonder teen suicide rates are up.)<<<<<<
—StatsMan (16:39:02/01-30-57)

>>>>(What about the way we mundanes are separated from magicians? My son is a magician, and I love him with all my heart. But I may never be able to really understand him. There's a part of his life that I can't see or touch or feel and that he can't seem to find the words to explain to me. I know he feels lonely sometimes and I do my best to help, but I also know I can't reach that part of him. That's the most difficult thing a parent can go through—to know your child is in need and not be able to do anything about it. I don't always understand my son, but I will always love him.)<<<<<<
—Ms. Dos (20:18:29/02-07-57)

STREET MAGIC

by Goblin-Boy

Corp wage mage? No thanks, chummer! I slipped out of a silk corp noose once already, and I ain't stickin' my head in one again for all the cred in the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank.

I was born in the Barrens, and if it weren't for my magic I'd still be there. I'd probably have joined a gang and ended up like my brother. I won't bore you with the story of my early childhood—let's just say it didn't leave me with a lot of pleasant memories. I was just another SINless kid in the Barrens, with no real life to look forward to, until I met Grimley.

Grimley was a weird old ork who lived in my neighborhood, the stuff of local legend. He was a mage and a cranky old recluse to boot. Every kid in the neighborhood (and plenty of adults, too) had a story about Grimley's strange habits and secrets. Everyone had ideas about what old man Grimley did in his run-down shack in the wee hours of the night when nobody was looking, but no one really knew for sure.

It's funny, but no one ever actually saw old Grimley do any magic. I mean, everyone knew he was a mage, but he didn't look like any hotshot spellslinger and he never seemed to do anything. If I were a mage, I thought, I'd be doing drek all the time. After a while I started figuring maybe Grimley was a fake—maybe he just told everyone he was a mage and they all believed him. One day, I decided to prove it.

I can't tell you what I saw when I snuck into his house, cuz he made me promise never to tell anyone. I can tell you it scared me so much I fraggin' drekked in my pants. Grimley came home just then, and it's a good thing, cuz I didn't know what to do. I thought he'd be mad, but he just stood in the doorway for the longest time, holding his sides and laughing like a maniac. After he made sure I was okay, he sat me down in his kitchen, gave me lunch, and asked me questions about magic. Then he asked if I wanted to learn it.

I couldn't say a word for a minute or two. I just stood there with my jaw hanging open, replaying Grimley's question in my

head like it was my favorite scene in some *Toonland* simchip. I felt like he'd asked if I wanted to be king or something. I couldn't believe it. Grimley said he thought I could sling it—he figured fate had dropped me in his lap, so he ought to do something about it. When I got my voice box working again, the first word out of my mouth was "yes."

A couple of times I almost quit. Grimley had me doing all kinds of drek that I didn't think had anything to do with magic. He'd make me sit still for an hour at a time to learn how to concentrate. Or he'd make me help him around the house while he talked, telling me what magic was and what it was about. Most of it seemed too simple to be true. I thought magic was a lot more mysterious than the old geezer made it sound. Anyway, he didn't really show me anything for a while.

Once he thought I was ready to handle it, he taught me how to see into astral space. Totally freaked myself out the first time I did it, but it got easier each time. I remember when he took me into the astral for my first journey out of my meat body. It was the most incredible thing I'd ever done—I still remember it like it was yesterday.

You've probably heard or read something somewhere about what being in astral space is like—"I floated in a realm of endless light" or "I felt free of my body and truly pure for the very first time." Well, that's bulldrek. Didn't feel like that at all to me. I felt so solid that I didn't believe I'd left my body behind at first. Grimley had to show me. We were standing in a little gray room, and I said, "Okay, so when do I leave my body?" Grimley gave me a look like he couldn't make up his mind whether to laugh or smack me one. Then he made a door in the gray wall—just reached out his hand and grabbed a doorknob that suddenly *appeared*—and opened it. I looked, and saw Grimley's kitchen. The two of us were sitting at the beat-up old table, him leaning back in his chair and me with my head on my arms like I was asleep. What really convinced me that I was seeing our meat bodies and not just some weird vision was the fact that my left elbow was resting in a plate of ketchup. I just happened to be wearing my fave synthleather jacket, so I was looking at a major tragedy. No way I'd've dreamed up that little detail.

Then Grimley asked me where I wanted to go. I said I wanted to see my mom. I didn't know exactly where she was—I couldn't keep track of whose house she went to on what days. Grimley told me to think of Mom, then open a door. I stretched out my hand like he'd done, and felt the doorknob kind of congeal under my hand. One minute there was space, the next a chunk of smooth metal. Weird. Anyway, I opened the door and walked into the fanciest living room I'd ever seen. Polished wood and glass everywhere, gleaming in the sun. Fancy trid-sim combo set all across one wall. Couch cushions made of fabric so shiny and stiff you'd slide off if you sat on them. And my mom, spraying the inside of a glass door to a cupboard full of big-nuyen junk and rubbing the dust off with a ripped-up towel. The really wiz thing about it was, Mom was the brightest thing in the whole room. I don't mean literally bathed in light or any of that drek—but somehow, everything about her just looked more real. Her hair had more shine to it, the colors of her skin and her clothes seemed

more vivid, her outlines seemed sharper. Everything else looked faded next to her, like old 2-D snapshots left in the sun.

We didn't stay long—Grimley said that wouldn't be good for me the first time out. I got worried about getting back to my meatbod, since I hadn't been able to tell when I left it. Grimley told me to think real hard about my left pinkie finger. Sounds lame, neh? But I did it, and suddenly I felt this jolt like a bus stopping too quick. Next thing I know, I'm stretching out the kinks in my neck and cursing the ketchup stain on my jacket. I felt real tired, and a little dizzy. It was dark outside, but Grimley made me stay and eat a sandwich before I went home.

I studied with Grimley a couple of years. He could be a real hardcase sometimes and I'd get fragged off at him, but he took everything in stride—which made me even madder. As the years passed, I started to worry about my family more. Mom wasn't getting any younger, and her work wasn't getting any easier. She'd leave home in the morning when it was still dark out to clean house for the high-class SINners uptown, and she wouldn't get home until after dinner time. My brother had a job for a while, but then his gang got involved in a turf war and his arm got chewed up real bad. The street doc had to amputate it. I started feeling like some kind of loser, because I was spending all my time studying with Grimley when I should've been helping out.

Then one day a corp recruiter contacted me. He'd heard some buzz about my having magical talent and wanted to make me an offer. He said his corp would pay me to go to UC Berkley and learn magic. When I graduated, I'd have a job with the corp. I told him I already knew magic and just needed the job, but he said no deal—no school, no job. I didn't want to do it, but when he told me how much the corp would pay me I signed on the dotted line. Grimley didn't say anything about it, but I knew he was hurt. I felt bad about that, but I think he understood.

Learning magic in school was a whole different simchip from learning Grimley's "whatever works" kind of style. For almost a year all we did was read books on magical theory and history. When we finally got to doing stuff, we did everything "by the book," following steps created and tested by a bunch of corp and ivory-tower spell slingers who'd set up standards for all kinds of spells, rituals and workings. Once, when I finished a project using one of Grimley's formulas, the prof marked me down for not following the right procedures. Right then, I started wondering if this corp wage mage drek was really gonna work out.

In my senior year, my change came. I spent a couple of weeks of drug-hazed pain in the university hospital as my muscles and bones reshaped themselves. When I got out, I was almost a foot taller and a lot heavier. No way could I pass for human. A couple days later the corp told me that they no longer had any positions available for entry-level mages. I should've been fragged off, but I didn't really care. I had plenty of magic training under my belt from two different but useful sources, and I was free to go wherever I wanted.

When I got back home, Grimley gave me all his grimoires and tools and drek, and I started building a rep for myself on the streets. It's sorta funny to think that I've got a good-paying "corp job" after all, even though no suitboy'd ever admit to hiring me. Best thing about it is, I can take or turn down any job I want. I

UNORTHODOX TRADITIONS

wouldn't trade that freedom for all the nuyen in the world. My mom hasn't had to worry about money for a long time, and she doesn't clean house any more.

I wonder if Grimley knew what I really was when he decided to take me on and just never told me. Not that it really matters—what's important is what he taught me, not why. Someday I'll repay old Grimley the debt I owe him—some gutterpunk with an itch for magic'll wander into my doss, and I'll make him an offer.

>>>>(Both "book magic" and "street magic" have produced capable magicians (and not so capable ones). The individual matters more than the training system.)<<<<<<

—Sereena (18:48:13/01-16-57)

>>>>(I'm so tired of this politically correct "no one thing is better than any other" drek. If you're a shadowrunner, learning street magic is the way to go. Traditional academic/corporate magical training just doesn't set you up to deal with the fast-changing situations you're going to run into in the shadows. Most corporate wage mages wouldn't last ten minutes outside their comfy offices and corporate enclaves.)<<<<<<

—Brewster (21:01:39/01-19-57)

>>>>(Don't be too sure, chummer. I know some ex-wage mages who are top-gun shadowrunners. If nothing else, they know the opposition better than most.)<<<<<<

—Hangfire (02:15:20/01-20-57)

>>>>(You're all missing the most important point. "Official" magical training programs may churn out technically wiz magicians, but nine times out of ten those mages lack heart. They come out as cold as the corps that pay for their training—they never develop a sense of responsibility to go with the power they've learned to wield.)<<<<<<

—Chompsky (02:19:06/01-20-57)

>>>>(I think you've missed the point, Chomp old bud. The point is, magic is the great equalizer. You wanna slug it out with guns or in the Matrix, the slot with the money behind him is gonna win. Only the wealthiest Johnsons can outfit their people with the latest tech and give them the latest training to use it. But magic ain't like that. Goblin-Boy's story proves that a street mage can train magicians as well, if not better, than any university or corp training program. And it don't cost any nuyen to use magic.)<<<<<<

—Godard (03:40:22/01-21-57)

>>>>(This next section gets into some pretty wiz and sometimes pretty scary drek—magical traditions that people make up out of their own heads, and views of it that are way out of the mainstream. I've drawn these accounts from police files, trid-show transcripts, and a longer posting from a chummer of mine that turned up on this board awhile back. (I stayed away from the scholarly tomes—no sense boring the ears off the people who really need to learn this drek.)

The lead-off file gave me the willies, which is why I included it. I know the author by rep—he's a fragging good forensic mage.

The Azroth story shows two things that all you street slags desperately need to understand. First, magic can work in infinitely unexpected ways depending on the user's point of view; second, magic can be fragging dangerous for people who don't know what they're doing. Don't mess with magic unless you have to—and then, make sure you do it right.)<<<<<<

—Talon (11:23:43/01-11-57)

AZROTH THE GOD: CASE NOTES by Friday

After a while, you become kind of immune to the violence—any cop'll tell you that. The department shrinks say it's some sorta psychological protection—they call it *desensitization*. The pain, suffering, death, hatred, cruelty—it becomes like that piped-in background music in all the arcologies—you simply stop noticing it. I guess you'd fraggin' wig out if you didn't. Whatever you wanna call it, it's worked for me. Hell, I've been on the force for twenty-seven years now, twenty-two of those working homicide. I can't

begin to tell you how many corpses I seen. But I can't get one of them out of my mind. There's always one case that never goes away—the Azroth case was mine.

It broke in L.A. about ten years ago, when joyboys and girls from Venice Beach bars started turning up dead in out-of-the-way places. Not the usual kind of dead, either—no BTL overdoses or fights over money that turned ugly. Something worse. Some sick puppy had tied down the victims and dissected them while they were still alive. Each one died at some point in the process—no way to tell exactly when, or how much pain they endured before they finally kicked off. Every body we found was drained of blood and had its vital organs removed. The organs





were wrapped in cellophane and stacked in a little pyramid by the victim's head, with the heart on top. Written in blood somewhere nearby—the only trace of blood we ever found—was the name "Azroth." Real sick drek. Even sicker, I could sense that this Azroth slot had drawn magical power from each death. From the pain, too. That's why he did it—to give himself a mystical shot in the arm. He didn't call it that, of course. He had no idea he was magically active—he just figured the power kick was a sign from the Universe that he was turning into a god.

Catching him was some trick. He got so good at manipulating magic according to his own sick system, so attuned to the higher uses of it, that he could wipe his astral "fingerprint" off the bloody writing and every other trace he left behind. Without that, we couldn't use ritual sorcery to identify or track him. We finally got him with good old mundane forensic evidence—traces he'd left on a note that he sent to the *L.A. Times*.

I talked to him a little after we brought him down. I'm still not sure why—I guess I just needed to see this monster, hear him talk about himself, to make sense of him. Didn't work, of course. He couldn't make sense of himself. He kept yelling for his totem—he had some word for it I didn't recognize, maybe he made it up. He'd concocted a whole personal mythology, totally off the wall and like nothing I'd ever heard of. The guy went and created his own magical tradition, put himself through several grades of initiation, and came up with spells and rituals, all without knowing what he was doing. He was convinced he was becoming a god named Azroth, who would take the place of all other deities known to metahumanity and then cleanse the earth of every race so that Creation could start over.

He was psycho, of course. But his magic worked. That's what still gets to me.

>>>>>(The guy's got it wrong. Azroth didn't create his own tradition.)<<<<<<
—Kazuo (22:43:15/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Who did—H.P. Lovecraft?)<<<<<<
—Argent (20:13:36/01-15-57)

>>>>>(I've known a few magicians who operate on their own unique wavelength. The human mind is amazingly resilient, and people come up with all sorts of things that shouldn't work but do. I know one budding young magician—I hesitate to call him a mage—who's developed his own magical tradition based on some late-night sci-fi show on Channel 54.)<<<<<<
—Silicon Mage (15:36:19/01-15-57)

>>>>>(Traditions made up out of whole cloth are pretty fraggin' rare. Most of them don't last too long before internal inconsistencies make them fall apart. Either that or they're so inefficient that the poor fragger gets blown to flaming bits by the first well-trained magician who comes along. Most of the personal-trads I've seen are just small variations on traditional practices.)<<<<<<
—Tim (01:20:25/01-20-57)

>>>>>(This next one comes from a chummer of mine with a ... well, let's just say unique view of magic. (No bomb-throwing, please.)<<<<<<

—Talon (03:44:21/01-12-57)

PSIONICS

by Lester

"Magic is no more than a convenient term for what we might as well call folk parapsychology, a primitive science that allows for the harnessing of the human brain's inherent psionic powers to manipulate the forces of the electromagnetic spectrum. In our modern age, such techniques need to be refined and codified through scientific study to make them more efficient than the folk myths and rituals of a time long past."

—from *The Reality of Magic*, by Peter Isaac

That's magic in a nutshell, folks. Isaac sums it up. Forget all the fairy-tale drek, forget spells and spirits and all that drek. It's just your brain working its own "magic" on electromagnetic energy. (Go ahead, folks—flame me all you want. No skin off my nose if you'd rather believe you're some fantasy-mage type with a magic wand or "in touch with the spirit of Nature" instead of being able to see the real miracle in the workings of the plain-vanilla mind. To each his own, I say.) Ain't nothin' mystical about magic, and it ain't new. It's ESP and all the other psychic drek, and it's been around as long as human beings have. The only thing that's new is that more people are aware of it and can use it. Why that is, I don't know and I don't pretend to know. But then, I don't think it matters.

Anybody remember a little nineteenth- and twentieth-century history? A few bright and curious people started wondering about things like ghostly visitations, visions of disasters that came true, people who could bend spoons or "hear" what other people were thinking. Around 1880-something, they set up some society for the investigation of the paranormal, and the science of psionics was off and running. These parapsychology guys figured that the human mind had untapped powers—telepathy, psychokinesis and extrasensory perception (ESP)—that everybody could learn about and use. Of course, they were up against a whole society that had a real problem believing in anything that couldn't bonk 'em over the head. For a long time, psychics were either laughed at as fools or jailed as frauds because most people couldn't believe that psionic powers existed. Nowadays, everyone knows they exist—but a lot of folks have no idea what they really are. Nothing much changes, neh?

Here's an example of psionic magic—assensing. Assensing is clairvoyance in action. I do it all the time, finding missing persons for my local branch of the Star. How it works is, they give me something—a bracelet somebody always wore, a murder weapon—and I use clairvoyance to look for changes in that object's electromagnetic energy. No spells or conjuring or any of that mumbo jumbo—I just pick up the thing and read it. With a bracelet, the energy of the person who wore it "imprints" the thing and tells me something about them. I'm reading their



energy pattern, just like somebody might read body language or expressions on a face. Once I know what that pattern feels like, I can find it—and the person it belongs to—anywhere in the world. If I read a murder weapon, the violence of the act imprints everything connected to it—the weapon, the site, everything. That imprint tells me something about the person who used the weapon and also shows me the crime. Of course, I don't get the whole picture perfectly every single time. Reading the information is only part of the story—once my psychic mind picks it up, I have to translate it into images or impressions that my conscious mind can understand and communicate to other people. Sometimes I goof up, thinking it means one thing when it really means another. Most of the time, though, I've got a pretty good batting average.

As for spell-throwing, that's pure psi manipulation of electromagnetics to cause a physical effect. I once "cast a flame bomb spell," as your average magician would call it. Me, I call it good old pyrokinesis—using psi power to move electrons and drek around to make fire burst out of thin air. (You gotta keep in mind that "thin air" isn't really the same as "nothing," like most people think. Air's made up of molecules and electrons and protons and whatnot, just like everything else. You wanna make something come out of thin air, just play around with its particles until you've got them in the pattern you want. Laws of Nature take over from there.)

I know, I know—what about spirits? How can *they* be some psi power? Simple—they're not. What they are is something somebody makes up to "explain" his own psi ability. "Gosh, I didn't move that 100-pound rock. I told my earth elemental to do it." Some people just aren't comfy with the idea of having powers that society has always told us didn't exist. Other people get creeped out by the thought that their frail little bodies can hold enough power to affect the big bad world, and so they project it on to something outside themselves. Whatever, it's still them doing it.

Not that there's anything wrong with believing in spirits, if it makes it easier for you to use psi. The powers themselves may work under the laws of physics, but there's no rule that says psychics aren't allowed to make up whatever stories they want to explain how their talents work. What gets to me, and the whole reason I'm even contributing to this post, is everyone's insistence that psi is "really" this big mystical bundle of weirdness and impossibilities called magic. That kind of thing scares people, or else makes them refuse to believe in any of it because it all sounds so fragging silly. Us psychics have been fighting for centuries against that kind of fear and ridicule, and we're tired of it. Witch hunts, demonizing, "tell me what I'm thinking" parlor tricks ... we've been dealing with all those things. And now, just when enough people are tapping into psi abilities to finally give us a little respect, along comes the fairy-tale establishment bent on making us out to be Cinderella's fairy godmother or something. There *is* a scientific basis to this drek, folks. Just remember that. Have your nice stories and your spells and your spirits if you want to, but remember that they're just pretty fiction. They're tools to help you use psi better, but they're not reality.

>>>>(Don't be shy, Lester. Just tell us we're all stupid idiots and have done with it, why don't you?)<<<<<

—Spiritus Sanctus (01:20:25/01-20-57)

>>>>(The laugh's on Lester. He's got it backward. The original parapsych researchers were actually studying early manifestations of magical talent. Post-Awakening magical theory proves that "psi powers" were manifestations of magic that bubbled up during the rise in the mana levels. Go read the research if you don't believe me—the material is just too limited in its scope to adequately explain magical phenomena.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (01:20:35/02-02-57)

>>>>(This man denies the spirit world, and it will punish him!)<<<<<

—Avenger (02:20:15/02-02-57)

>>>>(He's punished himself, chumley. By flat-out denying the existence of spirits, totems, and the planes where they dwell, he's made it impossible for himself to use an awful lot of magic. His limited mind wouldn't be able to accept the reality of it.)<<<<<

—Karma Babe (01:00:25/02-03-57)

>>>>(Hey, give the guy a break. For mundanes like me, the idea of a rational, scientific basis to magic makes it seem a lot less alien and frightening.)<<<<<

—Skeptic (11:20:45/02-04-57)

>>>>(My guess is, Lester's a sorcery adept and not a full magician. I know some "psychics" like him, and the only one with any conjuring ability is a teenage kid who used it to cause classic "poltergeist" phenomena. Most of the psis I know can sling spells like mind probes, control thoughts, illusions, manipulations, and detection spells. No coincidence that the effects of all these correspond pretty closely to "psi powers" like telepathy, psychokinesis, and garden-variety ESP. Because the so-called psi powers can do a lot less than magic can, self-defined psychics tend to place subconscious limits on their abilities—technically they can do whatever any other magician can, but their mental block is so strong that in reality there's a whole bunch of drek they can't pull off.)<<<<<

—Kazuo (22:45:17/02-11-57)

MAGIC AS MIRACLE

—Excerpt from a broadcast of *Praise Be to God*, hosted by The Reverend Jeremiah Warren, PBG Network, 2056

Welcome, brothers and sisters, and thank you for tuning into *Praise Be to God*, broadcast direct from the Holy Temple in Eufala, Alabama. Before we start tonight's program, I'd like to take a minute to address a grave matter that has come to my attention. I'm certain that some of you have heard on the news today the accusations that I, Jeremiah Warren, pastor of the Holy Temple, host of *Praise Be to God* and a humble servant of God, have built my career through the use of *magic*.

Yes, I know it's shocking, my dear friends in the Lord, and I know that none of you good people would ever believe such lies and fabrications. It is true that I have performed miracles during my ministry, but those miracles are the work of God. The laying on of hands, the speaking in tongues, the healing of the sick and lame, the casting out of demons and flights of the spirit—all of these are the work of God, Who has simply channeled His power through me, his servant!

No, my brothers and sisters, I am not the enemy. The true enemies are those who accuse me of using magic, Satan's black art, to lead the innocent astray! For they are false prophets who strive to destroy the servants of the Lord and lead his flock to eternal damnation!

Sadly, there are those who are vulnerable to such lies and fabrications, who would believe the venom spewed by the Lord's enemies. God commands us to fight to save these poor misguided souls before it is too late! We must join together so that we can help them see the Truth and recognize His holy word that they might be saved! Join me in this holy war by calling now and speaking with one of our operators. Yes, God commands each and every one of us to join in the fight, so call now and have your cred number available, and together we can smite this unholy challenge—praise be to God!

>>>>(Ah yes, good ol' Jeremiah. The latest in a long line of snake-oil salesmen ready to dedicate his life to collecting money for the Lord—and himself. Won't people ever learn?)<<<<<<
—Skeptik (09:31:02/01-14-57)

>>>>(He's not just a snake-oil salesman, Skep. Ol' Jeremiah really does have the power, although not the kind his followers think. His "miracles" aren't just tricks, they're actually magic. Haven't you heard the results of the study conducted by Georgia Tech's thaumaturgy department? They confirm what a lot of us thought all along—he's got the Talent. Of course, where Jeremiah was brought up, folks don't call it the Talent—they call it the work of demons, the dark art, the Mark of the fraggin' Beast. Drek, in some places kids have been killed during "exorcisms" intended to purge them of the "evil.")<<<<<<
—D. Bunker (19:21:02/01-15-57)

>>>>(Then how did Jeremiah convince so many people that he's the holiest Joe since Jesus?)<<<<<<
—Renata (20:31:04/01-15-57)

>>>>(He's a classic example of spontaneous manifestation. Little Jeremiah's mama and papa told him that magic was the work of the devil, so he hid his talent and tried to deny it. He had no framework for understanding or developing his gift—or at least none he was consciously aware of. Then one day, while he was at a prayer meeting, he started speaking gibberish. He went up to his old lame grandma and laid his hands on her. Presto, she's walking around! That was the first of his "miracles." He talks about it in his book. Pretty soon everyone's telling him that he's gifted, that God's takin' a shine to him. He's no longer afraid of his talent—he understands it as the power of God working through him, because

he has no other framework in which to understand or use it. Next thing you know he's performing "flights of the spirit" (astral projection), "rites of exorcism" (combating spirits), and a whole range of other "miracles.")<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (20:43:14/01-15-57)

>>>>(This drek is wild! Are there others like him?)<<<<<<
—Blatty (21:01:04/01-15-57)

>>>>(Well, most aren't as visible as Jeremiah. Some just lose the Talent altogether in such a culture, but plenty are able to use it. Their spells take the form of prayers and invocations, often spoken in arcane tongues such as Latin, Aramaic or Hebrew. They may use holy books and religious symbols as fetishes or may even unconsciously enchant them to serve as foci. Salt, wine and holy water serve as ritual materials and expendable fetishes, and these magicians derive their geasa from religious imagery or practices—holy symbols, prayer, ancient languages, fasting, holy ground such as a church, temple or mosque. Almost all of them are self-initiated, usually after some greater spiritual enlightenment, fasting, prayer or vigils that serve the same function as ordeals in common initiation rites.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (21:07:15/01-15-57)

>>>>(So when Jeremiah raves against magic, he's actually attacking the thing responsible for his success?)<<<<<<
—Tyro (21:14:03/01-15-57)

>>>>(Yup.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (21:16:07/01-15-57)

>>>>(I'll bet he's sorry he submitted to that Georgia Tech study now.)<<<<<<
—Tyro (21:24:10/01-15-57)

>>>>(Maybe, maybe not. I'd guess he'll do quite well from it, actually. I'm sure his followers are more than ready to believe that the whole thing is just another Satan-spawned attack on that good man and his holy message. And they'll be more than ready to help him out by sending in their nuyen.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (21:27:11/01-15-57)

>>>>(Praise B 2 God!)<<<<<<

—Skeptik (11:20:34/01-17-57)

>>>>(But don't get the wrong idea, folks. Plenty of religions have been able to reconcile their doctrines with the existence of magic, and many have welcomed the Awakened into their folds. Granted, the Awakening shook many to their foundations. But it also caused many to re-examine their long-held beliefs about magic. Most organized religions now recognize magic as separate from religion and view it as a blessing from God. The leaders of the Catholic Church, for example, describe magic as a tool of Humanity—quite a switch from the suspicion and condemnation it historically directed against the thaumaturgical arts. Of course, the debate over miracles and magic still rages. In fact, there's an



order of mages and adepts—I think it's called the Order of St. Sylvester—devoted to investigating extraordinary incidents to determine whether they are true miracles or manifestations of magic.)<<<<<

—D. Bunker (13:24:55/01-20-57)

>>>>>(Pay close attention to this next post, folks. (I saved the best for last.) Could be any of you, if you're not smart about your Talent. As for mundane readers, you may find it comforting to see just how vulnerable a spellslinger can be.)<<<<<

—Talon (23:34:32/01-12-57)

ALL DRESSED UP AND NO PLACE TO GO

by Burnout

In case you couldn't tell from the handle, I'm a burned-out mage. A onetime wizard. A sad-sack spellcaster who's lost the juice. Misplaced my mojo, squandered the stuff, just let my magic drain away because I was so fraggin' sure that I was smarter than the Universe. I wasn't. Too bad for me, I had to find out the hard way.

You've seen me before. I'm a stock character on the trid—the object lesson, the cautionary tale, the guy whose pathetic existence reassures the norms out there that magicians are all on the brink of losing it. “Don't be afraid of Mister Super-Shaman—he'll burn himself out someday soon, and then he'll be less than nothing.” The funny thing is, for once the tridmeisters got it sorta right. It ain't true that every magic man is gonna burn out—the smart ones don't. The ones who learn about the limits that go with the Talent and live within them—they don't burn out. Only slags like me, who figured our magic made us the next best thing to God, lose the gift we were born with. But the schlock-sellers are right about the less-than-nothing part. That's how I feel, most days. I guess I should be grateful not to feel that way every fraggin' minute anymore.

Can you imagine what it feels like to go slowly blind and deaf, losing your sight and hearing so gradually that you don't even notice until the day comes when you absolutely *have* to see 20/20 or hear perfectly *and you can't do it*? You used to see colors, but now the world is gray. You used to hear music and laughter and conversation, but now the world is dead quiet. And you're not even sure how it happened. You just realized one day that the abilities you once took for granted aren't there any longer. They died. And part of you died with them. That's what burnout feels like.

Imagine you're a decker who can't slip the electrons anymore because a slow-growing brain tumor scrambled your wetware. Or a street sam who gets some nerve disease that gradually makes you lose control over every muscle in your body. You've lost the thing that made you who you are, the thing you lived for most. Magical burnout is like that, only worse because it doesn't come from a tumor or a disease. We do it to ourselves.

It started for me after a real bad run, where two of my buds bought it and I came fraggin' close to taking an APDS round in the gut. The corpsec slag missed by about a millimeter, and not because of any spell I'd cast. I was too busy dodging fireballs and taking out the combat mages to spare any mojo for the gunnie, and the gunnie fraggin' near did for me. Blind luck I stepped aside

when I did. After that I decided I was tired of being the biggest target on the team (they teach the corpsec boys to geek the mage first, ya know!), and I knew my magic alone couldn't keep me safe when the lead started to fly. So I thought it was time to do a little work on the old meatbod. Cyber-something, I wasn't sure what. Just something to make me stronger, faster, tougher in a firefight. I knew what everybody said about magic and cyber—that the metal would take away my sacred spirit or some such bumb and frag up my magic—but I decided I didn't believe it. All that “life energy” drek was a bunch of mystical jetwash—only the slubs who ran around in wizard's robes and tall pointy hats would believe it. A hardcase runner like me? I'd never lose my edge. And anyway, I only wanted one little thing. Not enough to frag me up bad, if the mystical jetwash turned out to be true.

So I got my cyber—boosted reflexes, so's I could dodge slugs faster. And it slowed me down, magic-wise—but not much. Sure not enough to bother about. But because I couldn't sling the drek quite as fast as I used to, I started slipping up. Gave myself a bad scare or two, and after that I decided I needed more cyber. Something to make me tougher this time. Enhancements.

My magic got even slower. And it started to drain me wicked bad—after some runs, I could hardly stand up for a week. I felt like I had a bad case of the flu, only I couldn't throw up because I couldn't get anything down in the first place. It was too much fragging effort to eat. Looking back on it, I figure I'd pulled my energy so out of balance that my meatbod couldn't cope. Whatever, I started missing out on runs. That meant missing out on cred, which I couldn't afford. I had to get back in biz somehow, but my magic wasn't gonna do it any more. So I took an easy little job as soon as I could, and made the Johnson pay me with a trip to a cyberclinic. When I came out, I was all cybered up and ready to rock. But my magic was gone.

At first I tried to tell myself it didn't matter. But it did. I'd walk down the street feeling like my head was wrapped in cotton gauze—I saw things through this grayish haze, and all the usual 'plex noises sounded far away. I thought at first it was something physical, so I got cybereyes and cyberears—but it didn't go away. A mojo-man friend of mine explained it to me, finally. My eyes and ears worked fine, but my brain was so used to having extra input from the astral that it translated the missing data as hazy vision and muffled sound. It'd clear up sooner or later, he said, and it mostly has. Some things haven't, though. I keep trying to assense things like I used to do by instinct, and I give myself a splitting headache every time I try. It's kind of like the stories I've heard of guys who lost arms before we had cyber replacements—they knew the arm was gone, but they'd keep trying to grab things with it anyway.

So now I'm a street sam, I guess, without a scrap of magic. Which is an okay thing to be, except that everything I ever learned about the streets or the biz or myself had magic at the heart of it. All my moves, all my strategies, all the drek I used to do automatically because I took it all for granted—that's all gone. I'm starting over, just like a baby learning to walk, only I'm a pretty fragging clumsy baby. I'm not doing too well. I've gone from a top-gun magicker to a fourth-rate sammie, or maybe worse. Some trade. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't. And you shouldn't either.

THE MAGICAL ARSENAL



>>>>(This file's pretty self-explanatory—brought to you by my good friend BlackStone, a guy who's been around the metroplex a few times.)<<<<<

—Talon (00:21:32/01-10-57)

Nearly every runner knows all about big guns. Not many seem to realize that you can turn someone into a ball of fire with a spell as well as a flame thrower—and a spell is a helluva lot easier to carry around, smuggle through customs, slip past a corpcop—you scan? (Of course, most spells won't leave a bulge in your pants, either, but if that's your bag I'm pretty certain you can whip up some mojo to do the job.) Seriously, a skilled practitioner can use modern magic to frag with someone in any number of nasty ways. On the other hand, magic can be used to patch up injuries, which can come in quite handy when you're in the middle of a fire fight and don't have time to wait for the DocWagon boys.

Anyway, here's a sampling of the goodies in the modern magician's arsenal—mojo that you can use and mojo that might be used against you.

>>>>(Before BlackStone's enthusiasm carries us away here, let me just note one little thing ... magic is not the easy substitute for guns that he's making it sound like. Know why? Every time a magician slings a spell, he takes physical damage. He gets hurt. He may suffer no more than a ten-second nosebleed, but he will hurt somehow, some way. So go ahead and use a spell in place of an assault rifle if the situation warrants, but remember the price you'll pay for that choice.)<<<<<

—Reality Czech (03:41:22/01-29-57)

SPELLS

Spells are probably the most common kind of mojo a magician is gonna throw at you. Not that anything about spells is common. A magician's arsenal may include all kinds of ways to frag with you, either physically or by using mana. And because most magicians like to create



their own, the odds are a magician is gonna have some spell up his sleeve that you've never seen before. Of course, there are also some tried-and-true spells that people use over and over again; like someone once said, never mess with what works. That said, here's a little overview of the spells you're most likely to encounter.

PHYSICAL SPELLS

For all the newbies and curious mundies out there, physical spells affect physical things. That means anything from the cells of your meatbod to the surface of the plascrete wall you're propping up. Physical spells can be useful—or trouble—in all kinds of situations; I'll describe the ones I've used or seen used most often.

Anyone who's got a trideo set is probably familiar with those wiz-looking flame/fire spells—*abracadabra* and *POOF!*—you're burned toast. Those turn up in all kinds of forms: fireballs, fire bolts, fire darts, flame bombs, et cetera. They're real popular, partly because they do a lot of damage and partly because they appeal to the Inner Pyromaniac in every (meta)human being.

>>>>>(A very flashy way to cack a target. Can be quite effective as a psychological weapon, too. I'll never forget the first time I saw someone use one of these. I was a young innocent gutterpunk, roaming the streets of the Barrrens with my chummers and watching for pedestrians to accost. One day we came on a slot walking down the street and thought we'd have some fun. We all figured the guy was just some old derelict—had no weapons we could see, old clothes, kinda mumbling to himself as he walked along. We pulled our old van up alongside the curb and Crank, our self-appointed leader, hung out the window.

"Hey you fraggin' piece of drek, what the hell are you doin' walking' through our turf?" Crank yelled at him. The old slot just ignored him. Kept walking along, looking at the ground the whole time. "Hey you old drek-eating slot, I'm talking to you!" Crank continued. The old guy just kept walking along, ignoring Crank's taunts. That seemed to enrage Crank, who jumped out of the van. Big mistake, that was, but Crank didn't have much time to think about it. He took about two steps toward the old guy, who turned his head to look at our fearless leader and then BAM!—Crank turned into a ball of fire.

For a moment we just sat and stared at the writhing mass of flame. The old man stood motionless, a blank expression across his face. Then he looked at us, let out a sigh and asked, "Okay, who's next?"

That's when we got the frag outta there.)<<<<<
—Nicky (03:21:09/01-15-57)

Ram spells are another fave, especially among those who don't necessarily want to geek their target. A ram spell damages inanimate objects, so the less bloodthirsty among us can use them to mightily inconvenience the opposition by caving in the walls right in front of them or crumpling up the front end of the lead cop car in a chase. (The more bloodthirsty among us like to tumble walls down on top of people, or blow out a tire at just the right time to cause a fatal accident. How far to go with it is your choice, chumley.)

Of course, physical spells do more than just blow things up real good. Combat sense, for example, is a physical spell that makes you (or whoever else you cast the spell on) hypersensitive to dangerous situations—you start sensing events a split second before they occur, which means you react that much faster. That kind of edge can really save your butt when the drek goes down sudden-like. Other fun physical spells are the kind that let you change the environment—like laying down an ice sheet under a platoon of sec-guards, or throwing a stream of acid at the cyber-boys pounding along behind you. For those who prefer less lethal tactics than that last one, chaos and chaotic world spells are perfect; you throw one and suddenly the target is surrounded by flickering lights and shadows, bombarded by weird noises, et cetera. Most times, all that chaotic light and sound'll stop 'em dead in their tracks. (It stopped me once, and fraggin' near cost me my life. That kind of effect is tough to ignore.)

>>>>>(And let's not forget the flying-objects school of sorcery. The sight of a public telecom ripped off its post and flying through the air at high speed at you can be pretty unsettling, even if you dodge it. Or how about the slot who levitates a vital object—like the gun slung across your back, or your wheels?)<<<<<
—Mistik (21:44:32/01-15-57)

>>>>>(I done time inside last year cuz some mageboy pulled that scam on me. My buds 'n' me'd knocked over a local joint and were zippin' away with the credbox when I look in the rearview and see some snot-nosed kid with greasy hair dashing outta the place yellin' his head off. The kid makes this scoopin' motion with his hands, and alluva sudden our van's floating inches off the ground, wheels spinnin'. We couldn't do nuthin' but sit there, too fraggin' scared of breakin' our necks to jump out, while the sirens got closer and closer. If I ever find that kid, I'm gonna scrag 'im.)<<<<<
—Trog (11:21:11/01-16-57)

>>>>>(You're welcome to try. In the meantime, keep your sorry face out of my dad's bar.)<<<<<
—Junior (09:50:33/01-17-57)

MANA SPELLS

Mana combat spells use mana—magical energy—to physically damage a target. They may not be as impressive looking as flame spells, but they'll geek you just the same. Like flame spells, mana spells can be used to hit a single unlucky runner or an entire area.

One popular spell among those who like to deal death up close and personal is a nasty one that goes by the street name of death touch. Yep, this puppy does just what it sounds like—a spellworm using death touch can kill a target just by touching it. Even nastier cousins of death touch are slay spells that affect specific races or species. Personally, I've never gotten much use out of these on a run, but I've lost a few chummers to slay spells in the past (which I won't go into—this ain't the place for it). Let's just say that anti-metahuman freaks like the Humanis Policlub boys really love these ("Say, you still got that slay elves spell handy?").

Mana spells can also frag with a target's perceptions, just like the physical spells I mentioned above—always a useful thing on a



shadowrun. Used against you, these are every bit as much of a hoop-frag as fire bombs. Don't believe it? Then you try aiming straight—not to mention thinking straight—when you're feeling thousands of tiny little things crawling over every inch of your body or your vision suddenly becomes so sensitive that starlight hits you with the force of a megawatt flashbulb in the eyes. I've created those particular effects with overstimulation spells (my personal favorite—it lets me unleash my natural creativity, doncha know). Oh, and don't forget masking spells. IMHO, these are the most useful mana spells anyone's ever come up with. Magicians can use masking spells to alter the appearance of people, objects, vehicles—just about anything.

>>>>(My chummer Sluggo just loves to use masking spells. He's one big motherfraggin' troll with a wicked sense of humor. Once, we needed to get some info from a particularly close-mouthed corp suit. Problem was, we had to do it real quietly. Good ol' Sluggo, he tails the slot for a few days, notices that this guy likes to cruise the clubs for blond joygirls. The next thing you know, the guy starts seeing this new in-fraggin'-credible looking chica hangin' at the El Mocambo. Seven feet of lean, mean, white flesh clad in black thigh-high leather jackboots and not much more—drek, the guy couldn't help but following her around like a dog. Anyway, this woman—Monika—she toys with him for three nights. Let's him buy her drinks, dance with her—but she won't let him touch her and each night she goes home with someone else.

By the fourth night, he's chompin' at the proverbial bit, strainin' at the leash. She knows he's hooked, but she just carries on as usual. Every now and then she looks at him and her lips curl into a little smirk. After an hour or two, she says she's bored and starts heading to the door. The guy just sits at the little table, like he's in shock or something. Then she looks back over her shoulder and asks him, "Are you coming?"

Fifteen minutes later, they're up in the penthouse of a local hotel. At Monika's command, Mr. Suit relieves himself of his clothes and lies on the overstuffed, oversized bed. She barks at him to lie still and shut up—which he immediately does—and she ties his wrists and ankles to the bedposts with some latex straps she's pulled out of her purse. She slowly strips down to her boots, climbs on top of him, then asks, "Are you ready?"

He nods his head vigorously.

She smiles at him and suddenly SHAZAM!—"Monika" drops her masking spell and Mr. Suit finds himself looking up at the smiling face of a seven-foot troll!

Needless to say, Sluggo got the slot to talk.)<<<<<<

—Erika (22:43:55/02-10-57)

>>>>(Wait a minute—the El Mocambo? Monika? Jackboots? Latex?!)<<<<<<

—Playboy (22:45:03/02-10-57)

>>>>(Surprise!!!!)<<<<<<

—Sluggo (23:34:18/02-10-57)

The mana spells I really hate—because I've had them used on me—are the ones that control the target's thoughts, emotions,

and actions. Nothing feels weirder than some spellworm messing with your mind or jerking you around like some puppet. I lost a girlfriend that way once. I went on an out-country run—someplace in Scotland, never mind where—and my squeeze couldn't tag along because she had a little biz of her own in Seattle. So I go off to Scotland, and we spend a few nights in a local bar sniffing around for info and contacts. One night I get to chatting with this barmaid, who doesn't shy away from me like most mundies do because she's got a little something on the magical eight ball herself. Also, she looks a little bit like my squeeze, and I'm feeling lonesome. Now understand one thing—talking to her was as far as I meant it to go. Putting the moves on someone during a run isn't smart—it distracts you from your job. So I'm talking to this girl one night, and she casts a spell on me. All of a sudden I'm wildly in love with her. She's my Dream Woman, my perfect fantasy. Nothing about her changed—but the way I saw her turned around 180 degrees. (I found out later she was a lot more powerful a magic-slinger than I thought, and she had this jones for American guys. Pulled this kind of stunt all the time.) Just for a second, I recognized the spell for what it was—but then the emotions took over, and the rest of my brain went straight out to lunch. I mean, it was all I could do to keep my hands off her in front of everybody. She gave me this look, kinda gestured with her head toward the door, and I was out of my chair and running outside like a dog going nutso over a walk.

We had a great night, and I had a rotten morning. The spell had worn off by then. I woke up feeling all warm and comfy, with this warm body curled up next to me, and for a second I thought I was home. Then I opened my eyes and turned over, and realized I was in this strange squat with paint flaking off the ceiling, staring down at this chica that I did not remember taking home. The last thing I remembered clearly was finishing my beer in the bar, and her smiling as she asked if I wanted another. To top it all off, I looked at the clock by her bed and saw that I was an hour late for the meet with my team. I got out of there without waking the chica, and took a lot of flak from my buds (who weren't any too pleased that I'd made them look bad by being late).

So I thought that was that, except that my so-called friend Flipper was so mad about me almost screwing up the meet that he decided to tell my squeeze everything. When I told her I couldn't help it, that the chica'd used magic to make me feel something that wasn't real, my squeeze just gave me this look and said, "Blackie, if you'd wanted to fight it you could've. You didn't. What does that tell you?" And the hell of it was, she was right. Sure, a magicker can control your emotions with a spell—but if the wizard tries to make you feel something that goes against your grain, you can fight the spell's effects. That's a good thing to remember if you plan on using this kind of spell. You might not be able to make somebody shoot his best bud with it, but you can distract the hell out of him by trying. Every second he spends fighting that impulse is a second he's *not* shooting at you or your friends—and lots of times in this biz, a few seconds makes a difference between a good run and a hoser.

>>>>(A ganger wizboy tried a control spell on me during a turf fight—the stupid slag tried to make me shoot myself in the foot.



There wasn't any emotion, though. He just took control of my arms. Weirdest thing I've ever been through, watching my own arms move to point my rifle straight down and not being able to do frag-all about it. I fought off the juice before the ganger could make me pull the trigger. A mage buddy of mine explained later that it's real hard to make somebody's body do something that'll hurt them—the brain tends to object, and sheer willpower can break the spell.)<<<<<<

—Cowboy Bob (22:13:41/01-25-57)

COUNTERING SPELLS

Unless you're a magician yourself, there's not much you can do to counter a spell. For a lot of spells, magicians need to see their target, so getting out of his line of sight sometimes works. If that's not practical, you can geek the mage.

>>>>>(Never get caught between wizboys tossin' juju at each other. I'm a street sammy, so I been in some bad firefights before. Man, give me flying lead any old day over flying mojo—I'll prob'ly live longer.

It was a ganger fight—or at least, that's what I thought it was gonna be. I was hired muscle, in it for the pay (which was pretty good for a buncha gangers. Guess that shoulda made me suspicious.). So me and the rest of the muscleboys on each side face off and start shootin' and pretty soon my side's lookin' like winnin'. The slot next to me sees he has a clear shot at the opposition's lead ganger, and he lines it up sweet. Me, I'm already closin' my fingers over the credstick.

Suddenly the slot next to me flies up in the air and goes sailin' into a brick wall, like some giant invisible hand picked him up and threw him. To my dyin' day, I won't forget the crunch of his skull against the brick. Left a little dark spot behind when he slid down, dead as a beetlehead's brain cells. Then two more guys on my side suddenly go up in flames. I see a little knot of gangers on the other side, in synthleather jackets with little moons painted on 'em, standin' real still while slugs whiz right at 'em and flatten out about a foot short of hitting 'em. It dawns on me that they're magicboys, and that my side's hosed. Now I got no real stake in this fight 'cept my cred, and I figure it ain't worth much unless I'm alive to spend it—so I step outta the front lines and start to run away. Just so happens my escape route takes me past another little group of gangers—and in the middle of 'em, playin' with his fingers and with a glazed look on his face, is the slag who hired me.

I stop, tryin' to figure which way to go—I thought the slot was gearing up some mojo as payback for me takin' off. Then he makes this throwing motion toward the other gang's magicboys. Suddenly, one guy's jacket catches fire. He screams and drops to the ground, rolling around to put the flames out. The rest hardly miss a beat—they close ranks, then start mumbling and dancing around and stuff. One of 'em gives a shout, and my employer drops to the pavement with a blackened, bloody hole where his chest used to be. The wizboy next to him flicks his fingers, and a stream of acid shoots outta nowhere and hits the oppo leader in the face. The stream passed close enough to me that a drop of it hit my arm—it burned like pure fraggin' hell. The slag casting it wasn't even aimin' at me, and I got hurt anyway. I ran then. I didn't wanna see no more.

I still got a scar on my arm, the size of an old-time quarter. I look at it every time I'm tempted to take a job where mojo might be flyin'. Me, I'm sticking with gunfights.)<<<<<<

—Josey Wales (12:33:21/01-22-57)

FOCI

Magical items can be a shadowrunner's greatest advantage—or greatest liability if you don't know how to use them. Under the right circumstances, foci can provide just the right extra punch to get something done (nothing beats a good mageblade for taking on some magical nasty, trust me). And some tasks are simply damn near impossible without the right foci.

So what's the problem, you ask? First, active foci leave you vulnerable to astral attacks. Foci are like little beacons in astral space. They may draw all kinds of unwanted attention from guardian spirits, patrol magicians and wards—and at the same time give the nasties an opportunity to strike at you. That's why smart magicians don't use all their foci all of the time, no matter how many foci they've bonded.

>>>>>(I've also heard that astral creatures such as wraiths are attracted to the astral emanations of magical items. A good reason to keep those foci powered down or masked.)<<<<<<

—Hex (00:35:08/02-01-57)

But *focus addiction* is even more dangerous. Foci can make a magician lazy. They boost a magician's abilities, providing a leg up, magically speaking, that makes performing certain kinds of magic easier. It becomes real tempting for a magician to rely on his foci and not exercise his magical abilities. And without regular exercise, that magical ability gets "flabby" and doesn't work as well. The next thing you know, you start to pile on more foci to make up for the loss in your abilities. You become a "focus junkie" and need a bigger focus "fix" to do the same work. Eventually you end up a burnout case, fumbling with all kinds of wands and powders and scrolls to cast a spell that once you could have tossed off with just a flick of your fingers. A pretty sorry state.

>>>>>(Magicians who do most of their magic through foci are often called "mechanics" by other magicians. The purists may scoff at them, but that doesn't mean that they aren't capable of tossin' some serious magic around.)<<<<<<

—Tanner (16:15:43/01-22-57)

>>>>>(This focus addiction drek is pretty scary. Why bother using foci at all? Why take the risk?)<<<<<<

—Tangent (02:19:23/01-22-57)

>>>>>(Because foci are valuable and useful tools. They're only dangerous if a magician misuses or abuses them—like the magician who carries around so many active foci that he looks like a bank of lights at a fraggin' Urban Brawl stadium in astral space. A few tools, used properly, are no concern. Remember, it's not the foci themselves that are dangerous—it's how you use them.)<<<<<<

—Necro (02:25:55/01-27-57)

A smart magician uses foci *sparingly* and with the respect due such powerful tools. Savvy magicians keep their foci powered down until they need them. They activate a focus, use it and then put it away. Doing it the right way takes a little extra time, and it means that you won't be able to use all of your foci instantly. But the loss in response time is well worth the extra security. If you need to throw everything you've got at something on a run, you're already hosed, chummer. Don't go in looking for trouble like that.

>>>>>(I always know we've got magical trouble on a run when our mage shows up "loaded for bear" by wearing her major foci. She only pulls out the big guns when we need 'em.)<<<<<

—Hangfire (00:49:15/02-01-57)

>>>>>(And Aurora has very big 'uns, too ...)<<<<<

—Pervo (02:03:22/02-02-57)

>>>>>(Watch it, freak.)<<<<<

—Aurora (00:45:20/02-05-57)

SPIRITS

Spirits are one of those magical phenomenon that thaumaturgical theorists love to argue about. Are they sentient? Where do they come from? Do they have a separate existence? My advice is forget about all that fancy drek. You find yourself in the middle of a run with some heavy-duty spirit rearin' up to bite your ass and believe me, you're not gonna care whether the damn thing's sentient, where it came from, or whether it has a separate existence. Here are the things you should know about these beings. Read carefully, this drek just might save your hoop someday.

First, some basics for you magical morons out there. There are two types of spirits—nature and elemental. Both types can take astral or manifest (physical) forms. Regardless of which form they're in, firearms and explosions won't hurt them. That's right, you can blast away all you want and Casper's just gonna laugh at you.

If a spirit's in astral form, you're only gonna see it if you're astrally active. On the physical plane, you might spot it as a shimmering in the air if you're lucky. Fortunately, a spirit in astral form can only strike at astral targets. Weapon foci are effective against astral form spirits, but the user must be astrally active too. Defeating an astral form in astral combat (easier said than done) and banishing also work. In manifest form, a spirit can attack physical targets, but it also becomes vulnerable to physical attacks.

If you've got a magician on your team, let him deal with any spirits you run into. If you have the bad luck to run into a spirit without any kind of magical backup, my advice is run. Fast. And don't look back. If that's not an option, then believe it or not, hand-to-hand combat is your best bet. It's not actually the physical combat that makes the difference in dealing with the spirit, it's the sheer will it takes to duke it out with a spirit in close combat that gives you a chance of disrupting the spirit. A *small* chance.

NATURE SPIRITS

Nature spirits rarely take on any fixed form. Generally, they tend to take naturalistic forms—a storm spirit might appear as a





whirlwind, a sky spirit as a cloud. Sometimes they take on the shape of their summoners, but their "bodies" are made up of material from their domains. A forest spirit, say, might look like a man made of twigs, leaves and mud. Only a shaman can summon a nature spirit, and he can only do it in that spirit's domain. In fact, the spirit only has power while it's in its domain. But as long as you're in the spirit's domain, it can do some nasty dreck to you. A storm spirit, for example, can hit you with a fraggin' lightning bolt—and there ain't no way to get outta the way of one of those. A shaman might also send a nature spirit out to find you if you're in its turf. And trust me, it will. It can conceal itself, slow down or speed up your movement, fill you with overwhelming fear, make you lose your bearings and cause "accidents" in its terrain.

>>>>(All you wannabe ghostbusters out there better listen to ol' BlackStone here. He's not dreckin' you. Back in '54, me and my pals pissed off a shaman down in old Central Park one night. First, we got lost—even though we'd all run around in that park since we were kids. The next thing you know, we're separated. I still don't remember how that happened. After about three hours, I gave up looking for my chummers and got my hoop the hell outta there—which took me another three hours, it seemed. I went back the next day and found Willy about three meters away from the main trail. I chased away the pack of wild dogs that were breakfasting on him and saw he had stumbled on some old rusty spring trap that nearly took his leg off. A little farther into the woods Zonker was pinned under an old dead tree, with dried blood coming outta his mouth, nose and ears.)<<<<<<
—Believer (02:11:59/01-25-57)

If you find yourself facing a nature spirit, you can try to escape by leaving the spirit's domain. Move to the most different terrain that you can find nearby. If you're on the street, say, run into a park or jump into a river. Remember, lesser nature spirits are bound to their domains and can't operate outside of them. Of course, if you're fighting a powerful enough nature spirit—or worse yet, a fraggin' toxic spirit—it'll be able to follow you anyway. But you'll feel better for trying. Or you can try to survive until sunrise or sunset. A nature spirit summoned during day vanishes at sunset. One summoned during the night vanishes at sunrise.

>>>>(Wait a minute. How exactly does this domain thing work? If a shaman's standing on the forested slope of a mountain under the open sky, is he in a forest, mountain or sky domain? Could an area be more than one domain at once?)<<<<<<
—Domino (13:05:39/01-26-57)

>>>>(Domain overlap is common, because Nature herself is multi-faceted. A forested mountainside under the open sky could be any of three domains: mountain, forest or sky. But by conjuring a spirit of any one domain, a shaman magically identifies with that aspect of the environment and declares—at that present moment—that the environment of the summoned spirit is the "true" domain. If the shaman then turns to conjure another type of spirit (without physically moving from the spot) he has shifted his magical view of the landscape and (in magical terms at least) he has left the previous domain.

Two shamans in the same overlapping domain could each take different views. One could conjure the mountain spirit to hurl landslides at his foe, while another could summon a sky spirit to assault him with storms.)<<<<<<

—Watcher-of-Stars (04:18:20/01-27-57)

>>>>(Sky spirits extend their domain anywhere outdoors, under the open sky. The extreme limit of their reach appears to be the terminator (since crossing that would constitute sunrise or sunset and end the spirit's service.)<<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (17:04:19/01-27-57)

>>>>(If a shaman conjures a nature spirit and then leaves its domain—or is removed from it somehow—does the spirit go away?)<<<<<<

—Tangent (20:11:16/01-28-57)

>>>>(A shaman can conjure only one nature spirit in a given place. But he can assign the spirit a service that continues past the shaman leaving the domain, as long as the task doesn't exceed the spirit's normal time of service (sunrise or sunset).

For example, if I'm running through the woods, I can call on the forest spirit to conceal me and speed my passage. When I reach the river I can call the river spirit to flood and block my pursuers and when I finally reach the highway, I can have a street spirit ready with a truck with bad brakes for any of my pursuers who make it past the river. Likewise, if I get jumped in my apartment, I can call the hearth spirit to deal with my attackers, then scramble down the fire escape and have a city spirit waiting in the alley for anyone who follows me.)<<<<<<

—Tommy Dre (22:36:35/01-28-57)

>>>>(Is a city spirit's domain the entire city or only one neighborhood or suburb? What about malls and sewer tunnels?)<<<<<<

—Rakker (02:09:38/01-30-57)

>>>>(A city spirit's domain is the entire town (for example, the whole of London) but does not extend into the more specialized niches within the city ecology. Interiors of buildings are hearth domains; Hyde Park is forest and field, and so on. So while the city spirit has vast reach, its domain contains blind spots and holes. Malls (at least the ones I've been in) have hearth spirits, although rather odd ones. Sewers fall under the reach of the city spirit, but places in the tunnels where people have lived for a while tend to develop hearth spirits.)<<<<<<

—Runt (21:14:05/02-01-57)

ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Hermetic magicians can summon elemental spirits from one of the following sources—fire, water, air or earth. Typically, mages use these spirits to help them sustain spells, or they have the spirits perform physical services for them. A fire elemental, say, might manifest and burn through a door at the command of a mage. All elementals can engulf targets—a water elemental can drown a victim, a fire elemental can cover a victim with fire, and so on. Elementals can also nauseate and incapacitate tar-

gets, generate psychokinetic energy, and control the movement of targets.

All in all, elementals make pretty versatile weapons. They're not limited by domain and can pursue a target anywhere. The best way to escape an elemental, believe it or not, is to get out of the controlling magician's line of sight. If the mage can't see you, for whatever crazy reason, neither can the elemental. (This trick works for nature spirits as well, but not watchers.) Keep in mind, though, that if the mage is using some kind of magical enhancement—clairvoyance, say—or is in astral space along with the elemental, the spirit (and the astral mage!) can follow you as you duck around the corner or dive into a doorway.

Of course, escaping by ducking out of sight only works against bound elementals. So how can you tell if the fire elemental that just manifested next to you is bound or not? Sorry, chumley, there's no way to do it in a snap. Only long-term observation'll give you the answer to that question. And let me tell you, an elemental that isn't bound is one scary fragger to meet. A bound elemental is limited; it does specific tasks within the line of sight of the mage who summoned it. The other kind acts like an astral hound dog. You can't run from it, you can't hide from it. No one can call it off, not even the mage who summoned the thing. You've got to kill it or dispel it, end of story.

This kind of elemental goes by a lot of names. Three I've heard are spirits of death, astral Mounties (they always get their man) and pit bulls. Not that it really matters what you call them. Take my advice—get yourself some magical protection and some astral warriors on your side, and maybe you'll live one more day. And don't piss off your friendly neighborhood mage.

MAGIC AND HEALING

Throwing fireballs around and spying on targets from astral space are not the only kinds of advantages magic can provide a shadowrunning team. Spells that heal can also prove invaluable on a run, especially when calling in DocWagon isn't practical. Different spells can be used to help a runner resist pain, strangulation or suffocation; cure diseases; reduce the effectiveness of toxins; protect against infections or disease; stabilize an injured runner's condition; and treat wounds.

>>>>>(Damn straight on that one. I'd be dead right now if it weren't for my spellcasting chummer, Wizzo. Back in '52, we were part of team dropped into the Sioux Nation to perform a data-snatch for a very special client. For reasons I can't go into right now, we had to perform the mission with basically no support at all. Our client provided air transport to get us in, but after that we were on our own. At first, everything went smoothly. We hit the target and got the data with no problems. We couldn't believe our luck, which held until we got about five fraggin' miles from the border, where we stumbled onto a Sioux Special Forces squad. Thank the spirits we surprised them, or we would have been totally hosed. As it was, they got the stolen data, as well as Jones, Longo and Arnold. Wizzo was bringing up the rear, which saved his life. I lost my right arm and most of my right leg, and for a brief moment I'd wished that I'd died like Jones and the others. Then

Wizzo calmed me down and used some spells to treat my wounds and stabilize my condition. Thank the spirits Wizzo survived. There ain't no way I ever would have made it out of there without those healing spells.)<<<<<<

—Rooster (07:21:09/01-18-57)

Although healing spells can be very effective and convenient for a shadow team, it's probably best to use them only when mundane methods are unavailable. Otherwise, it's pretty easy for the team's runners to develop "Superman complexes"—to start believing they don't have to worry about getting all shot up because their magician can just whip out a healing spell and make 'em all better again. This may not be a problem in most cases, but if the team's magician gets geeked during a run the team could be pretty well fragged. Also, any use of magic—healing magic included—may draw attention from any astral security in the area. So try mundane healing methods first and save the magic for the times when you really need it.

>>>>>(Once again, BlackStone's conveniently neglected to emphasize that any use of magic—no matter how minor—will cause physical damage to the magician. Why do people keep forgetting about this? I'm not just talking about the folks in this post—I'm talking fragging near every slot who doesn't sling the juice (and far too many who do, who oughta know better). Every fragging time I go on a run, I have to deal with at least one damn-fool street sammy or whatever who figures I should heal every hit he takes, and never mind what all that magic use might cost me. An awful lot of runners see magicians as practically expendable—it's more important to heal the sammy so he can shoot up some more guards than to keep the magician healthy. The sammy can take any crazy risk he wants because he's got me back there to fix him up—but who's going to heal me? Who's going to patch up the damage I'm taking every time I sling a spell to keep the sammy in fighting condition? Nobody, that's who. By the time I get done healing my chummers—half of whom only got injured because they took a stupid chance ("Who cares if I take a slug to a vital organ? The mage'll heal me right up!")—I'm too drained to heal myself. And if we're lucky enough to have a second magician on the team, he's gonna take just as much damage healing me as I did healing everybody else. Net result's the same—one magicboy down for the count. No way is that fair. Why do so many runners think it's perfectly OK to harsh out the magician so that everybody else can get off lightly? How come everyone else's health and well-being is so much more important than mine?)<<<<<<

—Manic Magicboy (13:41:22/01-21-57)

>>>>>(Living up to your name, I see. Look, Manny, it's a fact of life that magicians can do useful things like heal people. What're you going to do, let the street sammy bleed to death because you'd rather not get a nosebleed? How fair is that? I agree with you that people shouldn't take magical healing for granted—anybody who thinks that us spellslingers can keep throwing healing magic their way without paying for it is an ignoramus in desperate need of a little education. But you sound like you think nobody should



be asking you to heal them at all—like using your talent that way is somehow taking unfair advantage of you. It's not, any more than it's "unfair" to make the decker face the wicked bad IC all by himself.)<<<<<

—BlackStone (15:33:41/01-21-57)

>>>>(I'm not saying I won't heal my chummers. I just want a little consideration. Slinging spells hurts me just as much as catching bullets will—remember that, and don't expect me to just keep taking it and taking it and taking it.)<<<<<

—Manic Magicboy (16:44:21/01-21-57)

HEALING MAGICIANS

Whenever a magician uses magic, he uses his own body to create a "bridge" between the physical and astral planes. This bridge enables him to channel energy from the astral to the physical world and requires a very delicate balance between the magician's astral form and his body. Any shocks to the magician's body—such as drugs, poorly healed injuries, and cyber-implants—can upset that balance. Even organic bioware throws off the balance and reduces the magician's power-handling capacity. Enough of a shock can permanently reduce the magician's ability to safely channel magical energy. For this reason, anyone treating an injured magician has to be very careful. All things considered, it's probably best to wait for professional help for an injured magician. And it doesn't hurt to learn a bit about the special considerations that come into play when treating a magician.

>>>>(A lot of people don't know that most medical services like DocWagon issue medic-alert tags and specially coded membership cards to magician clients. That way, when a trauma team finds the subscriber unconscious they know to take the proper precautions. DocWagon's gotten into one or two lawsuits from magicians who claim that company employees acted recklessly and damaged their magical abilities and their livelihood when treating them.)<<<<<

—X-Star (18:05:12/01-22-57)

>>>>(I've heard that using drugs to shake off fatigue and drain can frag up a magician's ability to use magic, too. True?)<<<<<

—Tangent (22:04:56/01-22-57)

>>>>(Absolutely. Using drugs can cause long-term damage to a magician's abilities—especially drugs that push the magician's delicately balanced system beyond normal limits. The risk depends on the drug and the dosage.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (18:43:22/01-23-57)

>>>>(What kind of drugs and dosages are the worst offenders?)<<<<<

—Corvus (19:10:40/01-23-57)

>>>>(Generally hard doses of strong stimulants such as betamphetamines are among the worst. I've heard that some individuals intentionally administer carefully tailored doses of such drugs to

magicians to slowly erode the magician's power. After a week or two the poor slot's powers are completely gone. Not that anyone on this board would ever think of doing that, eh Corvus?)<<<<<

—Walker (23:48:50/01-23-57)

>>>>(Who would do such a thing? That's barbaric!)<<<<<

—Sereena (10:02:30/01-24-57)

>>>>(Of course it is. The NACLU got the procedure banned as cruel and unusual punishment in most prisons. Of course, that ruling doesn't apply to the SINless or in corporate territory.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (18:55:35/01-24-57)

>>>>(There are plenty of other techniques to clip the wings of a magician. Most people simply administer enough drugs or use sim-sense feeds to totally frag up the spellworm's concentration. Drek, if the slag has to struggle to walk in a straight line he's gonna have a much harder time casting a spell or astrally projecting.)<<<<<

—Ares (19:04:00/01-26-57)

>>>>(I hear that some magical prisoners are sent up the well to an orbital prison, where magic doesn't work.)<<<<<

—Agassi Blue (21:15:05/01-26-57)

>>>>(Bulldrek. There's no fraggin' way anyone would spend the nuyen to boost a bunch of criminals into orbit. It's way too expensive and there's not nearly enough space on the oh-so-valuable orbitals to use one for a fraggin' prison.)<<<<<

—Tangent (22:03:15/01-26-57)

>>>>(I wouldn't dismiss the rumor so quickly. Way I've heard it, some corp is getting magically active cons from the UCAS gum-mint (SINless, of course) and shipping them to an orbital so they can "participate" in a study on why magic goes haywire outside of the atmosphere. Supposedly the prisoners get their sentences reduced for going along with the whole thing. But from what I hear they don't really have much choice about volunteering and the only data the study has managed to produce is an impressive list of the ways a magician in space can die.)<<<<<

—DeeCeelOT (01:14:38/01-27-57)

>>>>(Okay, okay. We're getting a little off topic here. If you chummers want to continue this conversation in one of the SIGs, feel free. I'll repost these messages there.)<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (00:32:02/02-01-57)

>>>>(What about all of the childhood inoculations and medical treatments? If magicians aren't identified until they're young adults, why doesn't all of that invasive treatment affect their magical abilities?)<<<<<

—Quirk (16:12:35/02-01-57)

>>>>(As far as anyone can tell, this sensitivity doesn't come into play until the magician is Awakened—that is to say, open to the energies of astral space. Latent child magicians can have the same medical treatments as any other kid without any side

effects, but once their Talent manifests, they need to take precautions.)<<<<<

—Talon (22:50:24/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Most magicians I know go in for holistic, herbal and magical medical treatments. They claim these methods are less invasive and dangerous to one's magical well-being than conventional methods. Unfortunately, they also tend to be less effective (except for magic, which can get expensive in terms of nuyen or effort on the part of the magician).)<<<<<

—Argos (21:58:04/02-02-57)

PARANORMALS

Paranormal guard animals are one of the latest additions to the modern magical arsenal. A few corporations and security providers have experimented with paranormals for years now, but the practice of using paranormal guard animals has achieved popularity only in recent years with the development of new training and genetic-engineering techniques. In the past, paranormal guard animals posed nearly as much danger to their handlers as they did to intruders—and some people say they still do. Apparently, no matter how much you train these animals they remain wild, unlike dogs and other species that have been domesticated for thousands of years. And a barghest turning on its trainer presents a bit more of a problem than, say, a Doberman pinscher going bad.

The impressive capabilities of paranormals outweigh these dangers, however, and now entire menageries of critters have become a common sight on many company compounds. Generally, they're used to provide security during night-time hours. Typical choices for guard duty include barghests, basilisks, cockatrices, firedrakes and piasmas. Hellhounds in particular are highly prized because their dual nature makes them effective against both astral and physical intruders.

>>>>>(Drek, there seems to be an unspoken competition among the corps to see who came come up with the nastiest Awakened critter. Some corporate facilities are starting to look like fraggin' zoos.)<<<<<

—Whisper (23:41:50/01-25-57)

Lots of people think the only way to deal with these critters is to blast away and haul hoop. Well, that's one way, but it's hardly the best—and hardly appropriate if you're trying to get into a facility without setting off all kinds of bells and whistles. My advice is do your homework. Find out what kinds of paranormals you might encounter on a run and look them up in Paterson's Guide. Find out the behaviors, strengths and any weaknesses of the critter. Then think of ways you can use this information to your advantage. Remember, paranormals typically have natural magical and physical abilities that far outstrip the abilities of any runner. But runners (at least most of them, I would hope) have one advantage over paranormals—it's called intelligence. So don't try to slug it out with these nasty little beasties—outsmart them.

Take the basilisk, for example. These critters have this wonderful little ability to petrify anyone that looks into their beady lit-

tle eyes. So you get yourself some styling little mirror-shades and you won't have to worry about no basilisk freezing you at an unfortunate moment. Better yet, get yourself a little hand mirror and you can reflect the lizard's gaze back at him—which, conveniently, will turn him into a little basilisk statue. Or you might want to reflect that petrifying gaze up into the eyes of any lizard wrangler watching the action. Remember, do your homework—it may save you from some nasty little surprises.

>>>>>(The Stoneman's right. It's always best to use a critter's own powers against him if you can. Back when I was just a newbie, I joined a coupla runners on a little job against a gentech lab outside of Renton. It was a research lab owned by a small firm, so we weren't expecting much security. Anyway, we had no sooner breached the perimeter fence of the place when we heard some howling and saw a pack of hellhounds about twenty yards away, coming at us at full speed. Vurn, the team leader, ordered everyone to hold their fire and pulled what looked like a little antique transistor radio out of his pocket. He stood there calmly, turned a little dial on the thing and then, just as I thought we were corpse meat, the pack of black hounds stopped in their tracks, started yelping and whining like puppies and scattered, tails between their legs. After the run, I asked Vurn how he did it. Turned out he had rigged up what he called a "sonic blaster." Real simple—just a little thing that emitted a very loud, high-frequency tone. The tone was too high for us—or the lab's security guards—to hear, but apparently the hellhounds—with their improved hearing—found it excruciating.)<<<<<

—Doolittle (05:27:33/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Yeah, the old "silent dog whistle" trick works on hellhounds and piasmas, too. Just make sure you got fresh batteries in your sonic blaster.)<<<<<

—Neveready (12:01:32/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Strobe units work pretty well against paranormals with low-light vision, like hellhounds, too.)<<<<<

—WeeGee (20:25:09/02-01-57)

>>>>>(You mean like a strobe flash unit for taking photos?)<<<<<

—Tyro (20:43:33/02-01-57)

>>>>>(You got the picture. Say CHEEEEEEESE!)<<<<<

—WeeGee (20:58:19/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Flares work against piasmas. I guess these animals rely on their thermographic vision at night. You simply shoot off a flare or two as a decoy and they'll go for it. Of course, once they get within 2 meters or so they realize it's not something they can eat—although I've seen some try.)<<<<<

—Marty S. (23:21:08/02-01-57)

>>>>>(That's wild.)<<<<<

—Marlin P. (23:38:05/02-01-57)

>>>>(If you do end up dealing with a dual critter while in astral form, your best bet is to run. An astral magician has the advantage of not being hindered by a meatbody, giving him greater speed and maneuverability, as well as the ability to dodge through walls to get away.)<<<<<

—Hex (20:19:49/02-02-57)

MORE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

New weapons are being added to the modern magical arsenal all the time. Sometimes these weapons are produced in corporate magical-research projects. But just as often, it's street magicians improvising to meet the demands of shadowrunning that come up with new "tricks." Either way, it's next to impossible to keep up with all the latest mojo because it changes so quickly. It's probably best not to worry too much about your lack of knowledge—just remind yourself that you're bound to run into new and unfamiliar drek. And hope you don't get cacked when you do. That said, there are two important developments in the magical arsenal you should be aware of: fiber-optic networks and FAB—fat airborne bacteria.

Fiber-optic networks are an excellent example of a new magical application of an old technology. Fiber-optic cables have been around since the twentieth century, when they were used to transmit telecommunications data. In the late 2040s, magical security engineers began to use them for magical-protection applications. Now almost all magical security providers use fiber-optic networks. These networks of fiber-optic cables enable a magician to "see" remote areas from up to 2,500 feet away—as far as images can travel over the cable without using image-boosting equipment that would frag with the security wizboy's magic. By using fiber optics to see, a magician can cast spells at those areas in his view without directly exposing himself to his target.

>>>>(Just because a magician isn't directly exposed to his target doesn't mean he's not exposed to danger. What you do is find the lens at the end of the cable. Then real quick like, place a laser against it and fire straight into it. If you use an Ares MP laser it'll fry any eye looking into the other end. If you don't have an MP handy, you can use a laser sight. It won't do as much damage as an Ares MP but it will blind the fragger for a few days at least. Either way, it's a nasty little surprise.)<<<<<

—Trickster (02:34:21/01-25-57)

>>>>(No need to be so destructive, Trickster. You want to louse up a magician using fiber optics, do anything that'll block his view. Hang hats over all the security cameras—or haul around a little piece of frosted plexiglass and slip it over the lens. If the mageboy can't see you, he can't do frag-all to hurt you.)<<<<<

—Mamacita (21:45:56/01-26-57)

>>>>(Here's one for situations where the "hat trick" might not be practical: invisibility. This is a beauty of a spell for fragging up the security wizard who's watching things via fiber optics. The physical invisibility spell will work on pieces of tech—no one'll be able to see you over that fancy-shmancy cable system (unless you're real

clumsy and knock drek over). And sight's the only thing the fragger's got to pinpoint you. He's sitting 2,500 feet away in a little control room—he can't hear your footsteps or smell your breath or bump into you. Move real quick and careful while you're under an invisibility spell, and you can sleaze right past the security mage's new toy.)<<<<<

—Mistik (11:23:21/01-30-57)

FAB, or fat airborne bacteria, is an example of new technology applied to magical use. FAB is genetically engineered bacteria that can function as an astral containment device. In other words, the drek forms an organic barrier that cannot be penetrated by astral forms—the same principle behind so-called living walls of ivy. It can be pumped into hollow walls or into hollow fibers that can be fashioned into nets or meshes—these are called *living restraints*. They're used to block or trap astrally active magicians or spirits. The drek's prohibitively expensive, so you're likely to encounter it only at the most heavily secured corp sites.

>>>>(FAB sounds scary and it certainly is a scary feeling to be trapped in a FAB net, but there are ways to defeat the drek. First off, the bacteria smells nasty. I mean nasty—kinda like a cross between rotten eggs, dwarf barf and warm ork drek. So if someone starts pumping it into the walls you're probably going to notice. Next, FAB is airborne, so you can vacuum the drek right out of the air. Finally, it burns real good.)<<<<<

—Valance (21:08:34/02-11-57)

If you want more information about fiber-optic networks and FAB, I recommend you look up the **Corporate Security Handbook** file elsewhere on this BBS. It contains a magical security section that talks about all the latest corporate magical security goodies.

>>>>(Cybermancy

Okay, you've all had a chance to gander at the recent post about what happened to Hatchetman. If you're smart, you actually read it. Here's a little refresher for those who remain ignorant about the pile of nasty drek called cybermancy.

Some people say cybermancy is not healing magic, and plenty of others say it doesn't exist. I know better, as does anyone who's read Hatchetman's story. His tale made me curious—and scared—so I went digging for more info. I found enough from reliable sources to say that this is some major, major mojo—heavy-duty magic with bad consequences that you should be aware of.

Apparently, cybermantic rituals, in conjunction with advanced cyber-surgical techniques, are used to defeat the aural-physical threshold of a subject. In plain English, it lets you keep some poor slot alive while you fill him up with enough cyberware to kill him. From what I gather, such people come out of the procedure very powerful—and very fraggged up as well. The cyberware makes them faster, stronger, deadlier than humanly possible. Plus they become permanently active on the astral plane and less susceptible to magic than normal metahumans. But they also experience unpleasant physical side effects—I've read fragmentary reports of personality dissociation, cancer, drek like that.



Nobody seems real clear on exactly what bad drek happens or why, but everything I could glean says that something goes badly wrong with every subject they've put through this procedure.

Right now, it seems that only five or six clinics in the world are equipped to perform cybermantic rituals, and they're all under the control of some very powerful people. No names or exact locations that I could find, but the rumors point to the usual suspects—Aztechnology, Saeder-Krupp, and Tir na nÓg for sure, and Fuchi allegedly runs a couple. One of 'em's supposedly in NAN territory, the other one's allegedly in Japan somewhere. Lucky for (meta)humanity, cybermancy isn't widespread and probably won't become so—like I said, this drek is heavy magic. Stands to reason that the few magicians who know the rituals guard their secrets very, very carefully and probably charge staggering fees for their services. In fact, from what little I've heard over the rumor mill, nobody knows for sure who the frag they are. The clinics apparently can't do the whole cybermancy thing without these mages, and there's only a few of them in the whole world. And no,

they're not giving lessons in how to work cybermantic magic. (Think about it. You're one of, say, three or four people who can do something that folks'll pay through the nose for. Are you going to teach more people how to do it, and cut down the demand for your personal services? Not likely.)

My advice to anyone in a position to do this to yourself is, don't. My advice to anyone looking for it is, don't. It won't be worth it. My advice to anyone who has to deal with a cybermantic opponent is, run. Fast. That way, you just might survive.)<<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (01:30:22/01-10-57)

>>>>>(Man, this drek sounds like the bomb. Anyone out there got any more data on this cybermojo?)<<<<<<
—Curious George (21:51:04/02-03-57)

>>>>>(Check out the **Cybertechnology** e-doc elsewhere on this BBS.)<<<<<<
—Marian (22:26:54/02-03-57)

THE ASTRAL ADVANTAGE



>>>>>(There were a few other people who posted info about running around in astral space, but you're reading this one because my pal Nate does it all. He may not be the best magician or the best detective or the best writer there is, but he's good enough at all three to get the job done, make a living and survive to tell about it. He's got an interesting story—and hey, you're gonna have to read the whole thing to get the whole screed. At first, I was just gonna lift the sections that answered specific questions people asked, but I got so caught up in the tale that I decided to include it as originally posted. Sorry there's no convenient subheads for those of you who usually just skip ahead to the good stuff, but hey—sometimes you gotta work for what you want.

Oh yeah. If you're paying attention, you could learn a few things from Nate about doing proper legwork before a job.)<<<<<

—Talon (13:46:23/01-12-57)

My name is Nathan Mack. I was 17 when the magic came back. Yeah, that makes me a codger now, 62 years old. I've been an information-gathering agent—naah, let's use the pre-affirmative action name. I've been a private eye for most of those 45 years. And things have changed.

>>>>>(Yo, Sherlock. Puhleeze promise to tell us something we don't know. I'm afraid to keep reading—if the next paragraph starts with "In my day ..." I might completely overreact and move to another BBS!)<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (08:14:01/01-24-57)

>>>>>(We should be so lucky.)<<<<<

—CTC (09:02:33/01-24-57)

The fact that I grew up in a functional, nuclear family of modest means, went to a good school and got enough moral support and loving discipline from my parents and teachers to





become a decent human being really took the edge off my dream of becoming a hard-drinking, hard-loving, borderline-immoral detective. My parents didn't like my plan to enroll in MIT to study criminal justice, but they did have to admit I showed an aptitude. My analytical mind, the ability to think on my feet and my interest in physical fitness gave me the basic equipment I needed to solve a few mysteries in my formative years (kidnapped pets, missing items, large-scale embezzlement, corporate crime—you know the kind of stuff). Being a big fan of twentieth-century pulp fiction gave me the focus for my talents: I wanted to grow up to be this era's Sam Spade. I figured that all I needed was the right training.

>>>>(Query: Sam Spade?)<<<<<
—Lit Rat (14:23:12/01-26-57)

>>>>(The protagonist of a series of mysteries written in the early twentieth century by an author named Dashiell Hammett. One of the best-known stories was about the search for a legendary objet d'art called the Maltese Falcon, which was made into a still-classic movie starring Humphrey Bogart. I can talk about this all day, if you're interested. Contact the 2OC Society at NA/UCAS/WE/66549335:Davidroth.HIST.)<<<<<
—History Buff (15:45:04/01-26-57)

>>>>(Some people just can't resist putting their contact code on this BBS, regardless of the topic. Does it make you as mad as it makes me? Well, we're doing something about it! If you want to help keep these posts off the board, contact the Society for the Prevention of Advertising in an Unnecessary Fashion at NA/CL/CU/84562093:SPAUF:joe.)<<<<<
—SPF Joe (17:22:56/01-26-57)

>>>>(Uh-huh. Smooth move, spauffy boy.)<<<<<
—CTC (17:33:56/01-26-57)

When I started having "out-of-body experiences" every night, then even during the day in the summer after I graduated from high school, I was convinced I was going to die—either that, or I was destined to found a new religion. I hated having no control over what I understood to be reality; it kept blurring in and out, and I learned things about people that I really didn't want to know. According to the feelings I picked up during my first "fit" on the job, for example, my coworkers were a seething mass of lust, hate, boredom, larceny and ambition—except for my boss, who was actually as honest and trustworthy as she seemed. Of course, if the rest of the company had their way, she wouldn't be in charge for long.

I started figuring out how to use this knack for "seeing another place" about the time it became generally accepted that something was different in the world, something that both the newsies and the scientific community were labeling magic. Instead of being afraid, my folks turned out to be just as curious about my magical powers as I was. They put the word out to people they knew to find me a teacher, and by the time I left for college in the fall I had a pretty good handle on my existing powers. I also had an instructor lined up for continuing my magic education at school.

>>>>(I thought the "My First Magical Experience" post was in another area. Yaawwn.)<<<<<<
—Sera-Sera (08:21:25/01-29-57)

I graduated college as one of a new breed, a magically skilled investigator. I understood all the classic methods and techniques of an inquiry agent, but magic gave me a unique perspective on the tried-and-true traditions—and gave me an edge.

In the beginning and for a long time, my magic gave me an advantage in my profession that no one could match or counter. I took all sorts of jobs, from trailing spouses suspected of cheating to courier jobs, from bodyguard work to tracing missing persons, and eventually earned a well-deserved reputation for getting a job done with a minimum of fuss and bloodshed. See, until the first shopkeeper or homeowner or businessman decided to use magic to protect his interests, those of us who might have been working against those interests had free access to nearly everything that person did and everywhere that person went. The secret was astral perception and projection—sure, I used spells and magical gear when they made sense, but there's nothing like simple perception and projection for gathering info.

Let me explain by spinning you the story of one of my early cases.

I was living in Chicago at the time, working out of a small office in a building poised on the leading edge of the ever-expanding Loop—which meant I was in the area voted next most likely to undergo the corporations' special brand of urban renewal. Like my role model, I'd hired myself a tough, good-looking female secretary, only mine was an ork. Sasha was good for morale—my morale, that is. Her presence carried a few important messages to prospective clients, not to mention bill collectors. She was big and well armed, and she moved quick on her feet, which was a testament to the martial arts training she took—people didn't try to mess with her or me. The fact that she was female and metahuman let clients know that I didn't have any race or gender issues that would get in the way of my work. The fact that I could afford a secretary at all spoke well of my success rate. Her natural low-light vision came in handy a few times, too, especially against human muscle-boys (and girls, for that matter).

The client in question arrived a few days before Christmas in 2020. She was an elderly woman with a beautifully mannered white dog on a heavy chain. Per standard operating procedure, Sasha detained the client in the outer office for a moment or two so that I could give her and her pet the astral once-over. For that I used astral perception, a technique for looking into the astral plane that lets a magician learn very specific things about the people, places and things in his environment by reading their auras. First off, a person's aura reveals their general health, the condition of their life force. Assensing (the professional term for reading auras) also allows a magician to see a person's current emotional state—and a good magician can do a lot with that information. You read enough people, you learn the general signs that show when people are lying, unhappy, homicidal, impatient—and when people are faking an emotion or trying to hide what they really feel behind an act. It's a handy tool of the trade.

>>>>>(It's possible for a mundane to fool a magician who's reading his aura, but extremely difficult. A really good "method" actor might be able to get into his or her role deeply enough to fake the desired aura—but at that point it could be argued that the person really is experiencing the emotion, and so what the magician is reading is, in fact, true.)<<<<<<

—Killion (20:33:54/01-25-57)

Of course, I knew something was up as soon as they walked in the door, because the watcher spirit I'd summoned for the occasion immediately began gibbering and shouting about the horrible, nasty-eyed, pointy-toothed meanie that was trying to eat him. Well, I flipped to the astral and discovered that the old lady's faithful companion was a hell hound! She didn't like me looking at her mistress, but apparently someone had taught her the difference between an attack and a harmless look-see, so the hound contented itself with baring its teeth. Oddly enough, the hell hound's aura seemed more complicated than what you usually see for a dual-natured animal. If the dog had been a (meta)human, I'd have said she was pining away for someone or something.

The old girl's aura showed that she felt very distressed by the job she'd come to see me about, that she'd been carrying a great sadness for many years—and that she was suffering the early stages of a nasty cold. My client also seemed completely comfortable about the true nature of her pet.

I signaled Sasha to send them in. When she opened the door to usher in my business appointment, Sasha announced, "Ms. Kroger and Gladys to see you." And she winked. Gladys the hell hound? As soon

as my client settled herself in a chair, I pushed my box of disposable hankies closer to her side of the desk.

"Good morning, Ms. Kroger. I'm sorry you feel so poorly. Please help yourself to as many tissues as you need."

That took her off her guard. She opened her mouth, shut it again, then said, "Thank you."

"How can I help you?" I asked. No matter how much info I got from their aura, the standard opening gambit always worked best to get them to spill the story. As she began her tale, I tipped



my chair back and stared at the ceiling. Quite frankly, most people who need to hire private investigators find it really difficult to say why they've come, so they're usually more comfortable if I'm not looking at them while they talk. I developed the habit of leaning back in my chair because it allows me to watch my potential clients from the astral plane and judge the truthfulness of their account, while at the same time hiding the fact that I'm splitting my attention between two realities.

>>>>>(Man, this guy covers all the bases—he's got the magic act down good. But most times, just being observant can clue you in to when the slag you're dealing with is a magician who's astrally perceiving. First off, he'll look like he's zonin' when he's peeking into the astral—eyes kind of unfocused, hard to get his attention. Second, he'll react to things no one else can see. Third, he'll probably be pretty clumsy doing the really simple stuff; walking, writing, eating and all the other things you learn as a youngster. Remember: you don't have to be a magician to recognize one.)<<<<<<

—Capt. Gray
(13:33:09/01-22-57)

So Ms. Kroger told me her problem, with Gladys sitting alertly at her side. Seems that when Ms. Kroger found Gladys as a pup, she'd had the chance to keep the rest of the litter, too, another female and two males. For what she later considered very selfish reasons, she decided to find other homes for all the pups but Gladys. Later she felt that Gladys missed her littermates and she wanted to cheer her up by planning a reunion.

>>>>>(I suspected this guy might be jerking us around, and now I know it for sure. He wants us to believe some half-cooked line about a hell hound family reunion? Drek! I don't know how this guy lived so long. You'd think someone would have arranged a mercy killing long ago. Sheesh!)<<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (10:45:23/01-24-57)

>>>>>(You ask me, this is a perfect chance to learn what makes a professional investigator tick. Unless I completely miss my guess, he doesn't laugh in her face, he applies all the skills at his disposal,



accomplishes the job, and has no trouble handling a little something extra along the way, proving that a true professional gets the job done, no matter what the job.)<<<<<<

—Hey Markit (15:11:06/01-25-57)

The problem was, she wasn't having any luck tracking down the other three hounds. The people who'd taken them originally had sold them to other parties, and the trail simply petered out after that first sale. If I hadn't been watching Ms. Kroger from astral space, I might have missed the fear she felt as she described her efforts so far. Despite my inclination to laugh off this case, I felt an unexpected obligation to Gladys. Her fiery red eyes seemed to plead with me, but she seemed more worried about Ms. Kroger than her brothers and sister.

As I dropped my chair back to its usual position, I dropped out of astral space. "Ms. Kroger, I'll take the job," I said, "but you're going to have to tell me the whole story. You're scared, and I can't do my job right if I don't know why."

I have to give the old girl credit. She didn't break down, just pressed her lips together, sighed, then began again. "I really do want to find Gladys's littermates," she said. "But not just to make my dog happy. I have a friend who is a shaman, and he has told me some very strange things about my companion. For one thing, my friend explained to me that Gladys is what is called a hell hound—an awful name, if you ask me." She rubbed her pet between its ears. "Why anyone would believe such a sweet animal came from hell is beyond me. Anyway, Stanley—that's my shaman friend—says that Gladys shows the potential to 'manifest'—is that the right word?—some unusual magical powers because she is a crossbreed. Stanley can give you the details, but what I'm concerned about is that someone else has discovered this potential in the other dogs from the litter. I'm afraid Gladys's brothers and sister will be mistreated.

"Now, Stanley has warned me that Gladys may be the only one of her litter to be so good-tempered and affectionate, and so I don't really expect to keep all the dogs when we find them. I just want to make sure they're happy. What frightens me about looking for the other dogs is that the people I gave the puppies to are all dead."

>>>>>(Crazy old broad. If her hound actually had unusual powers, or even an unusual combination of powers, it should have been studied and tested to activate those powers. Can you imagine? A hell hound that can breathe fire, maybe turn into mist, cause fear, drain life energy—yowsa! Bring it on home to momma!)<<<<<<
—Elise (20:30:10/01-25-57)

>>>>>(Why did you choose those specific powers, hmmm? Do you know something the rest of us don't? I think we all usually take it as read that any paranormal animal can be unique within its type, so what prompted your list?)<<<<<<
—Whizzer (23:13:44/01-25-57)

>>>>>(Who, me? I'm just your average, enthusiastic drek-head. Really. Don't bother trying to find me, I'm not worth it. Really.)<<<<<<
—Elise (02:50:43/01-26-57)

So I asked Ms. Kroger to supply me with all the info she had—names and last known addresses for the dogs' original owners, anything she knew about the owners' deaths, Stanley's full name and address, descriptions of the hell hounds—the usual stuff. I started working as soon as she left. Well, first I had lunch, then I got started. I made myself an appointment with Stanley Silent Dog for later in the day, then briefed Sasha on what I needed her to do. Did I mention Sasha was a decker? While she jacked in and followed up the leads we had, I turtled along on my own keyboard and terminal, doing a little research into the current knowledge on hell hounds and genetic manipulation of magical creatures.

Even 30 years ago, people were using hell hounds for security. I've found that people will use most any doglike animal for protection—the fact that hell hounds offer enhanced senses and the potential for flame projection and immunity to fire only increases their usefulness as guard animals. It's their dual nature that makes them particularly valuable, however. See, a dual-natured critter is always present on both the astral and physical planes. An intruder trying to sneak through a gate would face the hell hound's physical attack. An astrally projecting magician trying to move through that same gate would face the hell hound's astral presence—and the hound is equally dangerous and equally efficient on both planes. Unlike (meta)humans, who have to learn how to function on the astral plane while keeping their body alive on the physical, dual-natured beings suffer no disadvantages from being present on two planes simultaneously.

>>>>>(For those of you who don't know, a magician who astrally projects essentially separates his "spirit," his consciousness, from his body. Though leaving his body completely vulnerable, the magician can move anywhere at amazing speeds, interact with other astral beings, and even manifest on the physical plane. This ability offers a great many practical uses: infiltrating all sorts of buildings and areas, performing reconnaissance for a shadowrunner team, discovering the type of astral security protecting a target, providing astral security for a team or person, sending a message, performing specialized magical attacks, and so on. Depending on your circumstances, though, the big disadvantage of leaving your body completely vulnerable might outweigh the benefits of astral projection.)<<<<<<
—Magister (10: 31:23/01-23-57)

>>>>>(Course, any magician with half a brain and one trustworthy associate can use the astral advantage with no worries. See, unless you're a complete drek-for-brains and leave a focus or spell lock or some other type of magically active item on your meat, you have nothing to fear from the astral plane while you're gone. All you really need is someone you can trust to protect your body and who carries a big gun. Course, they have to be magically naked too, or you still run the risk of another magic-type person grounding something nasty into the physical plane next to your body.)<<<<<<
—Mervin (04:44:07/01-24-57)

>>>>>(Not that I doubt your understanding, but I've had a lot of skin replaced because of a magician. My best chummer, Bernie, asked me to watch his body while he went on an astral jaunt. Now, I trust Bernie with my life (and did, as a matter of



fact), but he felt the need to reassure me that nothing bad would come from astral space while he was gone. He went so far as to take me to a neutral third party, a very reputable mage, to prove that he was carrying no active magical devices. For his own peace of mind, Bernie also had the mage scan me for magical doohickeys. Good thing, too, 'cause she found one. Seems the heirloom ring my mother had given me was actually a focus for an armor spell lock—I guess there are more skeletons in my closet than meet the eye. Anyway, I did this favor for Bernie. Seemed like gravy—just had to keep an eye out for baddies and take care of any who showed up. About an hour into the watch, a small red doglike creature appeared out of nowhere, and before I could move, exploded in a huge fireball. Lucky for me, this mysterious flame wasn't centered directly over Bernie, or he could've cacked it. Can someone explain that bit of weirdness?)<<<<<<

—Thelma (09:41:37/01-24-57)

>>>>>(You were the recipient of another type of grounded spell. The magician who toasted you abused his power, as far as I'm concerned. Here's the straight drek. Whether for this purpose or some other, the magician summoned a weak fire-elemental spirit before visiting astral space. When he made his attack, he sent the elemental to Bernie's body, commanded it to manifest (which created the necessary astral-physical connection) and blew it up with a physical spell, in this case a fireball. Unless your friend Bernie is a being of ultimate evil that the attacking mage felt compelled to destroy, he's really hurting himself as far as ever summoning other elementals. If he's powerful enough and performs the correct rituals, he will continue to be able to summon these spirits. But as a collective being, they've got a looong memory, and every one he summons will fight to win its freedom. If he ever loses control of an elemental, he can kiss his butt good-by.)<<<<<<

—Aron (10:04:13/01-24-57)

>>>>>(Couldn't Bernie have avoided a lot of unnecessary pain by warding his buddy?)<<<<<<

—Cracker (15:20:04/01-24-57)

>>>>>(Only if he established an attuned ward. Basically, the point of a ward is that no astral being can pass through it—including the caster. An attuned ward lives up to its name; the magician casting it tunes the ward to his own astral "signature" so that he becomes "invisible" to the astral barrier, and so can move freely into and out of the warded area. This would have kept your friendly little fire elemental away.)<<<<<<

—Aron (15:24:51/01-24-57)

>>>>>(Hmmm. It's like our detective friend said (was it him?): for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Or wait, maybe it was Newton. What I'm trying to say here is that for every barrier and ward spell that another magician puts up, there's ways around them. Now, I can use magic, no question—I'm killer in astral space. On the physical plane, though, I got squat. So I use my one power to my advantage and spend a lot of time in astral space. I figure out a lot of cool stuff that way.

Take this ward thing, for example. I was taking a perfectly innocent stroll through astral space (okay, maybe not perfectly innocent) last week and swooped past one of my favorite astral haunts, a privately owned and operated grade school. There're two or three magically capable kids there who astrally perceive during nap time, and they're just the cutest sprites—very friendly and bright, really makes my day a whole lot more cheerful when I see them. Only problem was, last week I couldn't see them because someone had slapped up a ward! I was disappointed and mad, and I decided I just wasn't going to take it. So I started poking around. Whoever put up the ward used a fair amount of force, and I knew I couldn't just break through. And I didn't really want to attract a whole lot of attention to myself by firing off a spell powerful enough to defeat the barrier, so I decided to try a few other things at random, hoping that one of them would work. What I ended up with is a little something I now call phasing. As an initiate, I can attempt to dispel spells, and that was one of the tricks I tried on the ward around the grade school. Much to my surprise, I found that my successful dispel attempt let me slip through the astral barrier with no one the wiser.

The effort was worth it, 'cause what I found inside was even more surprising. The magical kids had spontaneously pooled their gifts to form the barrier themselves. From what I gathered, they'd seen another magician sniffing around their turf and they didn't like his looks, so they'd blocked him by creating a wall around their classroom. I didn't bother trying to explain that what they'd done was impossible without the proper materials and training, I just let 'em get on with taking their naps—hey, that kind of thing takes a lot out of you! Guess I oughta put some thought into finding them good teachers.)<<<<<<

—Yojo (15:36:14/01-24-57)

>>>>>(This guy sounds like an astral adept, a type of magic user I've just begun hearing about real recently—that doesn't mean they haven't been around from the beginning, of course, but they're new to me. These guys are absolutely mundane on the physical plane, but every indication is that they rule on the astral. I'd sure like to find out more about them, but no self-styled astral adepts posted for this file. If you're out there, let's do what we can to make this explanation more complete, okay?)<<<<<<

—Talon (07:16:09/01-26-57)

The version of current research offered for public consumption wasn't too useful, so I figured I'd get Sasha to do a little poking around in the corporate data bases. Aztechnology was always a good bet for this kind of stuff, but I doubted we'd get far looking into their affairs. Yamatetsu, however, showed a promising distribution of assets—high interest in biotechnology and a lot of nuyen going into magical research (though that category didn't show up on the corporate profile). Plus, Yamatetsu had a rep of relying heavily on the use of paranormal biologicals, mainly hell hounds, for site security. This much I knew from previous dealings with them.

I checked in with Sasha before leaving to meet Stanley Silent Dog. Through the legitimate Matrix channels, she'd established that the three other owners had each sold their hound to an interested third party within a year of accepting the pet from Ms.



Kroger. I knew she'd find a connection between the buyers if one existed. The official documents filed on the three owners' deaths ruled their demises as death by misadventure, a quaint way of saying they died in some sort of accident. Sasha had also accessed the police records on the deaths, and even there found no hints that the officers in charge of the investigations suspected foul play. The only odd circumstance was that all three died in the same precinct of Chicago, even though they lived in three different parts of the country. Sasha figured she could probably find an explanation for that, too. She came up empty, though, on tracing the dogs through their licenses, registrations or veterinary records. That one would probably require me beating the streets.

I left Sasha to her work and headed to Portage Park for my meeting. (As with many Chicago neighborhoods, the area south and east of Harlem Avenue and Irving Park Road had retained its village name long after its residents began paying taxes to the city.) Ms. Kroger's friend lived in a small house overshadowed by the ever-expanding Harlem-Irving Plaza. Beginning life as a small, open-air mall, the HIP was enclosed in the mid- to late- 1900s and continued to grow, eventually absorbing five square miles of retail real estate and expanding upward simultaneously. I'd always avoided the HIP; that whole area gave me the creeps, and I could actually pinpoint the reason why. Part of the area's long been owned by a facility for the mentally challenged, and we all know that the field of mental health has gone through many, many changes over the years—mostly moving from barbaric to highly regulated and medically sound. There's a mass grave in the area, dug in the aftermath of the Chicago fire, which was also used to bury victims of the various diseases that ran rampant after the disaster. And, quite frankly, by 2020 the area's residents had had a lot of years to hate their neighbors. Maybe I was just being oversensitive, but the background count in Portage Park made me nauseous. I didn't understand how a shaman could live here, but I was going to have the opportunity to ask.

Stanley Silent Dog made his home in an ivy-covered cottage, surrounded by a small, well-tended lawn, enclosed by a thick hedge. The walk leading to his door was made of river stones, as was the path to a small wooden shed on one corner of the property. While a mundane artist would see the house as a thing of beauty, and a building contractor would calculate the profit to be made repairing the brick from the damage the ivy was doing, I recognized it as a magic user's way of protecting himself and his guests from unwanted astral interference. His house constituted the equivalent of a living wall, a magical barrier based on the fact that astral beings cannot move through living matter. Even the foundation of the house was faced with medium-sized river stones, too small for a (meta)human astral being to move through.

>>>>(Ah yes, a latter-day proponent of the "simpler is better" school. Someone recently posted on this board a doc lifted from Knight-Errant that went into exquisite detail about the advanced types of magical security that that corporation and others had developed to protect their assets. Highly educational, but it reminded me of a philosophy my father held regarding automobiles; the more complex the system, the more that can go wrong. Seems to me that the more elaborate the magical security measures, the more likely it is that some element will be overlooked, or

that procedures expected to mesh into a seamless whole will actually offer holes.)<<<<<

—CTC (11:15:08/01-27-57)

>>>>(Yeah, that **Corp Handbook** post really made it sound drek-tough to do the old in-out on any of the big boys. Fat bacteria in walls, ultraviolet imaging, teams of mages working together, spells and wards galore—what's a poor runner to do? Take one step back and think about what they're saying. Way I viddy it, the corps walkin' the K-E path got more nuyen than brains, okay? They're paying someone else to protect their assets—that's smart. Don't risk losing your valuables because you don't know what you're doin'. But the fast-talkers at the secshop make a better living the more they sell, so they try real hard to sucker their prospectives into the whole nine meters. The company weenies all want it to look like they're just as important as the big guys, so they splash out a wad of cash, then figure out that they bought more than they needed. They start cuttin' corners—layin' off those pricey mages, usin' fewer guards, deferrin' equipment maintenance, buyin' low-grade ritual materials—next thing you know, there're holes in their security big enough to drive a panzer through.

Look. All I'm sayin' is that you gotta do your research. Just 'cause it says, "Security Provided by Knight Errant" on the glass doors don't mean that Northern Light Plastics has the same traps, alarms, and troops as Renraku.)<<<<<

—Droogie (14:15:46/01-27-57)

>>>>(Good advice, doing your research. Research is how we beat the corps, and how the corps try to keep one step ahead of the runners. Take this fat bacteria thing, for example. The first few magicians who ran into it had a very bad experience because it was an unknown quantity—they'd never seen it before and had no idea how to handle it. The rest of us can learn from their "research," however unwilling that research may have been. First of all, we now know to look for it. The presence of fat bacteria means the corp has mages onsite, but it also means that mundanes can capture us, or at least spot us using the UV version. So, we can prepare to defend ourselves. If legwork on a target indicates the potential for fat bacteria security measures, mages can prepare for that problem going in. For example, if your legwork can pinpoint the area in which the corp is using fat bacteria, you could insert a physical team or drone to simply cut through the wall or otherwise destroy the bacteria to let the astral presence through. That strategy also works well as a rescue plan.

Using the same basic principle, if you bind an elemental to your service before entering the target site, then find yourself caught in fat bacteria, you can summon the spirit to you, command it to manifest, and instruct it to physically break out of the contaminated area.)<<<<<

—Magister (20:42:15/01-27-57)

>>>>(Doncha just hate it when a mage uses "simply" in the same sentence as "physical insertion"? I know I do. The wizard's got a good angle on this, though. It's why shadowrunners work in teams, to cover each others' weaknesses—and butts.)<<<<<

—Rogers (13:39:33/01-29-57)



As a rule, magic users don't assense each other or even assense things belonging to another magic user without permission—it's a privacy-courtesy issue. So I kept myself to myself, walked up to Stanley's door and knocked. I was right on time for our meeting, so I was surprised when no one answered. When I knocked a second time and still got no response, I tried the door. Locked. Now, Stanley had made a point of asking me to be prompt, because he was fitting me in between a magic lesson and a ritual casting. I had offered to come in the evening, but he had his violin lesson on Tuesdays (I got the impression he used music for his centering technique). Anyway, I immediately suspected foul play—I get generally more suspicious of human nature and the nature of coincidence when I'm on a case. Casually, I strolled around to the back of the house.

The back door was also locked, so I took my skeleton card from my wallet and slotted it into the maglock. Why didn't I just assense the place at that point, you ask, or use some kind of spell to find out what was going on? Good question. Here's the situation as I saw it: I was investigating a case in which three apparently unrelated people were dead. I had an appointment with a clock-watcher, and he wasn't answering his door at the agreed-upon time. I had vague suspicions of corporate involvement. So I figured my man Stan was in trouble. Now, I didn't see any signs of physical surveillance, so I had to assume they'd set some type of astral watch. That was Reason 1 to not go astral. Reason 2 to keep to the mundane methods was that any kind of magic use sends up an astral flare in the etheric plane—and again, I was working under the assumption that they (whoever they were) had someone watching. My rule of thumb, then as now, is to use mundane solutions whenever possible.

>>>>(I get real rakked off at the mundanes who think magic is the answer to everything. "Can't you just, well, you know?" they

say and wave their hands—like I'm gonna snap my fingers and make their nuyen for them. Sheesh.)<<<<<

—Gabriel (21:43:35/01-23-57)

>>>>(What about the magicians who go into a stealth mission like an astral brass band, carrying a ton of active foci and locked or quickened spells with a swarm of spirits hovering around them on the astral? They might as well send out engraved invitations for magical security to come and frag them over.)<<<<<

—Whisper (03:54:15/01-27-57)

>>>>(Using magic also leaves a short-term impression in the astral plane, traces that might allow another magician to learn something about the caster. In fact, I know skilled assensers who can identify a casting magician from nothing more than a strong astral impression.)<<<<<

—Royale (19:18:22/01-27-57)

My modern-day skeleton key signaled that it had found the lock's sequence, so I tucked the key back into my wallet and opened the door. As I stepped into the house, a sort of ambient electricity lifted the hair on my arms and neck—the same reaction I have every time I enter a magic-heavy environment. I listened carefully for a moment, sniffed the air—nothing. I used standard investigative operating procedure for one-agent penetration of a small residence, and found nothing—except for Stanley, tied up in the bathtub. When I took the professionally tied gag out of his mouth, Stan worked his jaw for a second, said, "Thanks," and, "Can you let my dog out of the toilet?" I lifted the lid and sure enough, there was a very wet, very unhappy dachshund bound and muzzled. I introduced myself while I untied them both, then Stan told me what happened.

"Fortunately, the student scheduled for my one o'clock lesson canceled, otherwise she'd have been here when the goons arrived.



They were pretty polite for a team of corporate strong-arms, I have to admit—they asked me politely for what they wanted, took it anyway when I refused, then left me as you discovered. Spot tried to help me out, so they took care of him, too.” By this time, we’d arrived in what anyone else would have used as the living room. Obviously a combination study-schoolroom-reception area, it looked like an interior decorator with a completely alien sense of design had done some work here. The goons had been thorough, but they were neat. Rather than dumping the contents of drawers and cabinets on the floor, they’d methodically emptied every storage area and stacked the contents on every other available surface. Instead of ripping up the upholstery, they disassembled all the furniture, stacking the pieces, the upholstery and the cushions in neat piles. I looked at Stanley and he looked at me: “There were five of them, and they worked fast,” he commented.

“What did they take?”

“Everything I had on paranormal animals, bioengineering, and research into the relationship between magic and genetics. I’ve been working on a theory for five years now on how animals incorporate magic into their genetic makeup, and I believe I’m finally making some progress. For example, Spot here has shown no magical capabilities, but all three of his littermates show a single paranormal ability—one possesses the power of fear, one has the power of search, and the third displays enhanced movement.” My mind boggled for a second as I tried to imagine paranormal dachshunds. “Here’s the interesting part. When all four dogs are in proximity to each other, they manifest the power of paralyzing touch. I’ve conducted exhaustive research on hundreds of four-pup litters, and a statistically significant number of litters exhibit this same phenomenon. Rose’s hell hound—that is, Ms. Kroger’s Gladys—seems to have the significant gene that acts as a catalyst for this power enhancement, but I can only test my theory by finding her littermates.”

I was grilling Stan about the details of the goons, looking for clues to their corporate association, when a small orange female-type person suddenly appeared in the air between us. “Yowza, babe,” it purred. “You’all got some action happenin’ on the way outside o’ your home turf. Looks to me like one o’ those big bad corporator dudes you’all warned me about. He’s sniffin’ around my perimeter, so I thought I’d let you take care of it for me. Okay, big boy?” As I flipped into the etheric plane, I thought about the theory that watcher spirits are nothing more than a tiny fraction of the summoner’s consciousness imprinted on astral space and wondered about Mr. Stanley Silent Dog. The little short-term spirit did its job right, I had to give it that. The shaman and I saw each other’s astral presence at the same time, and immediately began looking for the intruder. She was headed straight for the house, and looked none too happy to see two opponents, rather than one. We forced her into a fighting retreat and followed her back to her meat body. None too smart a move, in retrospect—two magicians leaving their bodies unprotected except for a mundane dachshund—but, at the time, we were both more focused on discovering the identity and affiliation of the interested party. Our rash pursuit yielded results, though, giving us the thread we needed to unravel the mystery.

>>>>>(You know, you lose a little bit of yourself for every hour you spend in astral space, and you can die because of it. Right now,

you’re saying, “Uh-huh. And ... ,” but it’s a serious issue. Life involves a lot of risks, but magicians take a big risk every time they enter astral space. It’s not just that your astral presence could get you killed, or that you might get trapped in astral space, or that your meat body could be destroyed—all those are bad enough. There’s something else magicians don’t like to talk about, or even admit. The fact is, travel on the etheric plane can be as addictive as travel in the Matrix. People sometimes just forget to return to their meat, or cut it too close and die.)<<<<<<

—Royale (09:28:10/01-28-57)

As is so often the case, the whole affair wound up pretty quickly once I found the key fact. Sasha’s Matrix work revealed that it was, in fact, simply a coincidence that the owners of the other three hell hounds from Gladys’s litter died in Chicago, and that the same breeding firm bought all three hounds. Not that I’m a great believer in coincidence, especially when I’m on a case, but I was only being paid to investigate the whereabouts of the hounds. Gladys’s littermates were living fat and happy in New York, breeding true to type and powers. We discovered that the goons and the magician sent to appropriate Stanley’s work belonged to Yakashima Technologies, an up-and-comer in the biotech field. The Japanese-based corp had a lot of moxie and a brilliant staff, but its current CEO operated under some very old-fashioned business concepts, mainly, you don’t have to take no for an answer, but you don’t have to be rude about it.

>>>>>(Doesn’t sound to me like old Nathan here is very thorough in his work. How could he leave that huge loose end just floppin’ around out there? The “coincidence” of all three people dying in one place just screams follow-up to me.)<<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (12:18:21/01-24-57)

>>>>>(And I suppose you stop in the middle of a run to clean up every little mess you see? When was the last time you busted an embezzler while you were looking for that valuable paydata Mr. Johnson sent you in for?)<<<<<<

—Whisper (23:42:15/01-27-57)

>>>>>(Touché.)<<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (08:16:43/01-28-57)

A cautious person, Stanley had kept his research as secret as he could manage, naturally assuming that any corporation interested would have nefarious purposes in mind. When Yakashima turned out to be the least of several evils, Stan grudgingly agreed to explain the research they’d stolen and suggest ways for it to be put to a positive use. Yakashima put him on retainer for an obscene amount of nuyen and gave him free rein to continue his research, and we kept in touch pretty regularly. He let me know that his tests with Gladys and her littermates were just as successful as he’d hoped, but he never talked about his work much after that. From the first, I’d thought he was a bit off the beam, and I often wondered if he’d simply been bought off—encouraged to pursue his line of inquiry but forced to keep his results under wraps while the corp lifted the methodologies and discoveries



that supported their own efforts. Though he was a nice enough guy, I didn't consider his research methods to be all that reliable. In fact, in all the years since this case, I've never seen nor heard any other magician or scientist propose even a similar theory regarding paranormal animals.

Anyway, Ms. Kroger had her hell hound reunion, and I collected my fee, plus expenses.

>>>>>(Sounds like a complete crackpot, if you ask me. Everybody knows that's not how magic works. I mean, if four magical dogs getting together allows them to manifest an additional power, why doesn't it work that way for sentient magicians? And I also find it pretty hard to believe that Stanley found a statistically significant number of related animals that all manifested different powers and also displayed the phenomenon he was studying. I think he must have been fudging the results to meet his expectations, or maybe

there was some quirk in his own magic that acted as the catalyst he described—but even that's pretty unlikely. I mean, even magic has to follow some laws.)<<<<<

—Gabriel (22:31:14/01-25-57)

>>>>>(I think it's still a little too soon to be making such bald, positive statements about the way magic works. Things change all the time. Even as I post this, new spells are being created and discovered, new paranormal animals are making themselves known, new powers threaten the balance of the world, inexplicable, unexpected, alien and terrifying creatures and objects turn our world views upside-down. They say, "expect the unexpected." I believe that's the only way we're all going to survive.)<<<<<

—Janzi Z. (12:03:05/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Ya know, Dog has a plan, a really good, really complex plan full of twists and turns that only He can see the way through and if He decides that certain animals or people need certain gifts to make His plan work then He will make sure those people get those gifts in just the best way and no one else knows the plan so if something seems impossible to us it's probably just that we're not looking in the right place at the right time and when it's time for us to understand where the path leads Dog will show us where to go. So don't be so impatient and doubtful because it will all work out in the end you'll see it will for all of us Dog shamans and everyone else who loves Dog.)<<<<<

—Spike (14:52:04/01-27-57)

Soon after that case, companies offering magical protection became more commonplace not all at once, and not all offering the same level of expertise and professionalism, but my job got a lot harder. Fortunately for me, everyone working to keep their person and possessions safe from people like me had to try just as hard.

>>>>>("In conclusion, I'd just like to say that I'm a boring old fart with nothing important to say to anyone with half a brain. I hope you don't mind me wasting your time this way, not to mention your utilities. Thank you very much."

Sheesh.)<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (02:41:15/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Speaking as a mundane, I found this very illuminating.)<<<<<

—Bung (17:22:42/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Speaking as a magician, I found this very illuminating—though I'm sure not in the same way.)<<<<<

—Serena (21:35:52/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Even I can take only so much of ignorant smart-mouths sticking it to people willing to post their true selves on the BBS. I'm sure I don't know how it went down, but if Sera-Sera has any friends, they might want to beat feet to her flop and help her point the fire extinguisher at her deck, which should be smoking real pretty about now. Let's all try to play a little nicer, shall we?)<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (11:11:11/01-31-57)

ADEPTS



>>>>>(Despite what some people may think, magic doesn't just belong to spellslingers and conjurers of nature spirits. It also belongs to adepts, who use it in ways that are sometimes the same and sometimes a lot different. They're everywhere in the streets and the shadows, and my chummer Johnny Zen'll tell you all about them.)<<<<<

—Talon (10:22:31/01-10-57)

>>>>>(As far as we know, there are basically two kinds of adepts: physical adepts and magical adepts. And before anybody asks, yes, physical adepts use magic. The name "magical adepts" refers to the fact that these non-physical adepts specialize in certain areas of magical expertise; I've personally met shamanic adepts, elemental adepts, enchanting adepts, conjuring adepts, and sorcery adepts. There may be any number of other types out there that we just haven't run across yet, so don't take this list as the be-all and end-all of this subject.)<<<<<

—Magister (23:14:55/01-29-57)

I'm a follower of the Inner Magic. Most of you know me and those like me as adepts, and you think you know all about our skills and powers. Trust me—you don't. But you just might have a glimmer or two of real understanding after you read this file. Get to know us, chumley, we're useful.

The eggheads define adepts as individuals who use their magical talents to boost their meatbodies and exhibit specific magical abilities. Of course, that definition don't really tell you much, now does it? Astral awareness, the ability to shrug off serious physical injury—that "specific magical abilities" tag can include any number of wiz little tricks, cuz no two adepts display exactly the same abilities.

>>>>>(A bit of an oversimplification, I think. While adepts have displayed almost endless combinations of "wiz little tricks," magical theorists have actually defined and studied no more than a dozen or so basic adept abilities.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (07:55:54/02-01-57)



>>>>>(Your magical theorists are identifying new adept powers all of the time, though. Some of those abilities appear naturally, but many can only be developed through training. Rumor has it that some adept powers can be learned only from certain magical groups, which guard their secrets jealously.)<<<<<

—Kudo (13:42:40/02-07-57)

So what's the difference between an adept and a mage or shaman? The usual explanation is that we adepts are "less powerful." Me, I'd say that depends on how you define powerful. Can we sling spells? Some adepts can. Can we see the astral? Most of us can—the exceptions are the guys who *only* conjure spirits or *only* sling spells. Can we go astral? Some can. Sure, adepts have certain limits that "full-power" mageboys and medicine men don't, but those same limits give us that much more focus on the wiz stuff we *can* do. And that, chummerinos, makes us every bit as good at using our mojo—if not better—than any "full" magician.

>>>>>(I beg to differ, JZ. Sure, adepts are good at using their magic—but all this drek about "better" is irrelevant. On the streets, all you really need to be is good enough to get the job done.)<<<<<

—Tim (11:23:44/01-28-57)

DISCOVERY

Adepts can discover they got the Power in all kinds of ways—just like magicians. Sometimes a magician will recognize a latent adept by the kid's aura and offer to train him. That's how it works in the Native American Nations. The tribal shaman spots the young adept, then the kid apprentices with a teacher who helps him make the most of his talent. In the UCAS, CAS and California Free State, the powers that be use magical testing in the schools to identify young adepts they can train and exploit. (Not much diff between us and the wizboys so far, is there?)

Other adepts get no such help. They discover their talent when some particularly nasty drek happens in their lives. The old subconscious develops the abilities, and presto change-o! One day you realize you're not like the other kids. Drek, I know some people who used the Power for years without ever really knowing it.

>>>>>(It's not all that surprising, actually. Many adepts have abilities that make them extraordinary individuals, but not superhuman—so it's easy for someone unaware of magic to ascribe their achievements to talent, luck, drive, the blessing of the spirits or whatever.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (19:22:58/01-15-57)

>>>>>(Look at Warren Cartwright: he was the star forward for the Hornets for years before anyone (including him) discovered he was an adept.)<<<<<

—NeonTeal (14:55:25/01-20-57)

>>>>>(Yeah, but Cartwright was a funny case. He was Ozark-born and trained by his granny in folk magic, which he fully believed in.

His powers were unconsciously based on his use of folk charms and the like for "luck" during games.)<<<<<

—Hiro (20:33:18/01-22-57)

In my own case, I was just a kid running with a local gang when another adept recognized my potential and decided to take me in and train me. Drek, I thought it was a real laugh at the time. This skinny old man tells me that *he's* gonna teach *me* how to be a warrior, that he's gonna be my *master*? I stopped laughing after he kicked my hoop all around the street and back.

>>>>>(For those of you not in the know, Johnny Z. is a martial artist and Zen archer. I've seen him make shots with his bow that I wouldn't have believed possible, and he's inhumanly fast with it.)<<<<<

—Hangfire (01:23:45/02-02-57)

>>>>>(A bow? Against modern body armor? You may be physically adept, mon ami, but you're mentally defective.)<<<<<

—Dolan (02:59:17/02-05-57)

>>>>>(Chummer, have you ever seen a steel-tipped arrow cut through ballistic cloth like it wasn't even there? I have. Believe me, an arrow fired from a bow with as much pull as the one Johnny carries hits with more force than a .45, and only rigid armor is going to stand up to it at all. And the archer may not restrict his aim to parts of the target covered by armor, anyway.)<<<<<

—Hangfire (00:26:04/02-10-57)

TRAINING

Any wizworm'll tell you that formal training is a tricky issue. That's cuz most magical learning is a matter of intuition and insight—it's not the kinda drek you can learn from a book. Every magician learns to wield the Power in his own way. A teacher can take you up to a certain point, but after that ya gotta flap your own wings. You either get it or you don't.

That's why adepts who are unaware of their abilities sometimes learn faster than others. They're not thinking about what they're doing, so their own minds don't get in the way. Their abilities develop naturally, according to their needs. Of course, they also can't choose how they want their development to go. The process is out of their hands.

>>>>>(If you know yourself, fine. But if your subconscious is harboring any secrets, watch out. You could end up spontaneously manifesting abilities based on subconscious goals and desires from the dark, repressed side of yourself that you wouldn't want manifested in the physical world.)<<<<<

—Nacht (02:31:22/01-22-57)

Formally trained adepts, on the other hand, have more control over the abilities they develop. But they also gotta overcome their conscious learning. When I first began training with my sensei, there were a coupla times he didn't seem to be teaching me a fragging thing. He made me do all kinds of pointless exercises

and meditations, nothing that seemed like the amazing things he'd shown me when we'd first met. I kept waiting and waiting for something to happen, but nothing did, it was just more of the same drek. One night I finally just lost it. But the old man guided my anger as skillfully as he handled my physical attacks. I ranted about his inane requirements, and he countered by asking me what I wanted from him. In that moment my anger turned inward and crystallized, a moment of complete centered-ness and attention came over me, and my sensei looked at me. "Now that you have found your center," he said, "you can begin learning to be a warrior."

FINDING THE WAY

Just as a magician focuses and develops his magical abilities by following his tradition, an adept follows his Way.

>>>>(Wait a minute. I've never even heard of this "Way" thing. What's he talking about?)<<<<<<
—Connor (07:24:53/01-13-57)

>>>>(Johnny's talking his own philosophy here. Other adepts describe the same thing that Johnny calls his "Way" in their own words, but with pretty much the same idea behind it. The adept does not follow any kind of formalized tradition or any kind of rules. Each adept manifests his abilities according to his own inner self.)<<<<<<
—Hangfire (01:18:20/01-20-57)

The Way is at the heart of an adept's power, the whole source of his magic. It's the guide that shapes his abilities and his inmost self. Lots of the Ways followed by adepts come from heroic myths and legends—the serious dudes, the real Big Guns that an adept can choose to follow and model himself after.

A talented person who grows into an adept always begins with the Way. For people like me who are formally trained by teachers, the Way is something we learn to choose or discover within ourselves. Then we consciously follow our Way and cultivate our abilities. The Way my sensei showed me allowed me to develop my body, sharpen my vision and become one with my targets so that I overcame the gap between the actor and the acted-upon. In time, I learned to expand my Way into archery—I figured out how to connect archer, arrow and target into one smoothly flowing whole.

For adepts who develop their wiz tricks spontaneously, the Way isn't quite so deliberate—but it's just as important. For some, the Way means shooting for some kind of physical perfection. Athletes, dancers, martial artists, soldiers—these folks are following Ways that bring out their latent abilities. For the ones who develop their Power in a crisis, the Way comes on them instantly, in the moment of calm where the mind is clear and fear washes away all doubts.

Once a potential adept finds his Way, he develops his magical abilities based on it. An athlete adept pushes to develop greater strength, stamina, speed and skill at his sport. A dancer might become more and more graceful and agile.

>>>>(Not all physical adepts are hoop-kicking street fighters. The star of the Bolshoi Ballet, Elena Chantova, is a physical adept whose grace on stage is like nothing you have ever seen.)<<<<<<
—Slider (20:12:43/01-20-57)

As the adept learns, his understanding of his Way deepens and he gets even better at using his mojo. An adept who pursues the Way throughout his life can do some incredible drek. My own sensei followed his Way for decades before taking me as a student, and I have yet to equal him.

>>>>(JZ has got that right. An adept who keeps working and practicing just keeps improving. It's like watching evolution in fast-forward to see someone you know change and improve so much over the course of a few years.)<<<<<<
—Zoomer (03:45:13/01-24-57)

>>>>(Some physads, of course, improve faster than others. As in all things, your mileage may vary.)<<<<<<
—Silicon Mage (21:30:19/01-25-57)

Most important, the Way gives each adept a role to play in the world. Of course, there are more possible Ways to follow than I can cram into one little post, but I'll describe the most common just to give you an idea.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

I follow the Way of the Warrior, the Spiller of Blood, the Destroyer. Warrior adepts include martial arts masters, swordsmen, Zen archers, and firearms experts.

>>>>(I know of a guy in the CAS armed forces who's a physical adept. He's got a magical knack with—I drek you not—artillery.)<<<<<<
—Josie Cruise (20:14:53/02-06-57)

Warrior adepts are aggressive puppies by nature, which lets us focus our talents into increased combat prowess. Not all warrior adepts are bloodthirsty maniacs, of course, but we tend to have a certain common *focus* on martial development that shapes us in similar ways.

>>>>(What complete drek! Is this guy trying to say that a Norwegian bearsark frothing at the mouth in a battle rage, an aikido master and an elven paladin are all similar personality types? I don't think so, chummer.)<<<<<<
—Mikhail Z (02:13:42/01-21-57)

>>>>(He has a point, Mikhy. Physical adepts, like most magicians, are strongly influenced by their magical path (or vice versa). Physads who go the warrior route tend to have at least some few traits in common. True warrior types tend to be fairly aggressive in one way or another. And many adepts who have enhanced combat abilities may be incorrectly classified as "warriors"—they might fit into one of the other classifications better.)<<<<<<
—Brand (11:02:34/01-25-57)

As for what we do in the world, I know plenty of warrior adepts who use their talents in military or corporate service, as mercenaries, and as street ronin.

>>>>(Most of the North American armies test recruits for the Talent at their inductions and have pretty decent records of integrating physical adepts into their ranks. Most physad soldiers don't get special treatment if their abilities are basically the same as the cyber that other soldiers get ('cept the military saves some nuyen). The ones who show a lot of promise get snapped up by special forces and the like.)<<<<<

—Killroy (16:10:59/01-20-57)

>>>>(The NAN military makes much more use of physical adepts, especially in its counterintelligence and special ops branches. Plenty of the dreaded Sioux Wildcats are physads and almost all of them are initiates.)<<<<<

—Wynde (20:18:19/01-27-57)

>>>>(Physads have some serious deficits in combat, though. They can't sling combat spells or go astral to fight something. All they've got, really, is magically enhanced body moves.)<<<<<

—Wizboy Will (21:22:43/01-27-57)

>>>>(All?! You call that all?! Shame on you, boy. My "magically enhanced body moves" let me dodge the incoming rounds that'll put you and your fireball spell out of action permanently, and my gun'll kill the enemy just as dead as any spell you can toss. As for fighting on the astral, you don't need to leave your body to do that. If I can see it, I can nail it, unless it's behind a physical wall in the "real" world or something. It's easy to get around that limit—I just have to pick my ground before getting into an astral slugfest. Astral projection as a combat tactic is bad news, anyway. Your empty body is a sitting-duck target for anything or anyone, unless you've got the time to set up protection for it in advance. What're you gonna do when bad drek goes down all of a sudden? Leap onto the astral plane and just leave your meatbod lying there in the open?)<<<<<

—Adept Annie (23:43:55/01-27-57)

WAY OF THE ATHLETE

Athlete adepts develop their abilities through sports and dancing. These adepts tend to be fanatically devoted to their chosen field, driven to succeed just like the champion athletes of the past. Their devotion, though, feeds and is backed up by their inherent magical talents.

Athlete adepts are in a tough position nowadays. Their ability at their chosen sport is almost always the primary focus of their lives, and yet modern prejudice about magical enhancements prevent an awful lot of adepts from truly excelling in athletics. Some sports that allow extensive cybernetic mods, such as football, also allow physad players. Even then, though, adepts often get nasty or just plain indifferent treatment from managers, coaches and even fans. Lots of ignorant yobbos see the abilities of physical adepts as magical "cheating" that allows the adept to perform better than they "should" be able to. These nice folks

think of the Power as some kind of "outside" boost to the athlete's abilities, just like cyber enhancements or drugs, and they don't want it mucking up their precious Urban Brawl games.

>>>>(A lot of adept athletes spend time warming the bench when their team plays in some place where the marketing demographics show that people prefer good ol' fashioned cyberware to magic. Then they're trotted out like trained dogs for the crowds that think being an adept is chill or trendy.)<<<<<

—HawksFan (15:03:33/01-25-57)

>>>>(The debate over barring adepts from the Olympic games was a long and bloody one, but in the end nobody was really paying much attention. The Olympics are considered second-rate entertainment compared to what's on the trid, and the International Olympic Committee's purist attitudes toward cyberware, magic and metahumans has made it difficult for the games to find a network that wants to carry them these days.)<<<<<

—MVP (21:46:20/01-28-57)

>>>>(Athlete adepts have presented a problem for years. They're tough to detect unless you want to run every athlete past a magician or astral adept—and how many leagues can afford that? It's also very difficult to separate an adept's natural ability from his magically powered ability. A very good aura reader who studies the adept in action can get a good idea of when the magic comes into play, but that takes hours of study per adept! Add on top of that the fact that many athletes can be physical adepts and not even be aware of it and you've got a legislative nightmare on your hands.)<<<<<

—Legal Eagle (14:10:20/01-29-57)

WAY OF THE ARTIST

Some adepts use their abilities to create art, usually something tangible like sculpture because our magic is so strongly tied to our physical selves. Of course, not all artist adepts use the Power in the same way. I know one guy who weaves his own blankets and ponchos and drek, putting his Power into every thread. Another chum of mine writes novels and poems. Both of these people use their magical knack for seeing the world as it truly is; then they bring that vision into being through their art. Either way, it's tied to the physical. They focus their mojo through the physical act of creating art (weaving, word processing, whatever) and produce a physical object (a statue, a painting, a book). Artist adepts have one big advantage over the rest of us—they can center themselves on their Way in nothing flat, because they're right smack dab in the middle of their own magical minds the minute they start practicing the art they love. (And it's pretty awesome drek, too.)

>>>>(That rockerboy Gato from CalFree is definitely a physad who uses his magic to liven up his act. He's smooth as silk on stage, has a voice that carries clear as a fraggin' bell over the crowd and the constitution of a plasma. He's not bad in a brawl, either.)<<<<<

—Boom (01:19:02/01-22-57)

THE SPIRIT WAY

Remember what I said before about adepts developing their abilities naturally, sometimes without even knowing it? Well, these guys are the exception to that rule. (You knew there had to be one, didn't you?) Adepts who follow the spirit Way get seriously involved in their own magical natures and spend as much time puzzling out the mysteries of astral space as any mage or shaman. Almost all adepts who follow the spirit Way can see into the astral, and I know quite a few who think that having a "window" into the astral plane makes them want to choose this path.

>>>>>(Physads with astral perception do tend to be a little different from the norm. They have more of a "magician-like" attitude and are pretty good at dealing with things in the astral.)<<<<<<
—Silicon Mage (18:23:41/01-15-57)

>>>>>(I'll say. A drekload of adepts with astral abilities have started hiring themselves out as "mystic bodyguards" and "occult troubleshooters." With astral perception and a couple of combat powers, these adepts can do some serious astral hoop-kicking and are often just what the witch doctor ordered to protect some big noise from a magical attack. Plenty of these slots can handle physical bodyguarding, too. Could be the next big thing—not many street samurai can tangle with a hostile spirit in hand-to-hand combat.)<<<<<<
—Donnovan (16:05:47/01-18-57)

>>>>>(It's been done, but not by many.)<<<<<<
—Daikoku (21:30:42/01-20-57)

>>>>>(That was a weak spirit. Don't get overconfident, mundy.)<<<<<<
—Calleach (00:12:37/01-21-57)

>>>>>(Personal arguments elsewhere, chummers.)<<<<<<
—Capt. Chaos (00:15:40/01-21-57)

Mystic adepts turn up a lot in tribal cultures, where they're treated like shamans. Some of the NA tribes see practically no difference between adepts who follow the spirit Way and shamans. They figure the ability to perceive and interact with the spirit world is what makes a shaman, not spellcasting or any other magic tricks. A few cultures view these adepts as bad-news trafickers in evil spirits, but not many.

THE INVISIBLE WAY

These guys are my opposite—or maybe my mirror image is a better way to put it. The warrior adept in some sense lives for conflict, while the adept who follows the invisible Way carefully avoids it. These adepts are the spies, the thieves, the silent assassins—ninjas, featherfeet killers, that kind of thing. Adepts who follow the invisible Way develop all kinds of powers that help them move and act unseen and unheard. Some can walk through a crowd without being noticed; I've known others who can stalk across snow or sand and leave no footprints. Hell, most of 'em don't even puff up dust or snow-spray. They tend to be pretty athletic, real good climbers and wizzer than wiz at illusion and sleight of hand.

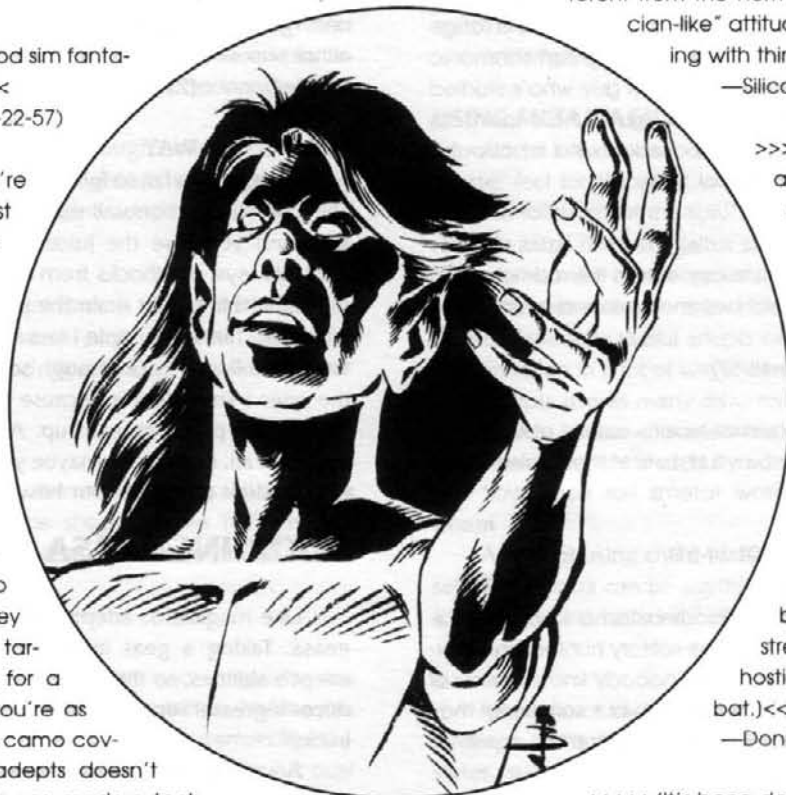
>>>>>(Ninjas are just a Hollywood sim fantasy. They don't really exist.)<<<<<<
—Capt. Gray (20:01:40/01-22-57)

>>>>>(Maybe not like they're done up in sims, Cap'n, but trust me—there are plenty of modern inheritors of the ancient ninja traditions.)<<<<<<
—Silk (03:45:16/01-23-57)

>>>>>(Ninjutsu, like many things, has been updated in the Sixth World. For one thing, ninjas don't run around in black pajamas much. The ones I've run into were all well-trained commandos who assumed whatever identity they needed to get close to their targets. They might wear black for a midnight stealth mission, but you're as likely to see them using hi-tech camo covering. Just because they're adepts doesn't mean they don't know how to use modern technology to their best advantage.)<<<<<<
—Shi (02:45:10/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Not every assassin type is a ninja, either. I know a guy from a tribe in Salish who's one of the best in the biz, and he doesn't know squat about ninjas or Oriental-style martial arts. He does all the same things they do, but he calls it "being Mountain Lion." When he moves all silent and unseen like Johnny Z's describing, he calls it "becoming Mountain Lion's breath." The way he scans it, he does what he does by imitating his totem.)<<<<<<
—Bear Warrior (03:44:21/02-03-57)

>>>>>(Weirdest "silent stalker" type I ever knew was this guy who based his whole way of doing things on some big blue cartoon guy from around the turn of the century. Real bizarre.)<<<<<<
—Mulroney (05:22:11/02-03-57)



WAY OF THE ANIMAL POWERS

Adepts who come from the Native American Nations or other tribal cultures often follow totems, though they don't see their totem spirits in quite the same way as shamans do. They use their magic differently, and so their links to their totems are different, too. The shamanic adept (jeez, I hate that name, it's so imprecise—but what the frag, it's the one everybody knows) follows the totem as a Way, a sort of pattern to imitate or an ultimate goal to shoot for. The shamanic adept takes the best qualities of the totem and tries to make them his own.

>>>>(What that does, of course, is limit their spellcasting and conjuring to spells and spirits that "fit" with those qualities. They work really well within those limits, but don't have as wide a range of magical skills to draw on. The difference between shamanic adepts and full-on shamans is kind of like the guy who's studied one subject intensively for years and the guy who's spent his whole life studying all kinds of drek. The one knows a lot about a little, the other knows a little about a lot.)<<<<<

—Mistik (18:23:54/01-18-57)

>>>>(The "animal powers" tradition appears in the martial arts of the Far East as well, many of which were developed by imitating animals.)<<<<<

—Kwai Chang (21:34:35/01-18-57)

>>>>(Tribal mystics are well known as "spirit warriors" able to fight hostile spirits and critters on their own turf. Lots of them take on the role of tribal guardian and follow totems like Bear, Wolf and Eagle.)<<<<<

—Watcher-of-Stars (02:14:52/01-19-57)

>>>>(Lately, I've heard rumors that some shamanic adepts follow the totems of Spider and Mantis, the solitary hunters and warriors of the insect world. Needless to say, nobody knows much of nothin' about these adepts or their abilities, but some say they hunt and kill insect shamans and spirits. If so, I say more power to 'em.)<<<<<

—Bughunter (02:33:21/01-25-57)

>>>>(I ran into a slitch in Hong Kong once—I think she was a Mantis adept. Fraggin' scary, the look on her face—like she knew she could kill you any time she wanted to.)<<<<<

—Griff (05:45:13/01-26-57)

THE TWISTED WAY

Along with all the ways to focus the Power constructively, there's the Way (of sorts) followed by those sorry adepts who look inside themselves and see only hatred, aggression, and revenge. I don't know whether these slubs are just born bad or whether something bends 'em that way when they're little scrappers, but either way it's a fragging shame. I've known a few twisters personally, and every single one eventually drove himself plain crazy with his own inner darkness. The darker emotions and instincts just took control, until there was nothing left of the person who used to live inside that adept's body. Don't make the mistake,

though, of thinking these guys are anything but fraggin' dangerous. When I call them sorry, I don't mean they're incompetent or weak. They're terrific at what they do, at least until someone takes 'em down with a tranq dart and locks 'em in a rubber room for the rest of their threescore and ten. A lot of these slots are warriors gone bad, and they're pure killing machines. The others tend to become twisted parodies of athlete adepts, artist adepts, you name it. Pray you never meet a twisted adept in a dark alley, cuz you probably won't live to tell your kiddies about it.

>>>>(I had the misfortune to cross one of the guys Johnny's talking about, down in Atlanta's Barrens. He was a serial killer with some kind of grudge against homeless people. Faster than a cat on the wire and ten times as mean. Nowhere near sane, either.)<<<<<

—Connor (23:19:50/01-20-57)

LOSING THE WAY

Adepts who fail to follow their Way quickly lose their powers. Think of it like a monorail that jumps its track. Stop following your Way and you lose the juice that powers your abilities. Drugs, implants, system shocks from severe injury, mystical maladies—the same things that drain the powers of a magician will also sap an adept. The few people I know who've lost it haven't managed to get the Power back, though some have tried. But then, most of the ones I know lost it because they went way too cyber or got themselves pretty messed up. As to whether it's possible to get it back at all, I can't say. Maybe you can—but I'd bet only the individual adept can figure out how.

ADOPTING GEASA

Like magicians, adepts can boost their abilities by adopting geasa. Taking a geas in accordance with his Way focuses the adept's abilities, so the same investment of effort and power produces a greater result. In other words, you get more bang for your buck.

An adept can place the same geas on a bunch of his abilities, or he can adopt different geasa for different powers. 'Course, any geas an adept adopts has to fit with his Way. A buddy of mine's a shamanic adept who follows Owl, and just like her totem she has incredibly sharp senses—but only at night.

As long as the adept observes his geas, he can still work the mojo. If he breaks his geas, he's in the drek Power-wise until the conditions of the geas are restored. For example, because my friend the Owl adept has a geas that restricts her powers to nighttime, during the day her senses work like a mundane's.

>>>>(Why adopt that kind of limit? I mean, why would anyone with magic ever want to be in a position where he can't use it?)<<<<<

—Curious George (22:30:44/01-18-57)

>>>>(In my case, I don't need my magic working overtime. I do night work, and the increased ability my geas gives me after dark more than makes up for the minor inconvenience of not being

able to hear dust falling by day. At night—when I need to—I can hear a single blade of grass rustle. More than once, that level of sensitivity has saved my life.)<<<<<<

—Owl Moon (01:02:30/01-19-57)

INITIATION

Just like with mages and shamans (again!), initiation lets an adept tap into the greater powers of the metaplanes and perform metamagic. It's like trading your little old Ford runabout (you know, the one that's held together with duct tape and only starts during the summer months) for a new supercharged four-wheel-drive Honda. Some adepts take years before they're ready for initiation, some never are, while others are ready for the greater mysteries real quick. It varies. Once an adept passes one initiation, he can take other initiations later. Each one increases his powers.

An adept can become initiated through solo work or as a member of an initiatory group. Some groups are organized by Way, others are adepts only, and others admit both adepts and magicians.

>>>>>(Most adept groups that I'm aware of are triple-A bad-news. A lot of them are little more than private assassin squads for some bigwig or government and others are more like fraggin' cults.)<<<<<<

—Kyrllin (19:01:53/01-20-57)

>>>>>(Not all adept groups are like that. But lots of the ones you're likely to run afoul of in the shadows—like Tir Tairngire's Paladins or the Irish Order of Cu Chulainn—are major-league hoop kickers.)<<<<<<

—Talon (01:22:35/01-22-57)

>>>>>(Johnny's making it sound like adepts and magicians are pretty much the same in terms of power and abilities, but they're not. Sure, adepts can use metamagic, but only certain kinds—centering, masking, that kind of thing. Because they can't cast spells, they lose out on a lot of the other metamagic techniques.)<<<<<<

—Wizboy Will (03:50:44/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Adepts can't cast spells? Sez who? Be a little more specific with your nouns, please. Physads can't cast spells. I'm an elemental adept, and I can sling spells with the best of them. And use meta techniques like quickening and anchoring.)<<<<<<

—Pyro (05:22:43/01-29-57)

>>>>>(You're still limited, Pyro. Cast any water spells lately?)<<<<<<

—Wizboy Will (05:34:55/01-29-57)

>>>>>(Never mind who can do more tricks. Like somebody said earlier on in this post, all you need to do is get the job done. A smart adept—or magician, for that matter—doesn't take jobs that don't play to his strengths.)<<<<<<

—Fat Man (07:33:21/02-01-57)

ORDEALS

Being an initiate isn't just tripping off into the metaplanes, doing metamagic, and all that other wizzer drek that only initiates can do. Before any initiation, an adept has to prove himself worthy by surviving an ordeal. An ordeal is a test of skill, power and inner strength that focuses the initiate on his Way and sparks the moments of intuition and insight that lead to greater development—providing the initiate survives the ordeal, of course.

>>>>>(Some physad ordeals can be pretty gruelling, too. A friend of mine went through one to join a group of adepts. She's sworn not to speak of it, but I can tell she nearly didn't make it. A lot of these ordeals weed out the ones who can't hack it pretty fragging quick.)<<<<<<

—Wolfgang (22:50:19/01-30-57)

USING METAMAGIC

Adept initiates that can perceive or travel to the astral gain a greater feel for the spirit world, just like other magician initiates. Initiated followers of the spirit Way can be real drek-kicking opponents in astral combat against spirits and other threats. Adept initiates can also use centering techniques to help them focus on their Way, shut out distractions and work more harmoniously with their bodies. Especially skillful adepts can use centering to improve their concentration in a lot of ways, using skills beyond the physical.

Adepts use as many different centering skills as other magicians. Every initiate chooses what's best suited to his Way. Here's a few centering skills used by adept initiates I know.

Chant

An adept using chant recites or sings a mantra to center himself. The mantra can be anything from the animalistic war cries of a berserker to a ballad about an ancient hero.

Dance

Ritual dance movements, shamanic improvisation and graceful leaps and turns are all examples of dance. Many martial arts styles, such as Capoeira, make use of ritual dance—so do traditions like the whirling dervishes. Gymnastics and ballet can also be used this way.

Kata

Kata are formalized sequences of martial arts techniques. The techniques can be slow and graceful like tai chi moves or quick and forceful. Combat attacks are not kata, but adepts can use techniques from kata in combat.

>>>>>(Every morning, I awaken my totem's spirit within my body by moving as the fox does. I suppose the Asiocentric would call that kata. I call it greeting the fox.)<<<<<<

—Silver Tail (04:55:21/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Let us not forget the ancient art of carromeleg. The elegant movements of this elven warrior's art make an excellent centering technique.)<<<<<<

—Lady Bright (06:22:31/02-10-57)

Kiai

A kiai is a powerful shout martial artists use to focus their energies and startle opponents. A lot of adepts use kiai to center themselves in combat.

>>>>(Chummer of mine from the CAS calls his mystic shout a "rebel yell." He's totally ignorant of the martial arts, as least as far as all the Japanese and Chinese names go, but he knows one heluva lot about the old U.S. Civil War. Loves it to death.)<<<<<

—Davis (03:22:44/01-23-57)

Kuji-kiri

Kuji-kiri are slow, weaving hand movements once used by ninja, who believed the gestures had hypnotic and mystical powers. Different finger placements and hand movements symbolized different powers for the ninja to draw on. Nowadays, some adepts use kuji-kiri as a centering skill.

Meditation

Lots of physads center themselves with meditation. Meditation techniques used as centering skills include passive types such as zazen and moving techniques such as tai chi.

>>>>(I know a guy who was raised real devout Catholic, who meditates to center himself by moving beads on a rosary. He says he's praying, which I guess is pretty much the same thing.)<<<<<

—McKendrick (11:21:33/01-14-57)

>>>>(As a tzaddikh, I center the power G-d gave me by silently reciting the Shema until my mind is quiet enough to approach the Master of the Universe.)<<<<<

—Kotzker Rebbe (21:34:23/01-14-57)

MASKING

Just like magicians, all adept initiates can mask their auras to make themselves look like mundanes or uninitiated adepts. Adepts who can see into the astral can try to see through the masking of others.

FOCI

Most people think adepts can't use foci at all or can only use weapon foci. Matter of fact, that's one of the misconceptions behind the whole deal about adepts being "less powerful" than shamans and mages. As usual, of course, the common wisdom's got it wrong. Adepts can use all kinds of foci. How useful any given type of focus is to an adept, however, depends on what kind of adept we're talking about. A physad like me has a built-in limit; we're the ones who can only use weapon foci. (Which I don't mind a bit—there's not much call for anything else in my line of work.) An elemental, shamanic or magical adept can use any kind of foci that runs his jack, as long as it meshes with his abilities. For example, a chummer of mine who's real tied into the element of earth uses fetish foci when he slings manipulation spells. Course, he can't use a weapon focus to save his life (literally). I also know lots of

shamanic and magical adepts who use spirit foci every time they whistle up some spirit chummer.

Making foci is another thing altogether. Physads flat out can't do it, though we can bond a weapon focus made for us by our friendly neighborhood enchanter. Some folks might call that a disadvantage—I don't. The way I see it, not being able to make my own foci means I'll never be able to spend days coming up with the perfect formula, weeks scouting around for the perfect materials, and then a solid month performing an enchanting ritual where if a single thing goes wrong, I've spent all that time and effort for nothing. (Poor me. I'm crying. Can you tell?) Much easier to pay someone to go through all that drek.

>>>>(If you can afford it.)<<<<<

—Scotsman (02:11:33/01-19-57)

Most other adepts can't make their own foci, either. The only ones I know of who can are those few magical adepts who specialize in enchanting, and they can do it every bit as well as a mage or shaman.

>>>>(A physical adept with a magical weapon in hand can be one scary fragger. It's lucky they're rare.)<<<<<

—Gendarme (15:23:56/01-19-57)

>>>>(Also a good thing that only hand weapons can be enchanted at this point. At least you can try to shoot the guy (if you're quick enough).)<<<<<

—Scorpius (01:34:18/01-21-57)

>>>>(Lots of people have tried, but no one's yet managed to enchant missile weapons. Enchanters haven't come up with a way to make enchanted missiles "intelligent" enough to function outside the aura of a living wielder, and keep them cost- and time-effective. That trick is going to be a long time in coming, if you ask me.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (23:12:05/02-01-57)

PHYSICAL MAGICIANS

For decades most folks believed that the abilities and mindset of a physical adept were totally incompatible with the abilities and mindset of a magician. The thinking was, physical adepts "grounded" their magic so strongly in their bodies that they couldn't wrap their minds around the more complex astral manipulations of sorcery and drek like that. The two paths could never meet, or so the idea went.

Then in 2051, an anthropologist named Helen Rainwater began a study of ancient Japanese ninja clans. She wanted to show that these slots in black pajamas possessed primitive physical adept abilities. During her study, Rainwater came across numerous local legends that seemed to show these guys could cast spells! That led her to theorize that an undiscovered type of adept—a "physical magician"—exists. According to Rainwater, these physical magicians have the



powers of a physical adept plus some abilities that supposedly only belong to magicians and non-physical adepts. No one's found a real live physical magician yet, but lots of people seem to take the idea seriously.

>>>>(WHAT!?! You've got to be drekkin' me. Physads who can cast spells too?)<<<<<<
—Crash (21:15:35/01-16-57)

>>>>(Buldrek. Rainwater's study is complete jetwash. I think her physical magicians were just magicians with some quickened and anchored spells that allowed them to do physical adept-like things without any real concentration or effort. Keep in mind that Rainwater's a mundane, and probably a shaman wannabe. She's also a fragging anthropologist. She doesn't know magic theory from a hole in the ground.)<<<<<<
—Napoleon (19:04:26/01-18-57)

>>>>(Does there have to be a real thaumaturgical basis to every fraggin' pre-Awakening legend? Maybe it's just that, a legend.)<<<<<<
—Randi (20:16:55/01-18-57)

>>>>(It's no legend. I've run into a guy who can do drek just like Rainwater describes. He has the enhanced physical abilities of an adept as well as limited use of magic—not just spellcasting but conjuring spirits, too. He wasn't using spells for the physical powers,

either. Our mage got a chance to give him a good astral once-over, and he didn't have any quickened spells floating around him.)<<<<<<
—Grace (19:24:31/01-25-57)

>>>>(He could've been masking his aura. Big fraggin' deal.)<<<<<<
—Napoleon (20:04:55/01-25-57)

>>>>(Who is this guy? Where'd he come from?)<<<<<<
—Kyle (20:15:09/01-25-57)

>>>>(Sorry, Kyle, more than my life's worth. We weren't at cross purposes with the guy when we first met and I don't ever want to be on his bad side. As for the masking, I suppose it's possible, but he'd have to mask a lot of spells to cover all of his abilities and our mage is pretty good at seeing through masking. He also said the guy's aura was really strange—not mundane, but like no magician or adept he'd ever seen.)<<<<<<
—Grace (21:20:45/01-27-57)

>>>>(Ahh, it warms my heart to know the world still contains mysteries.)<<<<<<
—Ripley (22:31:45/01-27-57)

>>>>(Right.)<<<<<<
—Jackal (22:33:07/01-27-57)

VOUDOUN



>>>>(I came across this article by chance in the CAS Magical Studies Journal, the October 2051 issue. The full article is titled "Voudoun in the Modern Age," by Dr. Jean-Paul Dumailier. The good doctor is Haitian-born and raised. He's also a practicing magician, but get this—he's a hermetic. Works as an R&D wage mage in the CAS someplace—New Orleans, I think. Dumailier knows what he's talking about, but at the same time he seems to distance himself from it. Sometimes you can't tell if he believes all this drek or if he's making fun of it.)<<<<<

—Talon (08:24:53/01-12-57)

>>>>(Voodoo? What's next—the rock worshipers of Easter Island?)<<<<<

—Gemini (09:05:26/01-17-57)

>>>>(Or better yet, how about an article on those wackos that think magic comes from what you eat.)<<<<<

—Skeptic (16:22:09/01-17-57)

>>>>(Yeah, I hear potatoes are the most magical.)<<<<<

—Gemini (20:00:00/01-18-57)

>>>>(I knew I was going to catch drek for posting this. Well, anyone who knows me knows that I don't believe half the drek I read. Hell, I don't believe half the drek I see. But this is more than just Hollywood simflick material. Before I posted this I checked it out. Reports of voodoo (this is how it's spelled, for all you record-keepers out there) are coming in from every major city in North America. So unless you want to end up on the stick end of a zombie, read on, boys and girls.)<<<<<

—Talon (23:50:48/01-18-57)

Voodoo is a magico-religious system that exhibits elements of Yoruban religious traditions imported to the Caribbean with the slave trade, Carib practices, and Catholic symbolism.



The system's magical expression derives from its elements of pre-Christianized Yoruban and Carib traditions.

Voudoun originated in the islands of the Caribbean, notably Haiti, where it is still heavily practiced. The tradition is also practiced in similar forms in many of the regions where African slaves intermingled with European and Native American populations, such as the French settlements in Louisiana and Spanish holdings in South America. Other magical traditions in South and Central America exhibit many similarities to voodoo and are considered part of a general "family" of magical traditions descended from the African Diaspora.

>>>>>(Has anyone ever wondered why it is that these magical traditions that are only a couple of centuries old still work after the Awakening? I mean, how did the people who started all this know which techniques were going to work?)<<<<<<

—Grace (20:51:59/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Who the frag knows? Magic is so head-driven, maybe anything works if you really believe in it. And if your whole culture believes in it—well, that's a whole lot of energy.)<<<<<<

—Brujo (23:45:22/01-14-57)

>>>>>(The Awakening wasn't exactly an on/off process. There's plenty of evidence that magic worked before 2011—it just wasn't as visible or reliable, so most people didn't believe. But "tribal" cultures like the Haitians refined their magical traditions over generations of study, so when the world Awakened they had a pretty functional set of theories to work with. The same thing happened with the hermetic tradition, most of which developed in the past 500 years or so.)<<<<<<

—Talon (21:34:40/01-18-57)

>>>>>(Keep in mind that voodoo is also based on African tribal traditions that are thousands of years old. That's a lot of time to work things out by trial and error.)<<<<<<

—Islander (19:50:05/01-19-57)

Voudoun remains a major magical tradition of the Caribbean League and throughout the gulf region of North America. Many metroplexes all over North America contain followers of voodoo, known as *houngans*, as well, although they are concentrated primarily in the CAS and UCAS. Reports of voodoo in Denver, California and Seattle are now starting to become more common. In Aztlan, the government has outlawed the practice of voodoo, although pockets of worshipers still exist there. In Amazonia, the government permits voodoo practice, but estimates of practitioners are unavailable. Generally, voodoo becomes more infrequent the farther south one travels.

>>>>>(There are very few voodoo practitioners in the NAN states or Tir Tairngire. I've also heard of some underground practitioners

in England, where the regular population despises them. A few scattered houngans can be found in the rest of the world, but good luck tracking them down. The majority of houngans are orks and human, and most are relatively downtrodden—voodoo seems to appeal to the oppressed. About 5 percent of houngans are elves and trolls, and about 1 percent are dwarfs.)<<<<<<

—StatsMan (10:47:16/01-21-57)

The *Rada* tradition, the most predominant form of Haitian voodoo, is the most religious and popular form of voodoo. A darker voodoo tradition, known as the *Petro* tradition, uses voodoo rites to invoke power for harmful ends or personal gain. Many Petro practices center around violence. Petro reminds us that voodoo was born in the crucible of slavery, well stirred by men with whips and brands.

>>>>>(What's all this religion drek? What about zombies and voodoo dolls? The cool drek.)<<<<<<

—Jaxon (02:32:35/01-16-57)

>>>>>(The cool drek! Listen, chummer, voodoo isn't the fluff you see in the old Hollywood flicks about black magic and all that drek, it's a living, breathing religion followed by a lot of real people, not some sideshow. Show some respect!)<<<<<<

—Islander (20:04:52/01-18-57)

>>>>>(Whoa! Feeling a little defensive are we? Right now I respect anyone who creates the living dead.)<<<<<<

—Jaxon (00:05:51/01-20-57)

>>>>>(Be careful about leaping to conclusions based on Dumailier's remarks about Rada and Petro. Rada is not necessarily "good" nor is Petro necessarily "bad." Both are simply parts of the greater whole that is voodoo.)<<<<<<

—Samedi (02:34:56/01-20-57)

>>>>>(Right now I'm not trustin' anybody, you or Dr. Voodoo. As far as I know you're one of them Petro dudes.)<<<<<<

—Lucky (03:12:66/01-20-57)

MAJOR LOA

The central element of all voodoo traditions is the invocation of a powerful spirit called a *loa*, which possesses the worshiper. During possession, the loa's *mount* (the worshiper or other host body) becomes a vessel for the loa. The mount speaks with the loa's voice, acts like the loa, virtually becomes the loa.

The houngans view loa as gods—or great spirits—of voodoo. Like the totems of shamanic traditions, the loa provide their followers with a means to understand and use the magical energies that flow through the world. But unlike shamanic totems, voodoo loa often intervene directly in worldly matters by pos-





sessing worshipers. Traditional shamanic traditions contain no comparable practice.

>>>>(So are the loa gods or not?)<<<<<
—The Kid (15:54:28/01-15-57)

>>>>(Remember god spelled backward is Dog.)<<<<<
—Canine (16:01:33/01-15-57)

>>>>(As Canine so succinctly put it, it all depends on who you ask. Magic hasn't done anything to quiet centuries of debate about religion. If anything, it's only fueled new debate.)<<<<<
—Silicon Mage (20:13:41/01-15-57)

>>>>(I've seen one of these mountings. Freaky! (Hey, does all this talk about "mounting" bother anyone else as much as it bothers me?) The guy didn't show any of the signs of a shaman's mask when the loa mounted him. He just changed. One second he was standing there chanting, the next he was squirming on the ground like a snake and shouting gibberish. I still have dreams about it.)<<<<<
—MWS (16:20:01/01-21-57)

I have taken the liberty of describing the major loa of the voodoo tradition. Voodoo practitioners recognize numerous lesser loa as well, but most of these lesser loa appear to be regional interpretations or aspects of these major loa.

>>>>(Dr. Dumailier goes on to describe the loa in the most boring, clinical, dull way possible. You could tell he finds the whole loa thing suspect. So I deleted his material and went out to find someone who could add a little passion to the loa. I contacted some friends and called in some markers. I was finally introduced to a houngan named Top Hat. Ms. Hat took time out of her day to chat and do us all a favor. She jotted down some entertaining descriptions of the loa. If you're ever in Denver, look up Ms. Top Hat and tell her Talon says "Hi!")<<<<<
—Talon (08:26:25/01-12-57)

AGWE: SOVEREIGN OF THE SEA

Agwe is the regal and noble Ruler of the Sea. He is a giver of great peace, a strong and mighty loa who lives in a fantastic court below the waves, where he often entertains his fellow loa. Agwe's moods change as quickly as the waters of the Sea, and only fools do not fear his terrible temper. For as long as any man can remember, Agwe has fought with his rival, Ogoun, the God of Fire, for both of these mighty loa are filled with a passion for the loa Erzulie, the Mistress of Love.

Agwe's mounts act regal and dignified, like the noble Ruler himself. To invite Agwe, the mount must baptize himself in water to signify his ancient link to the sea. Agwe will remain as long as the mount is wet. Because he is the Ruler of the Sea, Agwe also rescues any followers he finds drowning.

Every year, Agwe's followers gather at the seashore. There, they take the ritual bath to mark themselves as Children of the Sea and load a raft with a fine feast. Then they take the raft out into the

waves and sink it, so that Agwe can share the gifts of the earth with his fellow loa.

In the Petro rite, Agwe is the Angry Sea, dark and dangerous and filled with destructive power.

AZACA: MASTER OF THE CORN

Azaca is the Keeper of the Soil, the Cultivator of Life, fertility itself. For many, many years, Azaca was the little brother to the other loa, the weakest of the great loa on the islands. But in recent times, Azaca has gained many followers among the Carib and corn-growing tribes of Aztlan.

Azaca is always eager and helpful to his followers, but he can also be hasty like a child, rushing off at the first chance. Any time someone plants or harvests in a garden or field, he calls on Azaca to ensure his success.

Thankfully, Azaca is not called on in Petro rites.

DAMBALLAH: GOOD SERPENT OF THE SKY

Damballah Wedo is the Great Good Sky Father. He is the oldest of the loa, worshiped by the first man. Damballah appears as a shimmering white serpent flying across the sky. Often, his companion, Ayida the Rainbow, flies next to him, and together the two loa circle the World Egg of Creation. Damballah has great wisdom, because he encircles all of creation and has seen everything. He is the bringer of peace and dignity and master of the elements.

Damballah is very old, and of all the loa he least resembles man. Those mounted by him writhe on the ground like snakes, hissing and often climbing and hanging from trees. Damballah rarely speaks in any tongue of man.

Damballah is a force of good. He cannot be called in Petro rites.

>>>>(This is the guy I saw. Wow! You know, thinking back on it, his advice did get us out of a few jams.)<<<<<
—MWS (16:40:27/01-21-57)

>>>>(And which non-human tongue do you speak, MWS?)<<<<<
—Shadowdancer (20:11:39/01-21-57)

ERZULIE: MISTRESS OF LOVE

Love and Passion are the domain of Erzulie. She is incredibly beautiful, sensual and loving—the greatest of all women. Beware her possessive streak, though, for she can be shrill and violently jealous. Erzulie demands much, but she also gives much in return. She is the Mistress of Dreams and grants men the ability to see beyond their world.

All of the loa love the beautiful Erzulie and many often fight for her attentions. She is Agwe's wife Siren in one of her aspects, Ogoun's passionate lover in another and Damballah's mate in a third.

Those ridden by Erzulie become sensual and charming, gifted with incredible passion and charisma. The loa loves gifts of fine clothes, perfumes and jewelry, and she wears such beautiful things whenever she can.

The Petro distort the love and passion of Erzulie. In the Petro her name is *Ge-Rouge*—of the Red Eyes—and she is passion scorned and jealous rage.

LEGBA: OLD MAN AT THE CROSSROADS

Papa Legba is the Divine Sun. He is an old man who serves as the center-post of all things, a bridge between the visible world of the living and the invisible world of the loa. He is Guardian and Gatekeeper. God of the Crossroads and Opener of the Way. He is always the first of the loa to be called on with the invocation, "Papa Legba, *ouvri barie pour nous passer*" (open the way for us to pass). He is revered for his great knowledge and wisdom.

Legba's mounts become like old men. Their limbs grow weak, twisted and bent, and they walk slowly and painfully. But the houngan's voice becomes forceful and commanding, filled with wisdom and charisma.



The Petro distort Legba's wisdom and power. They call Legba the Abysmal Night, or Carrefour, Master of the Crossroads and Ruler of the Demons of Night and Ill Chance. They invoke him for his power over the creatures of the night. The Petro claim this power as protection, but protection to a Petro usually means harm to anyone who opposes him.

GHEDE: CORPSE, CLOWN AND KING

Ghede is my *mait tete*, my patron loa. I am bonded more strongly to Ghede than to any other loa, and I always call on him first whenever I deal with the loa. But a houngan can call on any loa, not just her *mait tete*—this causes much of the jealousies among the loa.

Ghede is the most misunderstood of the loa. I do not wish to mislead anyone—it is true that Ghede is the Dark Abyss, the loa of Death and Twilight into which the sun must set. But Ghede is also the Protector of the Cosmic Void, the place where all life springs forth. Ghede sometimes is called the Lord of Resurrection, because he is master over both life and death. Ghede is a powerful healer and guardian of children as well, which many people forget.

Ghede is not a demon, but rather a sly and humorous figure, both greedy and clever. Ghede loves to shock others with his biting wit. He also loves food, the grander and more exotic the feast the better, for Death consumes all things.

Before mounting I dress in Ghede's "formal" costume of top hat, black tailcoat, sunglasses, cigarette and cane. When Ghede mounts me he fills me with a wicked sense of humor. I drink and eat enough to make a troll pass out, but I never feel ill when Ghede leaves me.

The Petro call Ghede Baron Samedi, the Loa of Graveyards, Evil Magic and Zombies. Baron Samedi's followers are the most evil and the most feared of the practitioners of dark voodoo. I damn all the Petro to the darkest hole in the abyss for the evil they have done to this noble loa.

>>>>>(So where are you now, Samedi? Cat got your tongue? Or should I just call you Baron.)<<<<<

—Lucky (03:24:02/01-20-57)

LOCO AND AYIZAN: THE PRIESTLY PARENTS

Loco and Ayizan are the First Priest and Priestess, our Adam and Eve. Long, long ago, they were man and woman. They worshiped and cared for the loa more than they cared for themselves, and the grateful loa rewarded them by sending a great horse. The horse rode through the sky and returned to Guinee, home of the loa, who welcomed Loco and Ayizan into their family.

Loco is Adam, the Perfect Man, the ultimate male. In many ways he resembles Legba, for Loco is a walker between the worlds and yet stands at the center of reality.

Ayizan is Eve, the Perfect Woman. Nurturing and creative, she brings forth life. Ayizan is the loa of prosperity and from prosperity comes wealth.

Together, Loco and Aylzan complete one another. Every houngan strives to be like Loco and Ayizan as much as possible and one day become worthy to sit in Guinee with them.

Loco and Ayizan are always worshiped by inseparable pairs of houngans. Many are husband and wife. Many are just lovers. This is a strange relationship, even stranger to those who do not practice voodoo.

Loco and Ayizan mount with great subtlety. You can only tell they have mounted when they speak. They speak with the voice of perfection. Unlike the other loa, only males follow Loco, and only females follow Ayizan.

The Petro don't acknowledge Loco and Ayizan.

OGOUN: WARRIOR, HERO, POLITICIAN

Ogoun is the Lord of Thunder, the God of Fire, the Iron Warrior. He is might, power, authority and triumph. Since the Awakening, Ogoun has also been worshiped as the Diplomat, Politician and Master Trader. Handsome, dashing and passionate, Ogoun is an active and strong lover. In fact, he is Erzulie's most aggressive lover among the loa.

Ogoun's mounts act like soldiers, marching about, calling out orders and barking commands. The mounts usually carry sabers—Ogoun's symbol of authority. The mount has great resistance to pain and injury as well. I have seen Ogoun's mounts strike and jab themselves with their sabers, but the blade never cuts or pierces the skin.

The Petro call Ogoun the Iron Warrior and worship him as a force of violence.

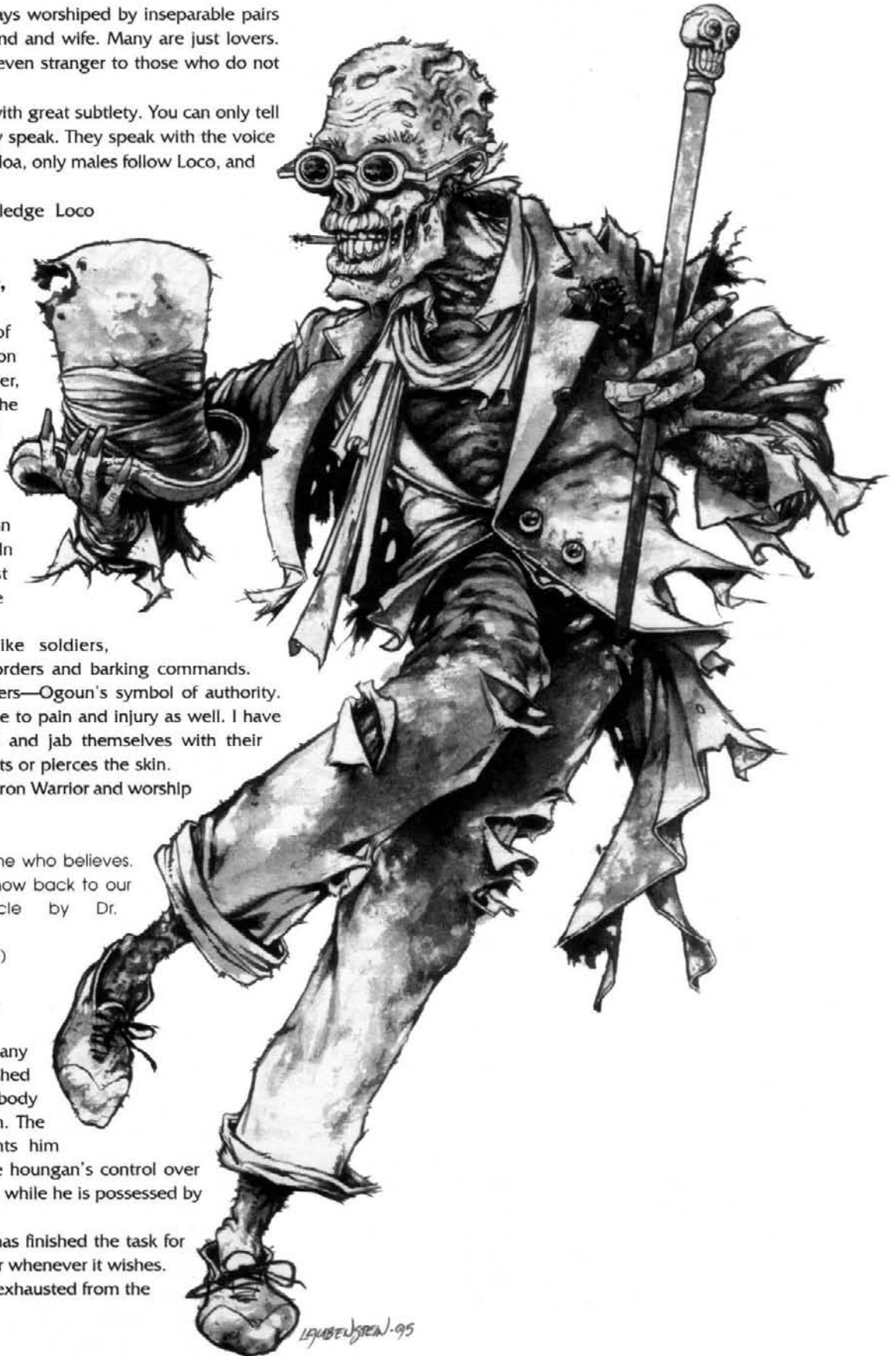
>>>>(Pretty good drek by one who believes. Thanks again, Top Hat. And now back to our regularly scheduled article by Dr. Dumallier.)<<<<<

—Talon (09:00:55/01-12-57)

CALLING THE LOA

A houngan can call on any loa with whom he has established good relations to enter his body and possess, or "mount," him. The loa riding the houngan grants him various powers. However, the houngan's control over his own actions is very limited while he is possessed by a loa.

The loa departs when it has finished the task for which the houngan called it, or whenever it wishes. Generally, the houngan is left exhausted from the ordeal.





>>>>>(There are stories of loa possession before the Awakening. But if my research is correct, they required long and involved rituals full of drumming, dancing and singing, hallucinogenic drug ingestion, self-inflicted torture and sensory deprivation. Under those circumstances, I'm pretty sure I'd be commanding some great spirits, too. But since the Awakening, a few chants is all that's needed.)<<<<<

—Doug H. (20:54:10/01-15-57)

>>>>>(Calling the loa is easier, true, but they are not mere spirits to be commanded.)<<<<<

—Islander (00:12:20/01-20-57)

A houngan may also summon a loa to mount a willing and worthy subject other than himself. Such an individual is known as a *serviteur*, literally "servant of the loa." The *serviteur* gains all of the normal benefits of loa possession. However, because they lack the bond with the loa that the houngan possesses, *serviteurs* are much more likely to be overwhelmed by the personality of the possessing loa and are less capable of taking actions on their own.

>>>>>(I was on a run down in bayou country once and ran up against this punk chromer. I'd seen many of them in the Sprawl and knew I could kick this slot's hoop with null sweat. What I didn't know was that he was a *serviteur*. So there I am, ready to kick some poseur butt, and he starts acting like Ogoun the Iron Warrior! It seems I was a bit too close to something some houngans held dear. Well, chummers, that razorboy was damn fast and much better than any punk like him had a right to be. Scary. Barely came out alive. And I'm told I have forever made Ogoun angry.)<<<<<

—Impact (02:16:32/01-17-57)

There are also cases of loa occasionally mounting a houngan or *serviteur* without being called. Such possessions are said to be warnings for a loyal follower of some danger or possible offense, or punishments for followers who have offended the loa. In the latter case, the loa often possesses the follower and puts him through a series of exhausting and embarrassing trials, apparently to teach him the error of his ways.

>>>>>(Scary thought. So a houngan could call a loa up and have it possess someone, making them into a puppet?)<<<<<

—Silk (20:30:04/01-16-57)

>>>>(Houngans have plenty of other ways to turn someone into a puppet without resorting to the loa.)<<<<<

—Samedi (23:58:50/01-19-57)

>>>>(There are documented cases of loa mounting skeptical nonbelievers who have attended their rituals with a bad attitude, but no records of loa performing such feats at the behest of a houngan. That other drek is pretty much confined to simflicks and Petro rituals. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you, Samedi?)<<<<<

—Islander (20:52:02/01-21-57)

The loa are a fractious lot, with distinct personalities and habits. Therefore, a houngan must carefully balance the delicate relations between the various loa when calling on them. Agwe and Ogoun, for example, are rivals in many areas and do not get along at all. On the other hand, all loa respect and honor Legba as the Opener of the Way and emissary to the material world. A houngan presiding over a ceremony at which many loa are expected to be present is often likened to a host who must carefully consider the personal relations of the guests on the list and make arrangements for everyone's comfort.

Often a houngan will call on his *mait tete* to help him navigate the treacherous jealousies of the loa. Each voodoo follower has a *mait tete* (literally "master of the head") loa. The *mait tete* is the loa that most closely resembles the houngan's own personality and serves as the houngan's personal patron. However, unlike shamans who follow only their own totem, a houngan may interact with many, even all, of the loa at one point or another.

>>>>(Many houngans use the *mait tete* in much the same way other people use astrological signs. For them, the *mait tete* is simply a way to describe someone's personality. It's no surprise that someone who is aggressive and forceful has Ogoun for a *mait tete*, for example.)<<<<<

—Islander (20:31:46/01-18-57)

>>>>(I guess that's why a 60-year-old grandma smokes cigars, dresses in a tux and goes around drinkin' and eatin' until she nearly passes out. I want to party with Top Hat.)<<<<<

—Lucky (18:39:55/01-21-57)

As houngans advance in initiation, they may contact and make connections with other loa. To do so, the houngan must undertake a spirit quest to Guinee, the Island Beneath the Sea where the loa dwell, to convince the loa to accept the bond. Because of the jealousies among the loa, creating new bonds becomes more and more difficult as the houngan increases his connections to different loa.

WORK LOA

In addition to the more powerful and well-known major loa, houngans may also call on the *loa travail*, literally "work loa." These minor powers are comparable to the watcher spirits of hermetic magic traditions. The voodoo tradition holds that *loa travail* are the departed spirits of (meta)human beings that are called back from

the depths of the mirror world. While some work loa often exhibit a faintly humanoid appearance on the astral plane, it seems unlikely that these spirits are the astral forms of the deceased.

To conjure a work loa, a houngan requires an *honfour* (a temple or ritual site) and a *govi* (a red clay jar used to hold the work loa). When they are not performing a service for their master, the spirits reside in the *govi*. Damage to the *govi* also affects the spirits, and if the jar is destroyed all of the spirits contained in it are disrupted. This practice of holding and controlling spirits, rather than calling them forth as in most hermetic and shamanic traditions, appears to be unique to voodoo. The practice has yet to be explained by houngans or the larger magical research community.

Houngans also use *govis* to conjure and contain other spiritual energies and to form astral links when performing ritual sorcery. Each houngan traditionally fashions his own *govi* from the earth near his *honfour* and enchants it for use as a magical vessel.

>>>>(I've heard you can use a *govi* to steal someone's spirit or astral form and turn them into something called an "astral zombie." Any truth to that?)<<<<<

—Starfall (17:53:10/01-13-57)

>>>>(I've heard those rumors, too. As far as I know, that's all they are—rumors. There's no confirmation of a houngan ever being able to do something like that.)<<<<<

—Archangel (20:45:30/01-15-57)

>>>>(Rumors can kill you, boys and girls. Have you ever thought that these "astral zombies" are nothing more than work loa?)<<<<<

—Walker (21:15:20/01-17-57)

BOUGHT LOA

Loa achete, or "bought loa," appear to be "free" work loa. These free spirits seem to prefer areas where voodoo is practiced, another unexplained phenomena related to voodoo practices.

A houngan can convince a loa *achete* to serve him by offering it some service or payment in return or by learning and using the spirit's "true name," a much more dangerous technique.

>>>>(Just when you think you've learned everything. From what I heard, these loa *achete* are even more treacherous than regular free spirits. They'll do just about anything to escape servitude. Believe it or not, reaching some kind of bargain with one seems to work better than trying to command it. The spirit doesn't seem to mind so long as it's getting something out of the deal.)<<<<<

—Brujo (21:20:11/01-15-57)

>>>>(Naturally enough, because such agreements usually result in the spirit increasing its power. And word is they can become very powerful.)<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (18:15:42/01-16-57)

>>>>(Of course they can. Where do you think the great loa came from?)<<<<<

—Samedi (23:54:56/01-17-57)

GUINEE

Voudoun mythology begins with the mystical home of the loa, a place called *Guinee*. Guinee, also known as the Land Beneath the Sea, is the ancestral world of all loa. According to houngans, Guinee exists beyond the mirror world of *les invisibles* (astral space). Guinee may actually be a metaplane—magical scholars suggest that it may be the same as the shamanic Metaplane of Man—but proving or disproving this hypothesis is impossible.

A houngan may make a spirit journey to Guinee for any number of reasons: to gain wisdom from the loa, to seek out other loa, and to form bonds with them. On a journey to Guinee, the astral traveler must prove his worthiness by defeating challenges from the various loa and their servants. These challenges range from answering riddles at the crossroad gates to escaping terrible sea creatures that dwell in the dark waters that surround Guinee. If successful, the traveler reaches the Island Beneath the Sea and may seek out the loa he wishes to meet.

>>>>(Do houngans really meet the loa?)<<<<<<
—The Kid (18:43:28/01-15-57)

>>>>(It doesn't really matter if they meet them or not. Kid. The houngan believe that they do and that's good enough for me. It's hard enough to find anyone who believes in anything these days, so if Top Hat says she goes to the underwater village of Guinee and chats with her mait tete about the Urban Brawl scores, I believe her.)<<<<<<
—Brujo (05:19:27/01-16-57)

HONFOURS

The honfour is a temple in which the loa are worshiped and houngans performs magic. Typically, honfours are circular huts built around a *poteau-mitain* (center post), with small altars and storage areas for fetishes and other magical tools to one side. Elaborate diagrams, known as *vevers*, are sketched out on the honfour floor with flour or ash for performing rituals such as the summoning of a work loa.

>>>>(Honfours are the temples of voodoo. They are sacred ground to the loa. The honfour contains the houngan's magical implements and serves as a dwelling place for his servitor spirits.)<<<<<<
—Samedl (00:25:02/01-19-57)

>>>>(Sounds like a good way to fight one of these guys is to take out the honfour.)<<<<<<
—Tangent (04:32:24/01-21-57)

>>>>(Not a bad idea, but very dangerous. Honfours are well protected. Houngans often share a single honfour as well, so you might end up racking off an entire voodoo secret society by just jandering up and scragging one honfour.)<<<<<<
—Ambros (20:16:43/01-22-57)

BOCORS

In the voodoo tradition, a *bocor* is a magician who uses his powers without the benevolent supervision and guidance of the loa. Traditionally, houngans considered bocors as mercenary individuals with little regard for the larger community. Since the Awakening, this attitude has changed somewhat. Houngans are much more accepting of shamans and hermetics, and they reserve the term bocor for magicians who sell their services to the highest bidder, regardless of the consequences. Corporate and government magicians and shadowrunning magicians are examples of the typical bocor.

In some smaller communities, bocors are still feared for their power, and many cultivate this fearsome reputation.

>>>>(Hey, I bet this is the first time wage slaves and runners were ever lumped together.)<<<<<<
—Niall (13:45:16/01-18-57)

>>>>(Petro bocors are largely responsible for the large influx of money into the islands since the Awakening. These bocors will hire themselves out for any type of black operations.)<<<<<<
—Brujo (02:44:19/01-20-57)

>>>>(The term *bocor* means different things to different people. Some traditionalists consider all magicians bocors. Others don't include foreign magicians in the category. And some people view bocors as an occasional necessity. Not cut and dried at all.)<<<<<<
—Islander (15:24:32/01-22-57)

>>>>(There is one bocor that elicits fear and hatred in all houngans. It's the Bocor Diabolique, the Devil's Magician or Devil's Magic. That's what the voodoo call our friends from Aztlan.)<<<<<<
—Talon (18:42:13/01-22-57)

>>>>(That last type sounds like a toxic shaman, or the equivalent thereof. Scary thought ...)<<<<<<
—Ms. Majestyk (18:54:31/01-22-57)

SORCERY

Sorcery is considered a force separate from the loa in the voodoo tradition. Voodoo sorcery makes heavy use of fetishes of all kinds, including dried insects, herbal powders, bones, rum or other liquor, stones, symbols, drums, rattles, weapons, ritual clothing and jewelry. It is often connected with ritual sorcery from which the ubiquitous "voodoo doll" of popular mythology derives. The "dolls" used in these rituals are actually ritual links fashioned of wax, clay or straw. Each doll contains a genetic sample from its target, such as a lock of hair or a few drops of blood, and is fashioned to resemble the target. These features increase the symbolic correspondence between the link and the target of the ritual.

>>>>(Houngans are usually very good at ritual sorcery and generally prefer it to an open flash-and-bang confrontation. Why stand where



an enemy can shoot you when, with a little patience and care, you can bring him down from afar with no one the wiser?)<<<<<<

—Runt (22:41:28/01-22-57)

>>>>>(Hey, when the slaves were tossin' voodoo spells at their oppressors it sure didn't pay to make a big thing of it. You bet they got real good at snipin' from cover and taking their time when they had to.)<<<<<<

—Rikki (01:32:48/01-24-57)

>>>>>(Do not confuse the issue, mes chères. We can cast spells with the best on a sprawl run. Many choose other ways, secret ways, quiet ways. But others like the big bang, the mardi gras, the party, I know I do.)<<<<<<

—Riverboat Gambler (02:05:11/01-25-57)

PETRO RITE

So far, I have described the Rada rite, the most common form of the voodoo tradition. But no discussion of voodoo would be complete without mention of so-called dark voodoo, more precisely known as the Petro rite. The Petro rite focuses on the forces of violence, anger and the dark powers of the night. Followers of this rite, sometimes known simply as "Petros," seem to believe that life is a vengeful path controlled by the most powerful.

The Petro loa are darker versions of the Rada loa. Practitioners of Petro believe that the loa exist purely to serve them in their attempts to gain power on the physical and other planes of existence. Petro practitioners are recognized as a dangerous group and many locales in the UCAS and CAS have outlawed the practice of the Petro rite.

>>>>>(Even the Petro know that they cannot use the loa. No one—not even a Petro—can be that stupid.)<<<<<<

—Mlle. Marie (18:04:54/01-16-57)

>>>>>(Sounds like some bad juju. Toxics?)<<<<<<

—Argent (21:34:14/01-19-57)

>>>>>(I don't think so. The Petro loa have been around just as long as "good" voodoo. Probably more of a yin/yang thing.)<<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (21:59:38/01-19-57)

ZOMBIES

The zombie is the most famous voodoo phenomenon—and the most misunderstood—largely as a result of nearly 100 years of horror films and trideos. Actually, the term *zombie* is used to describe individuals in three distinct conditions—true zombies, corps cadavres, and loa zombies. Note that zombies are largely the domain of Petro practitioners—houngans of the Rada rite shun all zombification practices.

The oldest and most common form of zombie is the true zombie. True zombies are created with the use of *wambele*, a powerful biochemical powder more commonly known as "zombie dust." First, the houngan prepares *wambele* with various neurotoxic plants according to rites passed on in the Petro tradition. Today, the powder can also be created with synthetic neurotoxins. Then, the victim is made to ingest the powder. Traditionally, the *wambele* was spread across the victim's doorway, where it came into contact with bottoms of the victim's bare feet. In recent years, *wambele* has been mixed in a victim's food or drink or injected directly into the victim's bloodstream. Once the victim ingests the powder, he enters a death-like trance.

After the victim has been pronounced dead and buried, the houngan and his servants unearth the victim and apply a potion that negates the effects of the *wambele* and deadens the victim's will as well. Any chemical compound can be used, provided it restores partial consciousness to the victim without restoring him enough to fight back. Nowadays the houngan can easily control the victim with spells. In recent years, houngans have also intentionally addicted their zombies to psychoactive drugs, which provides an additional means of controlling the victim.

>>>>>(WHAT PLANET IS DR. VOODOO FROM! You can't make zombie dust from store-bought chemicals. If that was the case, every talismonger in the world would have the drek on his shelf. It's strictly native and rare. The addiction drek is true, though, just don't ask me how I know.)<<<<<<

—Chrome Zulu (02:16:16/01-17-57)

>>>>>(I heard that a couple of big-time players (don't quote me, but one of them begins with the letter "A") tried to synthesize those neurotoxins but had some unfortunate accidents. Those voodoo secret societies aren't backwater hicks.)<<<<<<

—Kazuo (05:45:48/01-17-57)

>>>>>(Zombification has been illegal in Haiti since before the Awakening and is now illegal throughout North America and much of the world. Many of the voodoo secret societies have been known to sentence someone they found guilty of a crime to serve out their punishment as a zombie as a means of teaching them a lesson.)<<<<<<

—Archangel (20:05:55/01-18-57)



Corps cadavres and loa zombies are created by animating dead victims. Houngans create a corps cadavre by animating a victim with an animation spell. A houngan creates a loa zombie by animating a victim with the inhabitation power of loa. Both processes create shambling beings with very low intelligence, little or no sensitivity to pain, and little or no remorse or other emotions. The Rada rite strictly prohibits the creation of corpse cadavre and loa zombies.

>>>>(These things are fraggin' scary. Those old flatvids seem funny until you've actually had a bunch of these things trying to geek you, and no matter how many you kill, they just keep on coming.)<<<<<

—Sherman (01:46:54/01-20-57)

>>>>(Corps cadavres aren't as tough as loa zombies, but they're easier to create so you're more likely to run into a large group of them. Loa zombies are as tough as manifest spirits, but they're more vulnerable to magic and can be deprived of their animating force by banishing them.)<<<<<

—Talon (23:30:20/01-22-57)

>>>>(Direct sunlight also seems to break down the biochemical bases of corps cadavres. They find sunlight intensely painful, and

prolonged exposure to it eventually renders them inanimate. Loa zombies display no such weakness, however.)<<<<<

—Islander (18:17:04/01-23-57)

>>>>(Creating zombies of any kind is considered a crime in most North American countries and provinces. Some municipalities consider it no more than a public nuisance, but other will slap you with magical assault charges. Animating the dead isn't considered nearly as serious as enslaving the living, but it still carries a substantial legal penalty in some places.)<<<<<

—SPD (20:15:58/01-23-57)

>>>>(Of course, just because the UCAS gov'ment decided to outlaw zombies doesn't prevent Ares Macrotech or MCT from animating corpses and using them in their own extraterritorial enclaves—away from the prying eyes of the public, of course. Think about it. You're having trouble with ungrateful workers? The proles murmuring about unions? No problem. Zombies make an ideal work force—they're easily controlled, never complain, and you don't have to pay them. Of course, they don't offer much in the brains department, but you can't have everything.)<<<<<

—Zoomer (23:14:56/01-27-57)

AWAKENED VOUDOUN

Voudoun has always been a highly adaptive tradition, borrowing liberally from other faiths, such as Catholicism, for symbolism, while retaining a solid core of beliefs and traditions. Since the Awakening, many voodoo splinter sects have borrowed from shamanic and even hermetic magical traditions. Some of these sects even recognize new loa that inhabit the Sixth World, loa that hounsans are beginning to know only now.

Ceremonies of these so-called Awakened sects use simsense and virtual-reality technology to generate the trance states associated with voodoo worship. Some elaborate rituals take place entirely in virtual reality simulations of complex honfours with sophisticated sensory images of the loa and their symbols. Some members of these sects have even claimed to have seen loa spirits in the Matrix.

>>>>(Sounds like somebody's been reading too much 5-nuyen sci-fi.)<<<<<<

—Case (19:43:20/01-14-57)

>>>>(What's next—the voodoo-zombie-loa-dragon that lives in the Matrix?)<<<<<<

—Neon (23:04:55/01-14-57)

>>>>(I, for one, think there might actually be something to all of this hoodoo drek they're doing.)<<<<<<

—Contrail (20:12:37/01-16-57)

>>>>(Right. Voodoo programming?! Come on, it didn't work for economics, why should it work for the trix?)<<<<<<

—The Kid (02:34:49/01-18-57)

>>>>(What about the loa spirits in the Matrix?)<<<<<<

—Porky (15:44:08/01-18-57)

>>>>(Drug and simsense-induced hallucinations if you ask me. Spirits can't exist in the Matrix. Everyone knows that.)<<<<<<

—Randi (20:02:30/01-18-57)

>>>>(Not spirits in the traditional sense, no. But things that the hounsan might consider spirits could be in the Matrix. A sufficiently sophisticated program construct, say, might closely resemble a spirit in the Machine—maybe even a loa if you're a hounsan.)<<<<<<

—Silicon Mage (22:34:45/01-18-57)

>>>>(Let's stop beating around the bush here. You mean an artificial intelligence. There could be an AI (or even more than one) that people are worshipping as a loa. If that's the case—and that's a big IF—an important question arises: What does that AI want and why does it encourage or allow this worship?)<<<<<<

—DRAM (22:04:54/01-20-57)

>>>>(Maybe. Who can say what an AI would want? Its thought processes would seem totally alien to our own way of thinking. Maybe such an AI wants Mps full of Matrix zombies or something?)<<<<<<

—BlackFlag (16:30:59/01-21-57)

>>>>("Mps full of Matrix zombies or something?" Give me a break! Matrix zombies—I think you've been on-line waaaaay too long.)<<<<<<

—Neon (21:40:29/01-22-57)

VOUDOUN GLOSSARY

>>>>(For you chummers out there who don't sling the lingo, here's a short lexicon of terms used in voodoo:

Angé: An angel or good spirit.

Asson: A sacred rattle used when calling up the loa.

Baka: An evil spirit or demon.

Bocor: A mercenary sorcerer, usually with an evil reputation.

Cheval: Literally, "horse." To be mounted by a loa; to be possessed.

Connnaissance: A knowledge of herbal cures and healing magic learned by skilled hounsans.

Engagement: The magical bond or contract between a loa and a mortal, for special favors. A service is usually expected of the person in return.

Fort: Literally, "strength." Refers to a person who is strong in magical skills and knowledge.

Garde: A magical charm or talisman.

Gové: A red clay jar used to contain spirits.

Gris-Gris: A magical spell.

Gros Bon Ange: The spiritual double of a person, the astral or etheric form (literally, the "big good angel").

Honfour: A temple or ritual place.

Houngan: A practitioner/priest of voodoo.

Hounenikon: High official of the honfour, assistant to the hounsan.

Hounsis: Members of a voodoo society who act as assistants and helpers to the hounsan.

Installe: Possession by a loa.

La-place: An apprentice and assistant to the hounsan.

Loa: The deities of voodoo.

Loa Achete: Literally, "bought loa." Spirits that serve hounsans in exchange for payment, similar to free spirits.

Loa Travail: Literally, "work loa." Lesser spirits that hounsans may bind into service, similar to watcher spirits.

Mange moun: A fatal problem or illness sent as a curse by a malevolent spirit.

Nom vaillant: The ritual name of the hounsan.

Societe: A community of hounsans associated with a particular honfour.

Vevers: Symbols used to represent and call the loa. Typically drawn or painted with flour or ash on the ground. Similar to cabalistic symbols.

Zombie: A human being who has been drained of their will and enslaved by magical means, or a corpse that has been animated by magic.)<<<<<<

—Islander (19:17:55/01-15-57)

MAJOR MOJO



>>>>>(No Big Book O' Practical Magic would be complete without a little lowdown on the Biggest Bad Guys and the creepiest of the non(meta)humans, so here it is. These are the slots you don't want to run into, but inevitably will in our shady line of work. Lone Star FRT magicboys, corp combat mages, nasty juju around corp sites, physads in various security forces, vampires, astral weirdness, shapechangers, toxic baddies—they're all here, along with a little practical advice for how to deal with them. We're talking war stories, folks; this whole file is your chance to tell everybody How I Slotted With Fill-In-The-Blank And Lived To Bag On About It. As usual, I asked a few talented cobs of mine to kick things off—all readers feel free to chime in with your own gen any old time.)<<<<<

—Talon (16:44:56/01-10-57)

>>>>>(There's only one way to handle these slags—keep outta their fraggin' way.)<<<<<

—Been There (20:11:34/01-28-57)

>>>>>(Read my intro, pal. Practical advice, capish? 'Tain't exactly practical for a shadowrunner to "keep outta the fraggin' way" of Lone Star and corp mageboys. No matter how careful you are, sooner or later you're gonna face off with 'em.)<<<<<

—Talon (22:31:44/01-28-57)

LONE STAR'S WIZBOYS

by Casper

OK, everybody reading this post knows that the Star has combat mages on its Fast-Response and SWAT teams. Most of you probably also know that SWAT and FRT teams also include a lot of physical adepts. And anyone who's ever had the bad luck to run into a Star FRT or SWAT team knows that the above-mentioned wizboys are major bad news. But I'd bet nuyen to noodles that an awful lot of you who know this stuff never really thought about the hundreds of ways the Star can frag with your little shadowrun. So I'm here to fill you in on some





of their favorite tricks and tactics, and to suggest a few ways you can frag with them right back.

>>>>>(Yeah! This is my kind of technobab—hands-on stuff instead of way-out-in-the-stratosphere theory.)<<<<<<
—JustDolt (13:41:22/01-29-57)

FUN WITH COMBAT MAGES

Consider the typical Star combat mage. He's pretty good—took a few Advanced Level Magic courses in high school and showed enough promise at the dirty-fighting side of things to attract the attention of a Lone Star recruiter. These guys don't get heavily into theory; they're not the ones clogging up the classrooms at UC Berkeley or MIT&M. They want to know the quickest, most efficient way to sling juju that'll stop people in their tracks; once they get that, they chuck theory out the airlock. You know the old saying about, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing"? Well, the Lone Star combat wizboy has his own version of it: "A little knowledge can help you do a fraggin' truckload of damage."

So the Star recruiter sends Wizboy Willy (or whoever) off to summer school at the local HQ. There, our high-school graduate (or dropout with a lot of talent) learns the finer points of the art of magical mayhem. He learns how to sling the most powerful spells he's capable of, as fast as possible, with as little drain as possible so he can keep going for as long as possible. He finds out exactly what his limits are, and how to walk that edge without pushing himself over it. And he learns from the war stories of all the other combat mages in the Star—all the little tricks they know, all the clever dodges every shadowrunner's ever pulled on them, and what they did about it. He learns not only from his own mistakes, but also from *everybody else's in the whole organization*. So what we have here, kids, is a mageboy who likes being on the front line, is good at taking people down with minimal hurt to himself, is practically never stupid enough to overextend himself in a scrap, and rarely makes the same mistake twice. Most important, our Wizboy Willy of the Star is the guy you *will* run into eventually—unless you plan on confining your biz to swiping benefit checks from little old ladies in the Barrens (about whom the Star cares precisely zero).

I know what most of you are probably thinking right now, because I thought it myself. "So what if he rarely makes the same mistake twice? Once is all it takes to kill the fragger." Well, that's true ... but the trick is to recognize his mistake before it gets done happening and take advantage of it while you can.

In addition to full heavy armor and at least three guns with all the bells and whistles (smartlink IIs, gas vents, thermo scopes and such), your typical FRT combat mage packs at least four magical toys: a couple of spell locks to enhance his armor spell and personal combat sense, plus a power focus and a spirit focus. Loaded for bear, right? Well, being magically loaded for bear is a two-edged sword. Sure, the wizboy's foci give him extra juice when he needs it. They also give Joe Shadowrunner a nice little channel down which to shoot some pre-emptive mojo. So if a runner magicboy can whip up a physical spell nice and fast—while staying out of the Star mage's line of sight and dodging bullets from the rest

of the FRT team—and then sling it at the Starboy's power focus, BOOM goes the Star mage. That old saw about geeking the mage first works on them as well as us, cobbers, and don't you forget it.

>>>>>(That piece of advice is assuming an awful lot of luck, Casper. First off, the Star's focus has to be active—which means you've got to know it's active, which means at least astral perception on your part. That makes you astrally active, and just as vulnerable as the magecop. Then, assuming he's distracted enough with other things to keep from burning a spell at you right away, you've got to step into his line of sight in order to fling your juiceball. If you can see him, he can see you, and burn you before he cacks it. I don't care much for suicide tactics—if I take a magecop down, I'd rather not go with him. And I'm not even going to talk about the flying lead.)<<<<<<

—Fraulein Blucher (11:32:41/02-01-57)

>>>>>(Hey, I never said any of this was easy.)<<<<<<
—Casper (12:31:55/02-02-57)

>>>>>(Just shoot the fragger.)<<<<<<
—Pistol Pete (01:22:54/02-03-57)

>>>>>(You packin' rounds that'll go through full heavy armor, plus a high-voltage armor spell sustained by a spell lock? Then be my guest. Oh, and make sure nobody else pops you one—or lets the shells fly close enough to make you flinch—while you're lining up your beauty shot. Otherwise you might miss. Then you'll be deep in it, 'cause you've just attracted everybody's attention.)<<<<<<

—Spelling B (01:34:21/02-03-57)

>>>>>(B's got a point, but you can cut a mageboy down easy with a little teamwork. Even an FRT mage with personal combat sense to burn can get confused if there's enough people throwing enough drek at him. My chummers and I survived a nasty fire fight that way awhile back. We were helping ourselves to the contents of a certain warehouse when we got word that an FRT team was on the way, ETA about three minutes. We could've bailed, but they'd just have chased us down on the docks. We'd figured beforehand that they might try to crash our little party, so we did like we'd planned back at our squat—picked ourselves the heaviest of our newly acquired bang-bang, planted the rest in every nook and cranny we could find, spread ourselves out, and waited. Sure enough, they came crashing through the roof with all their cannons blazing. A pair of combat mages in the center, protected by the blizzard of gunfire their chummers were laying down. We started shooting from all directions, running in and out through piles of crates and boxes like mice in a maze, picking up a new gun whenever we found one and letting fly. Confused the frag out of 'em—the Star couldn't tell who was shooting from where, or which of us was the biggest threat. They broke their cordon around the mages, and one mageboy covered the other one's back with his assault rifle while the other one threw fireballs at stacks of boxes. They couldn't see us, so they had to toss their mojo pretty much at random and hope they caught somebody in the area of effect. They caught Louie—crisped the poor slot pretty good when the

stack of crates he was hiding behind caught fire and fell on him. At the height of all the confusion, one of our mages scrounged up a water elemental and sent it crashing into the warehouse, and about half a second later the other one sent a manaball through the mage that had been tossing fire. Blowed up his power focus real good and fried his buddy. Also fried a couple of the mundane troopers who'd been standing too close. The water elemental swept another bunch of 'em off their feet, and we took our chance to bail out while they were still floundering. By the time they got back up and figured out we'd hoofed it, we were speeding away from there.)<<<<<

—Shostakovitch
(11:31:24/02-05-57)

>>>>>(Not to burst your bubble, Shos, but you had an awful lot of things working your way. Two mages on your team, guns 'n' ammo to spare, and time to plan an ambush in advance. What do you do when the drek goes down fast, or if you can't pack enough firepower to equip a small army?)<<<<<

—MasterBlaster
(12:13:44/02-05-57)

Also, always remember that there's more than one way to geek the mage. One of my personal fave tactics is to toss an overstimulation spell at the nearest combat mage as soon as I spot him. While he's coping with sudden and total disorientation, a buddy with a gun can pop him. Astral static is another good "distraction" spell, especially if you run into an FRT on the grounds of a corp research facility. Astral static raises the background count in a given area, making it tougher to do anything on the astral plane—look around, sling spells, whatever. The background count at a corp facility is usually higher than the average; if you toss an astral static spell, you can raise the count high enough to seriously frag with anything a Lone Star mage might be trying to do. Of course, you incapacitate yourself at the same time—so once again, let your friendly neighborhood gungel step in and finish the slot once you've done your part. (And make sure you step away from the Star mage's line of sight right away—some of them are good enough to throw at least a little something, even against a nasty background count. Don't assume the Starboy's helpless just because you've made his life difficult.) Of course, both these tactics assume you're well armed; if you're not, you shouldn't be in this biz.



>>>>>(Truer words were never spoken. I hate amateurs!)<<<<<
—Fast Eddie (22:13:44/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Who died and made you God, jerkface?!)<<<<<
—Kid Samurai (22:21:34/01-14-57)

>>>>>(I did, you little snotnose. I can say what I want to puppies like you, because I've paid my dues. You, you're just a sniveling, milk-livered little pusbag with 1.2 Mp **deleted by sysop.**)<<<<<
—Fast Eddie (22:28:04/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Take your insult-fest to another board, please. Thank you.)<<<<<
—Talon (22:34:41/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Stink is a great spell for throwing a whole FRT team off-stride long enough to bail. If you anticipate running into any kind of trouble—which, in this biz, should be just about all the time—equip everybody on your team with nose plugs and then let the spell fly when you need to. I don't care how well trained a cop is—nobody, but nobody, can totally resist reacting physically to a sudden blast of a real stench. We're talking something that smells like a chicken farm plus a couple of rotting corpses plus an open sewer, multiplied at least ten times. The Star mages and gungels may not

all lose their breakfasts, but they'll lose concentration for a few seconds. Sometimes, that's all it takes.)<<<<<

—Santa Maria (04:13:33/01-16-57)

Of course, geeking the mage isn't the only way to use magic against the Star. Sometimes, the most effective tactic is to bring out your biggest guns right away and let fly. I'm talking flame bombs, folks. Have a flame bomb spell ready to go the second the FRT team busts in—if you can sling it fast enough, while they're still in tight formation, you can geek most of the team just by cooking off their ammo. Your average FRT team packs enough wallop to make a truly spectacular fireball. Just make sure you're far enough away not to take damage yourself.

>>>>>(Fire elementals are good for that, too.)<<<<<
—Talon (10:22:31/01-16-57)

So now that you know a few creative ways to geek the mage, I'm going to tell you not to—at least, not if you can help it. And you can help it in a lot of situations, common wisdom to the contrary. Incapacitation can be every bit as effective—try throwing astral static or overstimulation or chaotic world, and then just book without having your sammy buddy take a shot. This assumes, of course, that booking is an option. If you can't get out of town for some reason, then taking the slags down may be your only choice. If you can, though, try to stick with non lethal action. "Don't geek the cop" might sound like a weird piece of advice, but there's sound reason for it. The Star, just like the civil police forces we used to have in the UCAS, doesn't take kindly to people who kill cops. If you cack one—or several—you've just given the Star a reason to hunt you down and geek you no matter how tough the going gets. Don't bring that kind of trouble on yourself unless you have to—you'll live longer that way.

>>>>(So what? The Star's after my hide anyway—I'm a scum-of-the-earth runner, ain't I?)<<<<<

—Been There (09:08:33/01-16-57)

>>>>(If you're just a scum-of-the-earth shadowrunner, the Star might be persuaded to give up after a while. Bribes are always good ... or some other scum runner might become Public Enemy Number One and make a fatter target. (More brownie points at HQ for catching him, don't you know.) For killing a cop—chumboboy, your life won't be worth a plugged nuyen. You cack a lawman, you've by god made it personal.)<<<<<

—Santa Maria (10:11:34/01-16-57)

>>>>(So is there a difference between tangling with an FRT mage and running into one as part of a SWAT team?)<<<<<

—Curious George (11:23:44/01-17-57)

>>>>(The same tactics'll work for both, pretty much. Remember, though, that your SWAT mage is just a bit more powerful than your average FRT wizboy. Like, they both might sling a mana bolt spell, but the SWAT mage's will be more powerful. (Of course, either one'll kill you just as dead.) Also, the SWAT boys have a definite preference for physical spells that do a hell of a lot of damage. Your FRT wizworm is just as likely to toss something that frags with your perception, like overstimulation, as he is to toss a powerball. Not because he's any kind of a softer touch (believe me!), but because he thinks it's a more elegant solution (or some such drek.)<<<<<

—Shostakovich (11:35:55/01-17-57)

FUN WITH PHYSICAL ADEPTS

In addition to spell slingers, the Star loves to put physical adepts on SWAT and FRT teams. These guys can be a serious problem; they can move so fragging fast that they're putting your head on backward while you're just getting your powerball spell started. A lot of them also have such impressive control over their bodies that they can resist gases and toxins and such—so anybody out there thinking of hitting the FRT team with a burst of knockout gas, keep in mind that the adept will probably still be

standing. (And he won't be any too pleased with you, either.) And here's another scary thing about them—their own powers can give them the same "extra armor" and personal combat sense that the average Star mageboy has, without the need for spell locks. That means you can't turn their active spell locks against them by sending a physical spell through one.

All that said, however, you can deal with physads should you be unlucky enough to encounter one in the course of your shady escapades. One obvious way to do it is to fight fire with fire; if you're going someplace where you might expect to meet one of these slots, make sure you've got a physad on your team to take him on. When dealing with the Star, it's a good idea to have more than one physad; Lone Star FRTs don't put the same number of physads on every team, so you can't know in advance how many you may face (if any at all). As a rule of thumb, most FRT and SWAT teams include one to three physads—the reason for the upper limit is that physical adepts don't exactly grow on trees. (Lucky for us, too.)

The other way to deal with physads is to hit them where they're weakest—on the astral plane. In my experience, it's almost impossible to beat a top-flight physical adept in physical combat unless you're just as drek-hot a physad as he is. However, mages and shamans can nail the physad astrally if they're alert enough to take advantage of circumstances. Spirits make excellent weapons—they can wait until the very last fraction of a second before manifesting, and even a talented physical adept has trouble reacting fast enough to hurt or escape them. A mage buddy of mine likes to whistle up earth elementals and tell them to engulf the physad, rendering his impressive physical combat abilities pretty well useless.

>>>>(I like asking local city spirits to fill a whole FRT team with fear. The spirit doesn't even have to manifest to use its power, so there's no target for a physad to attack. Every time I use this tactic, the FRT boys slaughter each other. They've all got the biggest guns in the immediate vicinity, and so perceive each other as the deadliest threat. For once they get to be on the receiving end of the Star's "Shoot first, ask questions later" policy.)<<<<<

—Cat Feet (11:10:22/01-18-57)

>>>>(Ahh, sweet revenge ...)<<<<<

—Khan (23:50:45/01-18-57)

>>>>(And how much collateral damage does your wiz little tactic cause?!)<<<<<

—Civvy (24:01:00/01-18-57)

Of course, you can't use astral measures like spirits and spells against a physical adept any old time. The adept has to be astrally active in order for a spirit or a spell to affect him, which means you've got to hit him while he's astrally perceiving something. So watch him closely and be prepared to work fast.

>>>>(Here's a tidbit to remember: physical adepts can't cast spells, so they can't throw nasty mojo at you through your active spirit focus.)<<<<<

—Buffalo Bill (03:07:34/01-20-57)

>>>>(Don't be too sure about that. From what I read in the Inner Magic file, some physads may no longer have that limitation.)<<<<

—Been There (01:32:41/01-21-57)

>>>>(Buldrek.)<<<<

—Buffalo Bill (03:10:44/01-21-57)

Keep in mind that a physad can't astrally project; so if he's fighting a spell cast or a spirit summoned by an astrally projecting mage, the mage has a distinct edge in reaction time. Yes, friends, this is the one circumstance in which you can "move" faster than the physad. Don't waste this advantage—you won't get many of them when you're fighting these guys. One thing, though—if you go completely astral to take on a physad, make sure your body is safe behind enemy lines. Don't go astral in the middle of the fragging street or just around the corner, or your meat body will be dead as the proverbial doornail within seconds.

>>>>(Just like with every other major magical threat, teamwork makes your life much easier when taking on a physad. Have several street sammies on your team to keep the slag busy, then hit him with a nasty juiceball. Fireballs are my favorites.)<<<<

—Pyro (04:30:44/01-21-57)

>>>>(But if he's fighting a bunch of street sams, he's probably not assensing anything. How do you make the slot go astrally active so your spell can hurt him?)<<<<

—Curious George (04:35:55/01-21-57)

>>>>(I toss a low-level fireball spell real close to him to get his attention, then duck around the nearest corner. While he's scanning for me astrally, I hit him with the big one.)<<<<

—Pyro (04:44:33/01-21-57)

FUN WITH REGULAR COPS

Pay attention now. The following is the most important lesson you will ever learn. *Mundane Star troopers can have magic, too.* No, they can't toss spells ... but yes, Virginia, they can sure as drek resist the juju you throw at them. Especially the mundanes on the FRTs—they've got mage buddies in whose company they risk their lives every time they hit the streets. Do their mage buddies give them a little magical helping hand? Just as sure as elves got pointy ears, they do. I've run across mundane troopers with personal anti-bullet barrier spells cast on them and quickened to work permanently. A couple years ago, some people raised this issue in the **Lone Star** post; it's still true. Barrier spells, increased reactions, combat sense—the ordinary gunnies may have just about anything that can help them survive a mini-war in the streets.

>>>>(I read that post. Didn't somebody say that kinda magical augmentation wasn't standard op procedure?)<<<<

—Curious George (05:12:13/01-22-57)

>>>>(Maybe it wasn't in '54. It's a lot more common now, I'm sorry to say. The only reason it's not official SOP is because the Star

doesn't have enough mages to equip every fragging beat cop with quickened-spell goodies.)<<<<

—Thelma (06:33:41/01-22-57)

>>>>(Beat cops can have this stuff too. The FRTers aren't the only slots with mage friends. Sure, it's less common to find Joe Street Grunt with increased reactions courtesy of a spell—but it happens. I know—I ran into one once. He was so fragging fast, it was all I could do to hold my own for a while. I hadn't expected him to be that good, of course, which didn't help. Just dumb luck I didn't die for my stupidity. Never, never underestimate your opponent, even if he's just a beat cop.)<<<<

—Been There (02:33:04/01-25-57)

Even with their magical toys, though, you can still take the mundanes down. The secret, as always, is doing your homework first. Find out what kind of protection the gunnies are likely to be carrying and plan your response accordingly. You've heard a lot through the grapevine lately about mundane troops with increased reaction time? Then send your best razorboy or girl up against him, or get a few of your biggest and meanest street sammy friends to pile on him all at once. While he's busy duking it out with them, get where you can see him and toss a chaos spell or anything else localized that'll frag up the cop without hurting your chummers.

One weird phenomenon I've run into a time or two is the mundane cop with a spirit in tow. The mundane's mage buddy whistles up a spirit for him back at the local HQ, then tells the spirit to do whatever the mundane says. If the mundane's got anything on the ball, he'll order the spirit to nail you to the best of its ability—so be prepared to fight the spirit as well as the beat cop.

>>>>(Fight it with what? My Remington Roomsweeper? Rii-ight.)<<<<

—Samurai Joe (21:32:44/01-22-57)

>>>>(Read to the end of the paragraph, Joey.)<<<<

—Santa Maria (22:31:12/01-22-57)

Luckily for the mundanes among us, a spirit has to manifest in order to hit a non-magical target. So if it wants to hurt the street samurai a few feet away, it has to get physical first. This means that an alert runner with a sword or a knife or a club or even a stun baton can hurt it, and can do a lot more damage than the same weapon would do to a Lone Star trooper. Harming the spirit this way is not an easy thing to do, but if your will is strong enough you can do plenty of damage. No guns, though (sorry, Mr. Street Sammy). Willpower is the only thing that counts when you're fighting a manifest spirit, and the laws of magic say that your SMG won't work because it's not directly powered by your will.

>>>>(That little quirk means that Samurai Bob can throw away his Uzi III and fragging near destroy a manifest spirit using only his cyberspurs. I saw someone do that once. We needed some extra cybermuscle for a run, and on our fixer's recommendation hired



an absolutely crazed razorboy who called himself General MacArthur Jones. The place we hit had a standing agreement with Lone Star to send the FRT boys over, and they caught up to us just as we were bugging out the back way. They were between us and our wheels, so we had to stand and fight. Our mage was busy tangling with one of the FRT wizboys—the other one called up a fire elemental and told it to scrag us. We thought we were dead for sure. Then Jonesy tosses away his guns, jumps out from behind his cover, and runs straight at this flamin' thing with his cyberspurs at the ready, giving a bloodcurdling rebel yell all the way. He tore into it with the spurs agin and agin and agin, until the thing started screaming and then vanished. I'd never heard a spirit scream before, and I hope never to hear that sound again. Jonesy came out of it with singed eyebrows. Total nutcase, that man. Absolutely flipped around the bend.)<<<<<<

—Boris Badunov (05:20:03/01-24-57)

If the spirit in question is a nature spirit, meaning that it has a defined domain, stepping out of its domain is a simple way to render it harmless—say, ducking into an office building or someone's house to shake off a city spirit. (Pick an office building a little ways away from whatever disturbance you've been causing—dashing into the lobby of the Renraku arcology when you've been shooting up the pavement just outside is only trading one kind of trouble for another.) Of course, this approach can also trap you—the minute you step outside again, you're toast, unless you deal with the spirit in the meantime. Duck-and-cover works best when combined with some other move, like banishing. Get away from the spirit's domain so it can't do you any immediate damage, then banish the thing at your leisure.

If you're a magician and you want to get fancy, you can whistle up a spirit of your own to fight your opponent, or you can try to take control of the spirit. With that last tactic, keep in mind that you're not wresting control away from the mundane trooper—



you're taking it from the mage or shaman who called the spirit up. If you've got juju to burn, go for it—if you win the contest, you can use the spirit to kick the mundane trooper's hoop. Keep in mind, though, that the mage you're going up against is probably pretty strong; the Star is not noted for weaklings in its ranks. You'll be feeling a lot of drain, even if you succeed. There's also the risk of a draw, in which case the spirit becomes uncontrolled. It may just go away, or it may keep trying to nail you because it didn't appreciate you fragging around with it.

>>>>(That happened to my chummer Laslo. He got control of a fire elemental just for a second, then passed out from drain. The fire elemental was pissed cuz Laslo tried to dominate it—frag, I think it was pissed at the whole world—and it engulfed him before any of us could react. Wouldna done much good even if we coulda reacted fast enough—bullets don't hurt a bonfire none. We got outta there before the spirit could turn us into charcoal chunks, too.)<<<<<

—Muzzy (06:33:41/01-25-57)

Another thing to keep in mind when tangling with the Star on the beat—he can and will call for magical backup the minute it starts to look like he and his trusty Ruger Thunderbolt might not be able to handle you. So tossing a wizzer spell at the street grunt just because you can is not a smart move—it'll only bring an FRT team down on you faster than you can say "nothing up my sleeve." Save that kind of thing for situations where you need a weapon but you can't pack heat. Then toss it and get out quick, or else be prepared to fight some serious magic when the magecops show up.

>>>>(The moral of the story is, never assume that the "regular cop" is just a regular cop. I've had the misfortune to run into street grunts on routine patrol who turned out to be drek-hot physical adepts—a most unpleasant surprise. I survived the easiest way—I cut and ran. Later, I indulged my curiosity about those oh-so-atypical patrol cops by paying a decker buddy to take a walk through the Star's personnel files. Turns out the boyz-in-blue who nearly cacked me had screwed up politically—brown-nosed the wrong superior at a particularly unfortunate time—and got demoted to patrol. If it happened to me twice, it can happen anytime and anywhere.)<<<<<

—Pfister (11:22:31/01-25-57)

THE DISEMBODIED FUZZ: ASTRAL PATROL COPS

"Magical backup" in Lone Star means more than the wizboys and physads on the FRT and SWAT teams. It also means cops on astral patrol. Luckily for shadowland, there just aren't enough mages in the Star to allow for large numbers of cops to patrol astral beats like they do the streets of Seattle (or anywhere else they have a franchise). Unluckily, just about every Star precinct has a few magecops whose sole duty is to hang around on the astral waiting for a call.

>>>>(Buldrek. They're gonna pay a coupla wizboys to lie around all day just waitin' for astral trouble to go down? I don't believe it!)<<<<<

—JustDolt (12:33:41/01-25-57)

>>>>(Believe it, chumley. Somebody brought this up in the Lone Star post awhile back—it was true then, and it's true now.)<<<<<
—Been There (01:22:31/01-26-57)

For the average group of shadowrunners, the existence of astral patrol cops means that tossing spells around on the streets is a mondo bad idea. The second some mundane copper spots magical activity, he puts in a quick call to the precinct HQ, and the resident magecops hotfoot it astrally to the site of the disturbance. Astral bodies move fast; the astral backup will be on top of you and doing damage before your brain finishes processing the information that Billy Beat Cop yelled for help. To make matters worse, most of them bring a few spirits along for the party. This is the one situation in which my advice is to run; unless you've got a whole bunch of magicians who are all real quick on the uptake, you're probably not going to be able to beat down a pair of talented magecops plus their spirit buddies plus the mundane troopers who are most likely still sending bullets your way. Scatter and fight another day—and next time, don't get so flashy with your magic. With magic as with everything else in this biz, the most effective strategy is to minimize the trouble you get into in the first place.

>>>>(Sound advice. But if you absolutely have to fight in this situation, there's a couple of things you can try. First, ditch any and all foci or spell locks or anything else you may be packing that can act as a link between the astral and physical planes. If there's no link, astral spirits and spells can't do a fragging thing to hurt you. The spirit can still nail you, but it has to manifest first—which means you might get in some good licks. (Most spirits don't like to manifest for precisely that reason.) Second, if you're a drek-hot mage, you can always go for broke with spirits of your own. (I don't even want to think about the drain you'll suffer, but if you're this desperate ... what've you got to lose, eh?)

One last thing to remember, for all you folks out there shaking in your shoes: this level of magical opposition is expensive and rare. Odds are you won't face anything quite this bad, so breathe easy.)<<<<<

—Mistik (09:20:31/01-19-57)

>>>>(But not too easy.)<<<<<

—X-Star (11:02:34/01-19-57)

CORPORATE MAGICIANS

by BizWatcher

Combat mages, security shamans, and physical adepts—those are the three kinds of magic-slingers you're likely to meet when you raid a corp site. (I'm assuming a relatively major corp, even if it's not one of the Big Eight; most little mom-and-pop corps can't afford to pay magically gifted personnel decently. Magic-users don't come cheap.) A lot of the strategies Casper mentioned in his piece work as well against corp wizards as against Lone Star magecops. The trick is to know what kind of opposition you'll be facing before you start your run, and plan accordingly.

AZTECHNOLOGY

Of the Big Eight corps, Aztechnology and Saeder-Krupp have the absolute best magical defenses, and that includes combat magicians. Aztechnology is a particularly bad corp to tangle with in this regard—as some of you may have read in the recent Aztlan post, Aztechnology has about twice the number of magically active security personnel that other corps have (including Saeder-Krupp). In terms of raw numbers, that may not sound like much when you consider how few magicians work in corp security—maybe one out of fifty Azzie hardboys is a mage or a physad, as opposed to one out of a hundred at Renraku. BUT ... and this is an important “but” ... the Azzies also have mojo to burn making magical gewgaws for their mundane sec-guards. The mundanes can’t sling spells or throw spirits your way, but they’re amazingly tough to cut down. Hell, they’re tough even to inconvenience. They’ve got all the magical doodads Casper talked about, and more—combined detect bullet/bullet barrier spells, extended-range detect enemies/acid bomb or fire bomb spells, you name it. We’re talking nasty stuff—so if you’re planning on partying with Aztech security forces, make sure you’ve got lots of magic and plenty of ammo. And make your planning airtight—no mistakes, or you’ll likely end up dead. You’ll need every scrap of edge you can get just to survive, let alone come out with the paydata.

Just so you know what you’re up against, I’ll describe for you a run-in with a typical Azzie security team that I had the misfortune to meet during a run in the Az sector of Denver. My guess is you’ll run into slags like these at just about any Aztech facility. There were six of them: two combat mages, a physical adept, and three mundane razorboys. My cobbbers and I did what we thought was the smart thing: we booked down the hall and around a couple of corners, dodging magic and bullets all the way, then split up so we could take on the sec-boys from different directions. (We’d sussed the layout of the place pretty thoroughly beforehand, so we knew which corridors led to what.) We figured to take on the cyberboys first, since they were the weakest link.

Three of us—me, Lizard and McGarrity—managed to come up behind the razors. One of them had a spatial recognizer, so he knew where we were before his chummers did, but we’d figured on that. Brought our longest-range guns plus a couple of crossbows—Lizard loves ‘em, she’s the only person I know who can fire two at once. Anyway, the cyberboys spun around with their guns up just as we opened fire. They were a second too late, just like we’d planned—we let the APDS fly and waited for our targets to explode.

We got our explosion, all right—about ten feet short of the cyberguards. Turns out they were carrying quickened detect bullet/bullet barrier and detect explosives/blast barrier spells. Silly us; we’d figured they wouldn’t have any magical protection because they were so heavily cybered. Cyber frags up magic, right? So a razorboy can’t use magic, right? Wrong. Well, okay, technically right—but dead wrong in this situation. See, we forgot one crucial fact—a mundane razorboy carrying a quickened spell isn’t actually using magic. His mage buddy’s the one who whipped up the spell. So the razorboy’s cyber doesn’t frag up a thing—except us, of course. We stood there and gaped for a few precious milliseconds when we should have been beating feet. One of the cyberboys’ guns coughed, and McGarrity went down in a fountain of blood. Lizard and I ran. We skidded around a corner, and Lizard ducked back just long enough to fire a crossbow bolt at the razors. Went right through his throat, as sweet a shot as I’ve ever seen; appar-

ently his detect bullet spell didn’t work against other projectiles.

That was our only piece of luck. The rest of the team wasn’t doing too well against the physad and the two mages. The mages worked as a team, taking turns throwing mana bolts and powerballs. Our mage, Cindy Moon, tossed up a mana barrier, but sustaining the thing was costing her big-time. Finally it collapsed, and so did she. Went down for the count, leaving Cyber Charlie and poor old Rat to guard her with nothing more than machine guns and wired reflexes. Rat fired once at the physad, who sidestepped the entire spray of slugs. Charlie let off some





rounds at the Azzie mages, just for something to do—he had to know the bullets would never reach their targets. The Azzie wizard boys didn't miss a beat—they each flung a powerball, one at Rat and Charlie and one at Cindy. Charlie's wires paid off; he threw himself out of the line of fire, getting his hair singed in the process. The spells burned Cindy good, and threw Rat so hard into the wall that I could hear his neck snap. That's one thing about the Azzies—they don't care if you're already down, they'll kill you just for the frag of it.

Meanwhile, the physad hung back and watched the show. Lizard and I went for him, figuring he might be distracted enough by the magical fireworks for us to plug him. He wasn't. He flashed up right next to Lizard, so fragging fast I swear he practically teleported. Before she could take even a step away, he'd grabbed her still-loaded crossbow and shot her in the chest with it. Then he looked at me, like a butcher figuring out just how to slice up a side of beef. I tossed a knife at him, and he caught it like I'd lobbed him an easy fly ball. I lost it then—broke and ran. Some time later, I realized that Charlie was running right beside me. Wheels was waiting with the truck and didn't say a word when he saw us—just gunned the motor and took off. Why the Azzie hardboys didn't come after us and finish us off, I'll never know—maybe we weren't worth the trouble or something. Call me crazy, but somehow I don't exactly feel grateful.

So now you know what kind of trouble you're in for if you tackle an Azzie security team. And remember—the wonderful folks I just described are your average security. I hate to think of what's waiting for anybody who tries to crack into a really sensitive Aztech lab.

>>>>(Well, whaddaya expect if you're dumb enough to take the Azzies head-on? You don't do that unless you've got a fragging army at your disposal. Me, I like the subtle approach. Assense the place from a ways off, map out where the magically active personnel are and how they're moving, and then send in a watcher or two to find whatever it is you're after. Tell the watcher the exact route to follow, but also tell it that any orders you give it to change directions supersede the preplanned route. Then keep an astral eye on it as it goes through the installation, and make sure it stays well away from the corp mages. Once it's found the stuff you want, call it back and plan your strategy for getting the prize. A friend of mine has an ally spirit that he sends in on fetch-and-carry missions; the ally goes in astrally, dodges the sec-mages and watchers, manifests physically to get whatever he's after, and then walks out while my friend and some samurai chummers are raising holy hell at the gate. Works like a charm.)<<<<<

—Gentle Ben (03:41:55/01-16-57)

>>>>(That's some ally spirit, if it'll risk itself for some lousy paydata or whatever.)<<<<<

—Skeptic (03:44:57/01-16-57)

>>>>(I happen to value my friends highly. Is that so strange?)<<<<<

—Balthasar (04:10:33/01-16-57)

>>>>(I went on a run against an Aztech lab in Tacoma, and we got past the security team easy. Before we went in, our shaman cast spells on all of us with cyber to increase our reaction time, because we figured we'd need it to deal with the Azzie razors and any physads they happened to have. She also set up a wizard chaotic world spell, anchored to our lead samurai's body armor and linked to a detect enemies spell so that the chaotic world would go off as soon as the security team showed up. We snuck into the place with a little help from our rigger, and everything went according to plan. The Azzie team we ran into had two mages and two physads, but all of them succumbed to the chaotic world spell for long enough to let us charge past them. We'd been practicing our strategy for weeks, having our mage cast chaotic world on us so's we could fight off its effects—which is exactly what we did. One of the physads recovered quickly enough to toss a couple of throwing stars our way, and caught Cannonball in the shoulder—but Cannonball's a troll, and even though he's slow he's fragging hard to take down. Cannonball just kept moving, like he didn't feel a thing. Maybe he didn't. Anyway, we booked real quick down the hall, and as we rounded the first corner I played our last trump card—I dropped a little pendant, a piece of scrimshaw carved in the shape of a walrus. Just the kind of thing that might be a talisman, y'know? Well, one of the mundane razorboys got to the cross corridor first and started to pick up the pendant. An Azzie mage saw him and yelled at him not to touch it, but it was too late. As soon as the razorboy's hand touched the scrimshaw, the stink spell anchored to it went off. We were already out of the spell's range, so I don't know exactly what happened—but no Azzie mages came roaring after us right away, so it must have worked pretty good. By the time the hardboys' guts stopped heaving, they'd lost track of us—and we made sure to stay good and lost until we got what we came for and got out of there.)<<<<<

—Crow (00:01:34/01-19-57)

SAEDER-KRUPP

Saeder-Krupp is another fun one to tangle with. They don't have as many magically active personnel as Aztechnology, but they integrate them real well with the regular security, and you can bet there's one mean combat mage assigned to practically every guard patrol. The best thing I can say about Saeder-Krupp security teams is that at least their mages rarely work in pairs—in order to have enough to go around, they have to spread 'em pretty thin. However, plenty of Saeder-Krupp's combat mages work in tandem with paracritters. Hell hounds seem to be the favorite; they can do lots of damage with their flaming breath, and they don't have many weaknesses to exploit.

One of the few magical tactics that I've seen work against hell hounds and other paracritters is to toss a control animal spell on them. With hell hounds, you've gotta make it a strong one—they're smart critters, and the smarter ones are harder to snare this way. But it can be done, and it slots up the combat mage to no end. Most of 'em can't resist trying to take back control of their little pet, which means that they're not paying full attention to magically scragging you. Take advantage of the distraction—toss a spell their way, or get your samurai buddies to lob a grenade



over. Better yet, set the hell hound on them. The hound's not gonna go for their throat, of course—control or no control, you can't make the beastie kill the guy whose spent months or years feeding it and training it. But you can turn that hell hound into one mighty inconvenient lap doggie. Tell it to love its handler like crazy. It'll jump up and down in front of him, lick his face, beg to be petted, playfully knock him down ... all very useful ways of keeping the combat mage off balance.

>>>>(You can use paranimals against paranimals, too. A friend of mine has a trained flock of birdmen, about ten of 'em, that he takes on runs whenever there's a good chance of running into paranormal watch-beasts. We hit a Saeder-Krupp lab outside New York City, and Vlad—that's my buddy, Vlad Tepes—brought the birdmen along because we knew the place was guarded by hell hounds with handlers who were serious combat mages. While we snuck toward the perimeter fence, watching the guard patrols go by, our decker cracked into the security system and killed the lights. We were about twenty yards away when we saw the lights go. Right on cue, Vlad released his little bird-bats, who flew straight for the patrol shrieking like gangbusters. The noise drove the hell hounds nuts—they started running every which way, flaming things at random out of sheer panic. The mage handler couldn't calm them down—they fragging near flamed him to death when he tried. He yelled for help, and half a dozen guard patrols came a-running to put down the crazed doggies. They didn't

want to kill them—trained hell hounds are expensive to replace—so nearly every combat mage in the place ended up in the front yard, throwing spells to contain the hell puppies. A bunch of mundanes came with them, ready to shoot if the doggies started going for the wizboys (who are also expensive to replace). With so many of the security personnel so nicely distracted, we strolled through a little side gate that our decker friend had obligingly unlocked, and got in and out with what we came for.)<<<<<

—Maze (02:04:55/01-19:57)

OTHER CORPS

Don't get the idea that the other six megacorps—or any other corporation with any kind of serious money—is some kind of magical pushover. Aztechnology and Saeder-Krupp may be the leaders of this particular pack, but all the big corps know how to play nasty when it comes to magic. Of the rest, Fuchi and Renraku are the closest to being "weak" on magical security; in Fuchi's case because most of the folks running it are mundanes who don't think about magic as much as they should, and in Renraku's case because of the sheer variation in security measures from site to site.

If you're after some kind of paydata from Fuchi, using magic to get in may be a good tactical move. Fuchi's prime product is its software, and they invest an awful lot of nuyen in Matrix defenses because that's where they expect the toughest attacks to come from. They've got decent physical security, too—Fuchi scientists are prime targets for extractions, which means that the bodies'll be

coming over the wall. Magical assaults, though, they don't expect—or at least, not as much. They've gotten better about it in recent years, but they still tend to treat magical protection as an afterthought. I've managed to sneak in and out of Fuchi installations using improved invisibility, tagging in at the end of the night-shift crowd so that the sounds of their passage would cover mine (and slipping real fast through closing doors). If you use this tactic, though, make sure to avoid walking over pressure sensors—your body weight isn't invisible, and you will trigger an alarm.

A decker chummer of mine once used the invisibility dodge to set up a nice back door into the local matrix system at a little Fuchi lab (and no, I won't tell you where). She had me cast improved invisibility on her, then marched in at the end of the late shift. The lab was working on a rush project, and they'd been bringing in lots of outside consultants—so when the spell wore off, nobody thought twice about seeing an unfamiliar face in a nicely cut suit working over at an empty terminal. It took her all night to set up the back door, and she left at the end of the shift. I'd set up a mask spell on a coral pinky ring she liked to wear, and so the minute she slipped the ring on she looked just like the legit consultant who'd fallen mysteriously ill that day, but hadn't managed to call in (heh-heh). The desk guard was bored and tired and hungry—he looked at my chummer, saw a somewhat familiar face, and waved her out. Sneaky but simple, the whole operation—no guns blazing, no fireball spells or other bulldozer-type stuff. Just a little subtle magic, crafted to fit the circumstances, so that my chummer could get in and do what she was best at. That's the best way to use magic, as far as I'm concerned. Forget about the frontal assault, especially if you're likely to go toe-to-toe with tough combat mages and magically augmented cyberboys loaded for bear. Why take on that kind of opposition unless you have to? Look for your target's weaknesses instead, and use your magic to exploit them.

>>>>(And if they don't have any exploitable weaknesses, hit 'em with all the cannons blazing. Powerballs, fireballs, flame bombs, plus as much mundane mayhem as you can manage. Hit 'em with enough drek all at once and you might stand a chance of getting through.)<<<<<

—Gunga Din (13:41:22/01-15-57)

SPECIAL FORCES AND OTHER TOUGH GUYS

>>>>(Okay, folks—here's where you talk to each other. Anybody who's ever met any of the really big magical guns—Wildcats, Paladins, Otonin, whoever—and survived some other way than just turning tail, tell us all about it. Be as specific as you can—if all you have to say is, "It was a tough fight, but we won," that's no help to anybody. We want to know how you did it, so maybe other people can do it too.)<<<<<

—Talon (05:33:41/01-11-57)

>>>>(Some buddies and I ran into a gang of Leopard Guards in the Seattle Aztech pyramid. Most of 'em were cybered up, but one was a physical adept. Used his Cougar Fineblade as a weapon focus. The cyberboys were bad enough, but it was pure

fragging hell trying to stay out of the adept's knife range. He nailed two of us before we got him. We closed around our mage, cuz we knew we were gonna need her against this slot. She whipped up a fire bolt spell, and we stepped aside just long enough to let her cast it through the Fineblade. The adept went up in flames, starting with the hand that held the magicked knife. Once he was down, the rest of the cyberboys weren't too hard to beat.)<<<<<

—Al Phee (01:32:45/01-11-57)

>>>>(You talkin' about Leopard Guards, Phee? You got some real cojones, man.)<<<<<

—Checkers (02:35:44/01-11-57)

>>>>(Nah—just wired reflexes, tough body armor, lots of guns, and plenty of experience.)<<<<<

—Al Phee (02:55:43/01-11-57)

>>>>(I had a similar run-in with some Jaguar Guards in Tenochtitlán. There were six of them, three physical adepts, all well armed. We knew we would run into them, so we prepared for it. In addition to me, we had two more physical adepts on our side—the best money could buy. The three of us challenged the Jaguar adepts to one-on-one combat, while the rest of our team and the other three guards trained their guns on each other to make sure that no one interfered. The Jaguars are a pretty machismo bunch—backing down from a challenge like that, especially one offered by a half-gringo female, was more than they could take, and they went for it. As soon as all three activated their weapon foci, our mage—who'd been watching from the astral, her body well guarded back at our coffin hotel—lobbed three quick chaos spells, one after the other, at the adept guards. Two seconds of confusion was all we needed to slit their throats, while our friends took out the cyberboys with gunfire.)<<<<<

—Santa Maria (20:32:55/01-13-57)

>>>>(You wanna know who the real scary slots are in Aztlan? The warrior orders in the army, that's who. Somebody said in the Aztlan post that they're initiatory, and he's dead right. I happened on one of their full-moon monthly meetings—never mind how—and assensed the locale—and let me tell you, there was some heavy magical drek going down. They were doing some kind of ritual sending, but it wasn't like anything I'd ever seen before. I've got plenty of friends who're both mages and shamans, who've let me observe their magical workings, and this Otonin ritual thing wasn't anything like anything else. It was ... twisted somehow. Warped. I can't explain it any better than that. I booked pretty quick after my first look-see—didn't want 'em catching me eavesdropping. Next day, I hear on the news that a local businessman suspected of secret dealings with the New Society of Jesus dropped dead at a board meeting. People there reported seeing a giant serpent appear out of thin air, wrap itself around this guy's neck and squeeze, then disappear like smoke. The official story had it that "the gods who watch over Aztlan" struck him down in their divine wrath. Me, I figure the Otonin did for him.)<<<<<

—Snoopy (14:55:12/01-13-57)



>>>>(Like drek, Snoop. If those Otonin slots had the kind of juice you're talking about, they'd've known you were there right off and cacked you. I don't know whether you were on something or whether you're just a lying frag, but I don't buy your story.)<<<<<<

—Tin Lizzie (16:44:21/01-23-57)

>>>>(I spent a little time in the Yucatán last year, and I fought units of mixed warriors and mundane soldiers. I can't say if the warriors are initiates, but they've got something magical on the ball. They led every unit they were in, and their units fought with uncanny cohesiveness. It was like they were communicating lightning-quick changes in orders with telepathy or something. When the main battle moved away from me for a bit, I took a second to assense the ACS soldiers. There was some weird kind of mana pattern connecting them, coming from the lead Eagle warrior and spreading across the whole unit. It looked like a dusting of rainbow feathers.)<<<<<<

—Doughboy (21:33:56/01-26-57)

>>>>(I had occasion to do a little business in Tir Tairngire late last year, which unfortunately brought me to the attention of the Bratach Gheal—the High Prince's bodyguard, known to most of the world as Paladins. According to the research I'd done before embarking on this little escapade, most Paladins are either physical adepts or cyberboys, but a few are combat mages. I had the luck (?) to meet a combat mage whose ceremonial armor contained an immense number of spell locks built into its ornamentation. His combat sense was phenomenally heightened, and he had locked-in barrier spells against almost every kind of weapon (including the brace of spells I had intended to cast on him, of course). My ally spirit, bless its heart, saved my hide—left to my own efforts I'd have died a terrible death. My ally used its formidable powers against the Paladin from astral space, engaging enough of his attention that he failed to notice the near end of the large park bench looming toward him until it was too late to dodge. The bench hit him on the neck—that's the weak spot in most plate armor, between the helmet and the back plate. He went down like a stack of cards. My telekinetic manipulation failed to break his neck, but wrought iron makes an amazingly effective club.)<<<<<<

—Mr. Mistofeles (13:34:51/01-29-57)

>>>>(Most of us shadowfolk don't have to worry about the Paladins—we'll never have occasion to meet them. The ones to worry on are the Ghosts—aka the Special Forces troops of Tir Tairngire. These scary fraggers are physical adept initiates, every last fragging one of them—and they are everywhere you want to be (if you're in biz, of course). That last is what makes them so dangerous. I don't care about the big nasty armed-to-the-teeth-and-magically-invulnerable slot who guards Lord High Muckety-Muck's butt, cuz I'm not planning on getting close to His Lordship—ergo, Mr. Big Bad Bogeyman will never be a threat to me. But the Special Forces slag acting as "on-site security consultant" to the top-secret corp installation that my Johnson's paying me meganuyen to sleaze into—him, I care about. He's gonna get in my way unless I can figure how to blow through him or sneak

around him. And when you're dealing with people like the Ghosts, neither one is easy.

I managed it once, though. I'd gotten in and out of where I was supposed to go, encountering just about the level of opposition I'd expected—which should have warned me. My buds and I were coasting away in our "borrowed" catering truck, congratulating ourselves on how well we'd coped with all the drek we'd anticipated, when suddenly I had this feeling that someone was watching us from somewhere. Almost as soon as I recognized the feeling, it vanished—but I've been in this biz too long to discount the sneaking little hunches you sometimes get. So I told my buds about it, and the three of us decided not to head for our rendezvous point yet. Instead, we'd drive around awhile and see if we could make our tall (if there was one) pop his head up from cover.

Well, we drove around for almost two hours, stopping for gas and stuffers and even a quick drink at a bar, but nothing happened except I got that prickles-at-the-back-of-your-neck feeling once or twice. We'd just about decided that for once my "hunch" was paranoia, when the Nightsky a few cars in front of us pulled a boneheaded move—he stopped dead about a meter from the intersection, then threw the car across two lanes of oncoming traffic to get to the turn lane. We didn't crash, but the resulting pileup stopped us cold. Godot, our rigger, got out of the truck to scope the situation and see if there was a clear path out of the jam, and that's when the Ghost struck. He just appeared out of nowhere right next to poor Godot and slammed him into the truck hood. Cracked his skull, I think. Jake brought his gun up right quick, then gave a yell and swung it around as a throwing star came flying at him. Lucky for Jake he's got good reflexes—the barrel of his FN-HAR sent the star spinning into the side of an armored car.

By this time, the Ghost's two cyberboy friends had piled out of a nearby vehicle and were sending rounds our way. Jake and I both ducked behind the truck and used the cover of the traffic jam to crawl away in opposite directions. I took a quick peek into the astral, saw that the razorboys were real close to the Ghost, and that Jake had crawled right next to a cab with its engine running that was a quick three-pointer away from a Stuffer Shack entryway. Hoping he'd pick up on the game plan, I made my move. Cast a beautiful ice sheet spell toward the Ghost and his friends, then sprinted toward Jake. The Ghost went down—I guess he'd been scanning the astral for me, so he was distracted. Even a physad's phenomenal reflexes can't keep him on his feet when too large a chunk of his consciousness is thinking about something else. He recovered pretty quick, but Jake managed to pull the cab around and shoot us outta there. Coupla slugs went through the back window, and I thanked the spirits for the detect bullet/bullet barrier spell locks I'd set up just a few days ago. (The cabbie was pretty snarked off about the bullet holes, so Jake shoved a credstick in his mouth and told him he could keep it if he shut up. He did.)

Jake and I were lucky, of course—we were only facing one Ghost and a couple of mundy cyberboys, not the usual six-man Special Forces unit. My guess is, the one we tangled with was supposed to keep us under surveillance until we'd led him to our rendezvous, at which point a whole bunch more Ghosts and gunnies



would've turned up to nail the big fish. Maybe our friend figured we'd gotten wise to him and took a chance where he saw it, or maybe he just wanted to grab a little glory by nabbing us single-handedly (or close to it, anyway). Whatever, he moved too soon, and Jake and I took advantage of the situation. Which brings me to a very important lesson, especially when you're dealing with major pains in the magical hoop. Planning is all well and good—it's essential, in fact. But improvisation has its uses as well. It's not enough just to have a well-written playbook—you've also got to know when to throw it away, cuz there's always going to be something that catches you by surprise.)<<<<<<

—MasterBlaster (22:31:12/01-29-57)

>>>>>(Anybody notice just how many secret warrior and mage societies the Tír na nÓg elves have? Most of 'em with unpronounceable names? Reach Fulleach, Order of Cu Chulainn ... weird drek like that.)<<<<<<

—DeWinter (01:33:24/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Lucky for us, these guys usually don't operate against us lowly runners unless we've fragged the dozen or so Ghosts they sent our way first. Or worse. It's rare for street rats like us to become the topic of conversation at the dinner table of the biggest, baddest elven magicboys. Course, that doesn't mean you'll never meet 'em. Elves have a long memory, and for all you know you made a pass at one of their lady friends in that bar last night. If so, bulk up on the magical protection and pray they forget you.)<<<<<<

—MasterBlaster (04:02:33/01-31-57)

>>>>>(Thanks to everyone for the input—sorry about those whose war stories didn't make it. I had to delete about 11.8 Mp, because we're running out of room. As far as getting useful info out of this goes, though, you're not missing much. Turns out almost all the posts in this little free-for-all talked about fighting the boys and girls of the Big A, the elf Paladins, and the Ghosts. (Just goes to show who the toughest are, I guess.)

I wanted to drop a note on another bunch of magic-heavy security slags you may run up against. Hardly anyone mentioned them, and I don't know why. I'm guessing either they're so tough that no one's survived to tell the tale (I doubt that) or they ain't protecting anything worth any real nuyen at the moment (much more likely). I'm talking about the Sioux Wildcats, who are just as tough as anything the Big A or the elves can toss at you. I've heard that the Sioux Special Forces test the physads who want to be Wildcats by blinding them and dropping them off in the wilderness. If they survive, they're in—if not, they're vulture food. So when I say these slots are tough, I mean they're tough.

Two things to keep in mind about the Wildcats. First, if you're facing off against them, you're almost always on their territory, which gives them the old home-field advantage. They probably know the ground a lot better than you do, so be prepared for that. Second, most likely they have shamans backing them up rather than hermetic mages. The shamans can call on different kinds of spirits (as we've talked about in various other posts), and they can make your life hell—especially if your idea of the Great Outdoors

is having a beer on the roof of your tenement. I hear a favorite tactic among Wildcat units is to have a shaman summon a spirit of the sky and make it turn to fog so the physads can pick you off one by one under its cover.

As regards dealing with all the various folks who are major magical bad news (in law enforcement or otherwise), everybody's stories came down to three basic tactics:

1. Blow the hell out of the bad guys head to head. (If only it was that easy!)
2. Sneak past them. (Planning! Planning! Planning!)
3. Psyche them out. (Hope it works!)

And what these three boil down to is planning—the kind of planning you can only do yourself. Don't trust what the Johnson tells you about the security setup. You need to observe, learn, figure out everything. Plan the run out to the bitter end, but remember to leave yourself some openings—if the drek hits the fan, you need to have backup options. Finally, if you suspect that you may have to deal with these walking magical death traps, make sure your magic is bigger, badder, and tougher. I know (better than most) that magic doesn't grow on trees—you can't just go down to the nearest mage recruitment office and pick up a handful of new chummers. That means you need to get to know people who can sling spells, so you'll have someone to call on when you need it. If you need a bigger gun, you buy one. If you need bigger magic, you better buy someone who can provide it. If that means sharing the pot with some new guy, so be it. Nuyen ain't no good if your carcass is smoked to a pile of ashes.

See you on the streets.)<<<<<<

—Talon (15:05:00/02-01-57)

MAGICAL THREATS

>>>>>(I hope this peek into the wonderful world of modern magic taught you all a bit about how to protect yourself against what's out there—or at least survive it. Somehow, it all seems almost manageable once you know what you're up against, doesn't it? Well, before you answer that question, maybe you'd better scan this post, because I've saved the worst for last. Toxic and insect spirits, vampires, wendigos, shapeshifters—the nastiest, most dangerous things the Awakening has spawned. Some of these threats really have it in for the rest of us—they're mean, malevolent and thirsty for our blood. Others are more alien than evil—we can't figure their plans because they don't think like any (meta)human does, but what they're plotting sure ain't for the good of the population. If you're not magically talented, there may not be much you can do against these threats, but if you die, you'll at least know what cacked you.

That said, I'll turn this file over to the esteemed magician Dr. Leopold Van Helsing, who has graciously offered to share his knowledge of toxic and insect spirits and shamans.)<<<<<<

—Talon (22:13:53/01-10-57)

TOXIC SPIRITS AND SHAMANS

Throughout history, the inquisitive minds of men have produced strange and wondrous technologies. Often, these technologies have been harnessed to benefit mankind and the crea-



tures of the world. But just as often, these technologies have produced harmful effects that none could have foreseen, for throughout history man's technological grasp has often exceeded his wisdom. His arrogance blinds him to the laws of nature, and he too often believes that he can bend the natural world to his will. In these instances, mankind's technologies may bring destruction, decay, pain, suffering and death—both to himself and to the rest of the world. Toxic shamans and toxic spirits are a by-product of these blunderings, mutations spawned from the polluted rivers and poisoned woods.

>>>>(Fool! Blind man! Open your eyes. Toxic spirits are no mere mutations of the natural order. These beings are Nature's revenge against mankind for the degradations he has subjected her to! Only after the blight called Man has been wiped clean from the Earth will the waters and winds run clear and true again!)<<<<<

—EcoBoy (09:34:10/01-14-57)

Perhaps the most disturbing manifestations of (meta)humanity's degradations are the toxic mutations of the Spirits of Man. These arise in domains where misery, poverty, cruelty, regimentation, repression and the denial of life reduce people to hopelessness.

All toxic spirits are easily recognized by their twisted, crippled-looking appearance in astral space. These beings are particularly dangerous because they possess all the powers of free spirits, plus they may travel outside of their domains at the orders of their summoning shamans.

>>>>(So you can't save your hoop by getting out of their domains?)<<<<<

—Tyro (05:12:42/01-17-57)

>>>>(Negative. They can and will follow a target. If you don't have the juice to go at them on the astral or banish them, your only chance is a physical attack.)<<<<<

—Koppafield (05:14:39/01-17-57)

>>>>(People like EcoBoy, they're the ones that you've gotta be wary of. Without them, there wouldn't be toxic spirits running around. I don't know the guy personally, but if he's got any magical talent at all I'd wager that one day he'll become a toxic shaman—if he isn't one already. You need a toxic shaman to call up a toxic spirit—regular shamans can't handle that kind of power and live.)<<<<<

—Friday (09:36:59/01-18-57)

>>>>(Those toxic shamans are some extremely dangerous individuals. There's a whole cabal of them living down in the rain forest of Amazonia. You mess with the rain forest, and these slots'll mess with you. I've heard stories of these guys razing entire villages 'cause some poor slag cleared himself a little patch of woods to farm.)<<<<<

—Bolívar (09:57:03/01-18-57)

Magic gave life and form to the twisted results of man's arrogant attitude toward his environment. Just as the nature totems speak to those who become shamans, so the twisted totems call to magically capable (meta)humans and create toxic shamans. The most widely accepted theory labels toxic shamans as crazy, though whether driven so by the toxic spirits or driven by madness to become toxic shamans remains undetermined.

In keeping with man's perpetual efforts to harness nature's most powerful forces, some toxic shamans believe it is their destiny to call toxic spirits and use them to avenge what they see as

the defilement of the earth. Others summon toxic spirits and order them to further spread the corruption of the domain from which they arise, believing that only by eradicating man from the earth will Gaia be saved.

>>>>(Wait a minute. I don't get it. If these guys are shamans, then what kind of totems do they follow?)<<<<<<
—Tyro (10:21:09/01-14-57)

>>>>(Bad-ass totems, that's what kind. Twisted, mutated, toxic totems. Say you got a toxic Dog totem. Now usually, Dog is loyal, loving, a fierce defender of his territory and protective of humans. But a toxic Dog totem is quite the opposite—a rabid, aggressive, ferocious destroyer of humanity. The toxic Dog seeks the death of those the healthy Dog would protect.)<<<<<<
—Argos (10:34:48/01-14-57)

The characteristic all toxic shamans share is a complete lack of compassion. Regardless of how reasonably they may justify their actions, you cannot predict their reactions to a threat or situation using the yardstick of normal (meta)human behavior. Toxic shamans dabble with absolute power, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

>>>>(Cut to the chase, buddy. Platitudes and homilies aren't gonna save our butts against meanies of this magnitude.)<<<<<<
—Sera-Sera (20:23:42/01-15-57)

Toxic spirits possess all the powers of healthy nature spirits, which, as you might guess, makes it almost impossible for (meta)humanity to coexist with free toxic spirits. Toxic spirits and shamans must be dealt with in the same ways as healthy nature spirits and shamans. Because I have never heard of a toxic shaman successfully undergoing rehabilitation, I must recommend that they be put to death. Toxic spirits can be banished, disrupted or destroyed in the usual fashions, but never controlled in any long-term way. However acceptable their reasons for certain actions, toxic shamans and spirits will eventually step over a line that sane people are not prepared to cross—and then, without question or hesitation, they must be dealt with in the most ruthless way conceivable.

>>>>(Whew! I think this guy must be a direct descendant of the man who hunted Count Dracula! Ordinarily I don't cotton much to extremists, but I've seen the work of toxics and Dr. Van Helsing's attitude is right on the money. I cheered for the spirit that rose from the Calumet toxic swamp when it destroyed the factories dumping pollutants into the water, and I even thought it was justified in razing the land for 100 yards around the swamp. But I guess it was just blind luck that it destroyed the factories when they were shut down for the weekend, because it soon started killing the people who worked in the factories, the owners, and the families of men who had historically owned industrial works on that property. Then it went for banks that had loaned money to the owners, companies that sold the factories everything from office supplies to raw materials, and it got worse from there. The shaman controlling this spirit really did his homework.

Though many shamans sent spirits against the toxic, the toxic always won—probably through sheer oneriness. The rampage ended in a really spectacular battle. Lots of colors and lights and explosions shooting up from the depths of the swamp. The toxic was finally destroyed by what we later learned was a free spirit. The trouble is, of course, that no one knows why the free spirit stepped in. Maybe it had its own plans for the area. All we could do was hope its goals were less destructive than the toxic's.)<<<<<<
—Formerly from Chi-town (19:56:12/02-01-57)

INSECT SPIRITS AND SHAMANS

Let's move on to another, equally dangerous magical threat—insect spirits and shamans.

Ants, flies, termites, wasps, roaches, mantids—these are the insect totems. No one really knows where they come from, no one can really explain their existence or their goals. But nearly everyone (except for the shamans of these totems) agrees that these strange totems are very, very dangerous. Of all the generally harmful totems, the insect totems target their activities most obviously and relentlessly against (meta)humanity.

Generally, insect shamans believe they can use an insect totem for their own gain when they first accept the totem's guidance. When you consider the vast power these totems wield, the temptation is easily understood. In all cases, however, the alien nature of the totem eventually emerges and becomes ascendent, and the totem ends up using the shaman for *its* own ends.

>>>>(Hey, I gotta question. How is it that all the bad guys are shamans? If you believe this post, the nature boys are responsible for raising all the nasty stuff in the world. Anybody ever hear of a hermetic gone wrong?)<<<<<<
—Sera-Sera (18:34:52/01-23-57)

>>>>(Sure. Plenty of mages take advantage of their power to do the dirty to the rest of the world. As has been said many times, many ways, magic is neither inherently good or evil. Magic simply is, and (meta)humanity uses it properly or twists it, according to its nature.

That basic fact provides the key to why shamans come off on the wrong end of the stick more often than mages when the talk centers on evil magic. Totems call their shamans, almost always according to their nature. Dog would not call to someone who harbors a deep, abiding fear of dogs. Eagle would not call to a magic user with a crippling fear of heights. So it stands to reason that shamans who accept the toxic totems already live in a world filled with hate and fear and the thirst for revenge. Shamans who follow the insect totems carry an overwhelming and undeniable lust for power and influence. If the world offered no magical power, these poor slubs would find another way to satisfy their demons.

In my opinion, the logical conclusion to this argument must be that hermetic mages who turn to evil are even more despicable than shamans who twist their magic. For while shamans may lay part of the blame for their actions on the totems that influence them, hermetics have no such convenient excuse. They must shoulder full responsibility for their deeds.)<<<<<<

—Magister (07:45:03/01-24-57)

>>>>(This question of self-determination in the use of magic is, in fact, one of the basic debates among magic users and those who study the magic phenomenon. Answering questions like this one is way beyond the scope of the magic info I've gathered and posted as Awakenings, but the fact that a mundane asked the question proves that this post is serving its purpose. If you want to support or contradict Magister's comments, please take it to another page.)<<<<<

—Talon (14:22:41/01-24-57)

Our verifiable knowledge of the insect spirits and totems is quite sketchy, too much so for real comfort. The recent incident in Chicago, the shake-up within the Universal Brotherhood, the Crashcart debacle—all these events increased our store of facts regarding the insect spirits, but much remains to be learned. We can, however, state several accurate generalizations. There are, apparently, two categories of insect spirits: hive-based (such as ant, fly and wasp) and solitary (primarily roach and mantid). We also know that all insect spirits take one of two forms—flesh form or true form. The appearance of flesh-form insect spirits varies widely, from bizarre hybrids of insect and (meta)human forms to successful merges that leave the (meta)human form unmarked. (In the case of spirit-(meta)human merges that leave the flesh body intact, only an astral assensing of the "person's" aura will reveal the nature of the hybrid.) True-form insect spirits resemble the totem insect but are human-sized.

>>>>(This guy kills me. He refers to the destruction of a significant section of Chicago by way of tactical nuke and the subsequent quarantine of hundreds of thousands of hapless souls as an "incident." I don't consider the discovery of a huge nest of bugs and the knowledge that they'd infested most of the city an incident. I also think that the continuing existence of torporific bug spirits drifting through astral space over the area is a pretty big deal. Let's face it. The government has no clue how to handle the situation, they're obviously not taking any helpful advice from the magical community, and people are dying every day because the Sixth World finally grabbed a challenge it couldn't defeat. Hell,

we can't even understand the problem, which makes finding a solution especially tricky.)<<<<<

—Sally (05:12:53/01-27-57)

>>>>(Our best guess at this tick of the clock is that the more powerful the queen of the hive, the better success rate she gets on hatching flesh forms that look, talk and act like the real person they took over. The right-now theory is that the UB was headed up by some of the biggest and baddest, which was how they kept their cover for so long. 'Course, there must've been a boatload of willing devotees, too—shamans and hermetics and street sam-

mies and deckers and just regular people happy to accept the bug leadership for any number of could-be excellent reasons. Some of those hangers-on might've felt honored by the chance to become host bods for bugs, and disappointed when the transform process didn't look like a good match. Word to the wise: it's a sad, dangerous old world when people see roaches and flies as the next good thing. You know something's gone horribly wrong in the collective psyche when being a bug looks more attractive than being a person.)<<<<<

—Martha (06:24:51/01-27-57)

>>>>(Ain't that the truth. Ever since I found out that the bug spirits can look just like real people, I've been afraid to go anywhere public. I keep expectin' the guy next to me at the library or the StufferShack or the water cooler to be a bug. I know they don't just break out of their skin and eat your head, but I heard a story that if you look at them just right, you can see their true nature. Straight on they look human or troll or dwarf or whatever, but from

the corner of your eye they look like a wasp or a fly or an ant. Pretty gross, but it kept the guy telling the story alive.)<<<<<

—Timid Tom (06:35:12/01-27-57)

>>>>(Hey, don't believe everything you read, OK? And make sure you know the difference between the healthy fear that keeps you alive and the paranoia that makes you hide in your squat. Who knows if the UB-bug rumor is even true? And anyway, it is statistically unlikely that every city in the world, or even most cities,



contain a nest of bugs. Don't paralyze yourself by imagining astral threats when so many physical threats stand ready to finish you off. It's the job of this post to warn us and inform us of the many ways we can die by magical means. It's our responsibility to keep magical threats in perspective.)<<<<<

—Argent (14:26:02/01-30-57)

>>>>>(What did old Vanny mean by "the Crashcart debacle"?)<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (13:14:23/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Well, let's see. We're talking about grievous examples of bug spirits infiltrating the everyday world in some truly nefarious way. Stands to reason that the doc is saying that the rapid rise and fall of Crashcart had something to do with the bugs. Duh.)<<<<<

—Know-it-All (14:13:45/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Anyone who doubts this or the following drek should take a look at the Bug City file elsewhere on this board.)<<<<<

—Leopoldo (20:31:29/01-31-57)

>>>>>(I guess you need to get yourself a giant can of bug spray if you're gonna go up against these things.)<<<<<

—Joker (21:02:51/01-31-57)

>>>>>(Actually, that little joke holds some truth. All insect spirits are vulnerable to insecticides. Of course, they're infinitely larger than normal insects, so you'll need some pretty strong stuff and pretty generous quantities of it—but the basic idea's the same.)<<<<<

—Bug Hunter (21:12:04/01-31-57)

All hives are centered around queen spirits, highly intelligent and deadly beings. The queen offers a conduit of totem power for insect shamans and also has the power to create new insect spirits herself. The queen's sole purpose is to strengthen the nest by obtaining human hosts to carry new insect spirits and so to secure territory for the hive. Queens may use brute force to achieve their goals, or more subtle means.

Hives are the most difficult insect manifestation to eradicate. Because we lack complete knowledge of the insect spirit nature, it remains impossible for us to determine how to erase them from our world. As Chicago proved, even the UCAS, supported by the corps and informed by the magical community, could find no more satisfactory solution to destroying the hive at the city's center than to detonate a nuclear device within the nest. This response did not kill all the bug spirits, and we can only assume that the explosion killed the nest's queen, for we have no real evidence to support that assumption.

Solitary insect spirits include roach and mantid spirits. The females of these bugs can reproduce on their own, so an insect shaman need only summon one female to spawn an entire generation of bug spirits.

>>>>>(And I thought the rats were getting big and mean ... >shudder<)<<<<<

—X-terminator (21:09:44/02-01-57)

Mantid spirits break the few rules we accept as true about other insect spirits. Emerging mantid spirits do not incubate in human hosts, but must be invested into a (meta)human host of the same gender. Rather than focusing their efforts on destroying (meta)humankind, mantid spirits feed on other insect spirits. And because female mantid spirits always manifest as flesh-form spirits that show no sign of their insect form, and can continue to function as the person the host used to be, mantid spirits show a decided preference for living among humans.

Though these characteristics seem to indicate that mantids and (meta)humans might make suitable allies against the threat other insect spirits present, mantids show no particular affection for humans, and in fact ruthlessly dispose of those humans who purposefully or inadvertently interfere with their unknowable plans.

>>>>>(Mantids are SCARY. The females mostly look like real babes with that ever-so-appealing touch of exotica that really turns on about three-quarters of the male population, every race. And they're mondo unpredictable (more so than even the most human girl-chick)—you never know until it's too late whether they want you for your body or if they just want your body. Speaking as one who knows, my advice is, never try to talk them out of what they say they want to do, no matter how weird it sounds.)<<<<<

—Close Call (24:13:42/01-20-57)

>>>>>(You all are missing part of the picture here. Nature always creates a good to balance out the bad; in the case of the bugs, the good is the firefly spirits, the butterfly spirits, the ladybug spirits and the other beautiful, benign entities that brighten our lives without doing us harm. And if the same circumstances that give me the opportunity to observe these spirits also put me in danger of dying a horrible death at the hands of another type of bug spirit—well, I believe the experience was worth the cost.)<<<<<

—Zoologist (12:34:26/01-29-57)

>>>>>(You're nuts! What about the hundreds of thousands of people lured into ... never mind. I'll never convince you that you're wrong, so why bother?)<<<<<

—X-terminator (13:17:29/01-29-57)

THE INFECTED

>>>>>(This topic is a pretty controversial one. We're talking about vampires, wendigos, goblins, dzoo-noo-qua and banshees—creatures that drain the life force from other (meta)humans to live. You'll notice I used the word "other" in that sentence, implying that the infected belong to the same races as you and I. Now, I know a general statement like that will stir up some flak, but the scientific community feels statistically confident that the five types of entities I listed above are (in order) humans, orks, dwarfs, trolls and elves infected with some strain of the HMHVV, the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus.

If they're just a variation on the standard theme, you ask, then why put them under magical threats? Perhaps you failed to grasp the full implications of "creatures that drain the life force from other (meta)humans to live." I don't know about you, but I can

think of cleaner ways to die than by having the essence of my being sucked away by some ugly, amoral son-of-a-slitich that used to be like me but who has lost all sense of what it means to be (meta)human.

Gotcha, you say. Bad juju, you agree. But aren't these things about as common as snow in July? Oddly enough, I reply, the wild weather patterns of the twenty-first century make that a pretty good comparison. No, you probably won't meet one around every corner or in every club where you meet Mr. Johnson. You might live your whole life and never even know someone who knows one of the infected. But look at your line of work. You're a troubleshooter for the world at large, and the infected by definition are trouble that needs to be shot. So yeah, you need to know—at least enough to recognize the signs of the infected so you can prepare to deal with the threat.

There're no self-styled or board-certified experts on this subject, so I had to dig a little harder than usual to get enough info to give you a well-rounded picture. What I dug up were first-person accounts of encounters with the infected. Read it and weep, folks—or just polish up those weapons and spells.)<<<<<

—Talon (23:07:15/01-10-57)

>>>>>(I know this will sound like an apology, but vampires are people, too. I lived with a vampire for nearly ten years, and in all that time he never once tried to feed on me or anyone I knew. He was a real

stand-up guy, a generally good person to have on your side in a scuffle—superhuman strength, hearing and smell, immunity to poisons, pathogens and aging, thermographic vision and the ability to transform into mist really come in handy in a fight. We were friends before he became a vampire, and we stayed friends after. I wasn't there to study him or find his weaknesses or even to discourage him from following his nature, we just got along really well and found it economically convenient to share a house. I know vampires are unnatural beings with unnatural habits, but some of

them are also just nice guys trying to make it in a world that doesn't really want them around.)<<<<<

—Jackie R. (23:15:07/01-13-57)

>>>>>(Vampires show as much variation in behavior and attitude as people; they're not all psychopathic killers cacking their victims

for food and fun, but they are all abominations against nature and therefore must be eradicated. Only a handful of humans suffer the infection that creates vampires, but it only takes one spreading its disease to others, and then those victims in turn spreading the disease to establish a community that seriously endangers the normal population.

Man, the only good vampire is a dead one—and I should know, I've killed eight of them, including two nosferatu. Four I hounded into a bloodlust that made them careless and therefore vulnerable; one took out most of my team before I managed to burn it to death; one I killed nearly by accident; and the two nosferatu—well, I think they must have been looking to die because they went with a minimum of fuss.

It's no simple task to kill a vampire, primarily because the majority of these monsters are magically active. Their "natural" powers give them a huge advantage over even the best-equipped, most magically powerful (meta)humans, and their regenerative powers make it extremely difficult to inflict them with permanent, deadly damage. It has yet to be determined if the HMHVV

selects for magically active hosts or if magical ability is a side effect of the virus, but because they live so long and spend most of their unnatural lives honing their instincts to stay alive, most vampires eventually become unbelievably powerful mages or shamans.)<<<<<

—Deathblow (11:45:32/01-14-57)

>>>>>(... Vampires have a pecking order, which makes it a little easier to figure out the one who's going to be hardest to kill. If you're up



against a group of vampires, the newest undead will protect the oldest undead, whether by choice or compulsion. So the vamp that doesn't rush you is likely to be the most powerful. ...)<<<<<

—Killer Diller

(13:28:41/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Of all the infected I have encountered, the worst violation of the natural order have got to be wendigos. They possess a deadly mix of physical and magical powers, and use both very effectively according to the whims of a malign intelligence. They lack any semblance of normal socialization, existing only to satisfy their abhorrent appetites. Not content to simply feed for survival, they take great pleasure in corrupting normal humans, influencing their victims into cannibalism and then feeding on the flesh and life force of those lost souls. While others of the infected may be pitied as beings forced to live outside the natural order of things, wendigos must be dealt with as the blackest evil.)<<<<<

—The Huntress

(01:56:21/01-22-57)

>>>>>(The unfortunate thing about going to ground in the furthest outskirts of civilization is that the desolate wastes tend to offer just as many dangers as the sprawl, if different ones. I was hiding from my favorite corporate target on the wildest edges of the ubiquitous unnameable city, getting by on travel rations and a few of my favorite vid-books, sinking to new depths of boredom by the second week of playing you-can't-find-me. I have strong survival instincts and I never get distracted enough to give myself away, but I also knew that the corp trackers would be smart enough to follow the one clue I'd unavoidably left on my trail.

On the eleventh day, as I was erasing the signs that I'd ever been where I was, all the fine hairs on my body came to attention at once—a mere second before the low, moaning sound regis-

tered with my augmented ears. Without conscious thought I was running, my wired reflexes flawlessly choosing the path of least

resistance. My heart was outracing my adrenal pump; it felt as if my blood were thickening in my veins. At that moment, I believed my fear and panic swirled about me in a palpable cloud, and the screaming creature keeping pace with me seemed to grow stronger with every terrified step I took. As I felt my bodily functions begin to shut down, a thunderbolt struck my tormentor and we collapsed to the ground simultaneously, me in near-cardiac arrest and the banshee in writhing agony.

Though I rebel daily against my sentence to serve the corporation until I die in return for my life, I much prefer a death in battle to succumbing to the crushing weight of unnatural fear.)<<<<<

—Corp Meat

(10:15:54/01-30-57)

>>>>>(If you're reading this, I must be dead. I swore I would only let my stories be told after I was gone because I was mortally tired of hearing every fraggin' listener say, "You're lying, old man. Everybody knows the infected don't act that way."

Either I was the unluckiest bounty hunter ever to track the infected or my line of work just gave me a wider perspective on infected behavior, but it seems I always ran up against targets that didn't behave according to accepted wisdom.

There was the time, for example, when I was trailing a dzoo-noo-qua accused of killing two entire families. Personally, I tend to believe creatures are sentient until proved otherwise, so I was playing this hunt by the same book I used to bring in normal (meta)humans. Turned out to be a good plan. The deequa in question managed to travel to Europe under a couple of false SINS and bury itself in the chaos of Berlin. After a couple of weeks, I picked up





its trail when it surfaced in a vid report of an attack by the ORC poll-club against a mid-sized family-owned business, and ran it to ground in a goblin lair on the south edge of the walled city. To make a long story short, the goblins worked together like a well-oiled machine to defend their territory and the deequa led the assault with frightening efficiency. They effectively repulsed everything but my stonk of concussion mini-grenades—I walked in, trussed the deequa and rolled him out like taking candy from a baby.

This individual was exceptional for his subspecies, but not atypical. And that's the lesson for today, boys and girls—never underestimate your opponent, no matter what the scientific community says.)<<<<<<

—Brisco (07:56:12/01-30-57)

>>>>>(Talon, how'd that fairy tale get in here?)<<<<<<

—Sera-Sera (12:12:44/01-30-57)

OTHER THREATS

>>>>>(We've covered the active threats to (meta)humanity, but there are still other beings and situations that can mess up magickers and mundanes alike. The first of these is shapeshifters, animals that can assume human form. In most cases, shapeshifters do not actively pursue goals harmful to (meta)humanity, but they fall into the threats category by virtue of their "alien" mindset—they see things from an animal point of view, one most humans can't understand.

We also have to watch out for and defend against the rich variety of general nasties floating around in astral space waiting to take advantage of our vast ignorance and inexperience in things magical. Finally, we've recently found out about an even more puzzling and disturbing phenomenon—blank spots over Aztlan where there should be mana.

Once again, I've collected first-person accounts to describe these threats. Feel free to chime in with your two-nuyen's worth.)<<<<<<

—Talon (10:45:12/01-11-57)

>>>>>(Beware the shapeshifter, my friends, and tread not on its fearsome tail. (I think I mangled that classic line pretty neatly, don't you?)

A shapeshifter can be one of the most cunning adversaries you'll ever face. Because they're animals first, they've got very strong survival and hunting instincts. Okay, you say, so shapeshifters are animals with instincts, so fraggin' what. Well, instincts are like reflexes—they're automatic. A tiger doesn't have to think about how he's gonna bring down his dinner. He already knows what's good to eat and he knows how to catch it. Killing is an instinct; he's born knowing how to do it. And that instinct makes him fast—faster than any unaugmented human.

And because shapeshifters are animals following their instincts, they're not likely to be troubled by any moral qualms or human weaknesses when the drek hits the fan. You can see how that's a tricky call whether you're working with one or facing off against one.)<<<<<<

—Radl Cal (14:25:41/01-14-57)

>>>>>(Are werewolves shapeshifters? This description seems to fit them perfectly.)

—Serling (23:42:11/01-18-57)

>>>>>(Some people claim that the ancient werewolf legend suggests the existence of a species of pre-Awakened shapeshifters. But no one can prove it.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (23:55:01/01-18-57)

>>>>>(Ah, but there's even more. Anyone who cares to consult Paterson's Guide will see that shapeshifters display a severe allergy to silver—a trait they share with the werewolf. And they also assume their animal forms when the moon is full.)<<<<<<

—Lon (24:10:36/01-19-57)

>>>>>(The silver allergy is accurate. And some shapeshifters prefer their animal forms during full moons. But their transformations are not governed by the lunar cycle.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (24:15:05/01-19-57)

>>>>>(Think whatever you want, but beware—for even a man who goes to church by day and says his prayers at night may become a wolf when the wolfsbane blooms and the moon shines bright.)<<<<<<

—Lon (24:19:58/01-19-57)

>>>>>(Folks, remember the distinction we're making here. As far as we know now, werewolves do not exist. People who believe they've sighted werewolves undoubtedly saw shapeshifters. If you've never known a shapeshifter except in his human form, then you might easily believe he is a werewolf when he shifts to his animal form. Your mistaken belief doesn't change the fact that shapeshifters are animals first.)<<<<<<

—D. Bunker (24:32:12/01-19-57)

>>>>>(The Were use their keen senses in both human- and were-form to ensure their survival—we are so far outnumbered in this world that we must guarantee the continuation of our species by any means necessary. Though we adapt quickly to respond to unfamiliar situations, the ways of humans and the others still confuse us, and we are forced to rely on others to teach us what they can and do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We live in anticipation of the day those we trust will betray us. They always do, whether deliberately or by accident. That is why we think differently from others: our life is only about survival.)<<<<<<

—Animal Man (15:36:48/01-26-57)

>>>>>(Now I get it. The Were are just incredibly big, extra-dangerous animals, right? Like a tiger-plus. Along with the mondo-strong survival instincts of every animal, they've got human intelligence and a human form, but very little reason to act like a normal human with a conscience. Wowee-zowee! Good thing there's not very many of them, or we'd all start lookin' like so many sheep. How do we protect ourselves? Lay on our backs with our hands and feet in the air?)<<<<<<

—Rabbit Ears (22:09:12/01-28-57)

>>>>(Silly wabbit. Those tricks are for kids (now that I mention it, a young goat would taste good about now ...). Living with Were is really very simple. Learn to recognize the power we represent even when we're in our human forms, and stay out of our way.)<<<<<

—Tiger-Tiger (04:45:56/01-29-57)

>>>>(I chose this next post from about a thousand similar ones on the net—and who knows how many more magic users have had comparable experiences but not posted them? My point is, we know more about life on Mars than about what goes on in the astral plane. We must fear the unknown, at least enough to keep our edge against the things that go bump in the night. You should heed all the warnings posted on this board, because being cautious is the only way to stay alive in the Awakened world.)<<<<<

—Talon (15:52:21/02-01-57)

>>>>(I gotta tell you about my encounter with the "blob" of astral space. This thing was hanging out on the etheric plane above the site of a factory that used to manufacture buttons (not that I think that fact has anything to do with my story) and that a couple of go-gangs now use as a headquarters. I was doing a little astral surveillance one day for a Mr. Johnson of my acquaintance, and I ran into this shapeless, shifting mass in astral space. I was instantly ready to fight, but it didn't seem all that interested in me. There were two small spheres floating toward the top of the mass that I assumed served as the thing's eyes, for lack of a better word, that turned briefly toward me and then back to the astral version of the factory. Everything there was mundane except for two gangers carrying spell locks of some sort. One of those two was working on a Rapier, the other was leaning against the wall nodding his head in time to the thrash blasting from huge speakers hung from the catwalks.

I was a little leery of the blob, so I kept my distance and waited to see what it was up to. As I watched, the blob snaked out a tiny tendril of itself and touched the spell lock of the ganger leaning against the wall. The moment the tendril connected, the ganger folded to the floor and his aura blanked out. I flashed my glance to the blob and held off on the hellblast I'd whipped up to off this murderer—the critter had gone translucent and flattened to a hairline, the spheres flashing alternately blue and red. Far as I could tell, it was upset, even frightened.

I looked back at the factory. All the gangers were gathered around their dead companion except for the slub working on the bike, and he kept looking over his shoulder at the other gangers, his hands full of parts that he apparently couldn't drop. Too late I noticed another tendril just as it touched the spell lock on the second ganger's body, and he also died instantly. Unfortunately, when he fell something sparked and lit off the fuel in the bike's tank, which exploded, killing the rest of the gangers with flying shrapnel. I looked back at the blob.

This time its entire mass was flashing between colors. As I watched, the flat version of its body rapidly folded in on itself like origami until all that was left was the two spheres and a triangle. Then they blinked out of existence.

It all happened pretty fast, but I got the distinct feeling this entity didn't intend to hurt the gangers—it was just experimenting with its surroundings, just like a kid. I gotta say I regret not killing the blob, even though it wasn't hostile. Harm is harm, however well intentioned.)<<<<<

—Walt-n-See (13:08:19/02-02-57)

>>>>(And the lesson, children? There are more things in heaven and earth than our puny minds can fully grasp, so we must be ever alert, cautious and prepared to defend against the unknown.)<<<<<

—Magister (16:27:52/02-03-57)

>>>>(Talk about the horrible, frightening unknown—I really, really recommend exercising the greatest degree of caution you can summon if you plan to travel astrally in Aztlan. We are only now beginning to create the most tentative map of where the foveae lie, but it is extremely difficult to pinpoint where people were in astral space when they encountered the areas of nothingness—mostly because these poor souls died almost instantly. We desperately need the scientific community to begin scanning the Aztlan nation sector by sector to determine if this phenomenon is truly related only to magic or if it also appears as a physical wound in the planet's atmosphere. Please help! Good men and women are dying, probably needlessly, for want of a coordinated research effort.)<<<<<

—Mr. Wizard (11:38:31/02-03-57)

>>>>(I'm sure the Aztlan government and Aztechnology have extensive datastores filled with terrapulses of information on what the foveae are—frag, they might even have the straight dope on how they created these blank spots. I'm not saying they did, but judging by their general attitude toward interference of any kind, it's certainly not out of the realm of possibility.)<<<<<

—Slow Moe (20:35:14/02-03-57)

>>>>(Mr. Wizard's post came directly to me from Tenancingo, Aztlan. Do not pass Go, do not let the government know you're walking by. This man is seriously scared, and I, for one, don't blame him. For all our vaunted skills and knowledge sets, we're really just the most minor-league rookies when it comes to understanding what magic is all about. I guarantee you, even the highest-level mages casting the most powerful magic cannot truly claim to know exactly what they're doing and how it all works—and magic is not something you want to learn about by experimentation. Yeah, it's probably the only way we'll ever get smarter about this particular natural force, but I don't think we'll ever control it completely, not without setting ourselves up for a few unnatural disasters.)<<<<<

—Talon (02:17:28/02-04-57)



RULES



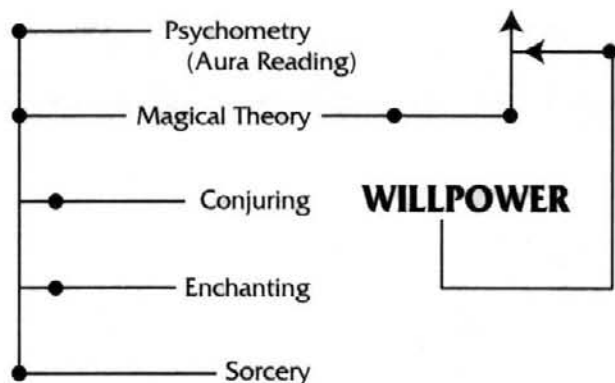
This section provides expansions and clarifications to the rules presented in **Shadowrun, Second Edition (SRII)** and **The Grimoire, Second Edition (Grimoire II)**. New rules for voodoo and other, previously unexplored magical concepts also appear in this section. As always, these rules are optional. The gamemaster should give these rules careful consideration to determine whether or not they will mesh with his group's gaming style or unbalance his game before incorporating any or all of them into a new or existing campaign.

MAGICAL SKILLS

Magical skills represent a character's knowledge and training in magical theory, conjuring, sorcery and enchanting. The following section offers clarifications, optional rules and mundane uses for magical skills.

SKILL DEFAULTS

As with other skills, it is possible to default magical skills through the Skill Web (p. 68, **SRII**). Sorcery, Conjuring and Enchanting all default to Magic Theory as well as to each other (it is possible for a theoretical thaumaturgist to attempt some practical applications of magic, but he's not likely to be very good at it). Magical skills can also default to the Willpower Attribute. Adepts and even mundanes can also make use of magical skill defaults—even if they cannot use the applicable skill to perform magic, they can make various non-magical tests. For example, a mundane who learns a free spirit's true name can default to Willpower to make a Conjuring Test and attempt to control that spirit (though he is far better off spending the time and Karma learning Conjuring if he really wants to succeed!). As always when using the Skill Web, add 2 to the skill test target number for each dot crossed on the Web.



MUNDANES AND MAGICAL SKILLS

Though nearly all characters can use any skill on the Skill Web, a character must be magically active (i.e., have a Magic Attribute of 1 or greater) in order to use magical skills. The characters who use magical skills most effectively are the true magicians (human characters with Priority A allocated to Magic or metahuman characters with Priority B allocated to magic). Magical skills can be differentiated between *active use*, that is, using the skill to perform magic, and *mundane use*, using the skill for non-magical purposes (that may affect magic in some indirect way).

The descriptions below note which areas of the skill are considered mundane and can be used by non-magician characters as well as magical adepts with no capabilities for that skill.

MAGICAL THEORY

The Magical Theory Skill gives a character a body of knowledge about the basic unifying principles of magic. That theoretical body of knowledge supports the more practical skills of Sorcery, Conjuring and Enchanting.

Mundane Use: Even a mundane who cannot wield any kind of active magic can gain a complete understanding of the principles and theories behind magic, though few possess the dedication to do so without at least some Talent. Those mundanes who persevere in their pursuit of magical knowledge often make excellent theorists.

Concentrations and Specializations

History: The History Concentration covers the general history of magical thought and traditions, including all major periods in human history and the individual theories of magic peculiar to each period. Characters might focus their studies on the movements and eras that particularly influenced modern magical theory, such as nineteenth century England and the early Americas. Magical Theory can be further Specialized by either geographic area (European, North American and so on) or historical period (the Renaissance, the Great Ghost Dance).

Spell Design: The Spell Design Concentration allows characters to create new spell formulae by which they may channel the energies of astral space in a particular way to create a particular effect. Even mundane theorists or adepts lacking full use of the Sorcery Skill can design spells, though they are unable to cast them. Spells cannot be taught, however, without active use of magic; if a magician wants

to learn a spell designed by a mundane theorist, he must puzzle out the casting on his own. Spell Design can be further Specialized by magical tradition (hermetic, shamanic and so on). Characters of one tradition who try to learn a spell formula from another tradition must add 2 to the target number for learning the formula.

Tradition: The Tradition Concentration focuses on a particular magical tradition: hermetic, shamanic, voodoo, druidic and so on. Each of the major magical traditions outlined in published **Shadowrun** products counts as a separate Concentration. The gamemaster may wish to further Specialize these traditions (e.g., English Druidry, Native American Shamanism, Post-Modern Hermeticism and so on).

Parapsychology: The Parapsychology Concentration of the Magical Theory Skill involves the study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century theories of "psychic" or paranormal abilities based on a conventional scientific model. Most of the information in this magical discipline offers no practical application, but enough accurate material exists in this field to give someone with the Parapsychology Concentration a limited knowledge of current magical theory. In 2055, a handful of historians and scholars study parapsychology, as do those magically active individuals who believe that their abilities fit into the parapsychological or psionic model (see **Awakened Oddities**, p. 104).

CONJURING

Conjuring is the skill of summoning, controlling and dismissing various spirits that dwell in astral space. Each magical tradition calls upon specific types of spirits.

Mundane Use: The Conjuring Skill includes knowledge of the rituals used to control and ward against spirits, and mundanes sometimes learn this skill as a means of defending themselves against spirit powers. Anyone, mundane or magician, who possesses the Conjuring Skill can use that Skill Level to resist the effects of a spirit's powers (in place of an appropriate Attribute). Mundane characters may also use Conjuring to summon and bind free spirits, provided the character knows the spirit's true name.

Concentrations and Specializations

Summoning: The Summoning Concentration improves a magician's Conjuring Skill for calling spirits. While some magicians Concentrate on summoning, it is generally considered poor magical practice because it leaves the magician with less expertise in controlling and banishing (do not call up that which you cannot put down, as Agrippa put it). Summoning can be further Specialized by spirit type (Fire Elemental, Forest Spirit and so on).

Banishing: Banishing dismisses spirits of all types back to the metaplanes. This Conjuring Concentration is equally useful against all spirits by all magicians. Many magicians Concentrate in banishing, especially "exorcists" and characters who often deal with hostile spirits, such as mage-detectives. Banishing can be further Specialized by spirit class (Elemental, Nature Spirit, Watcher and so on) and type (Fire Elemental, City Spirit and so on).

Controlling: Controlling or binding involves taking command of a spirit from another magician (controlling one's own spirits is covered by summoning). Magicians can use this Concentration in control contests (p. 143, **SRII**) either offensively or defensively.

Controlling can be further Specialized by spirit type (Fire Elemental, Forest Spirit and so on).

Spirit Type: Because each magical tradition summons a specific class of spirits, a magician may choose to Concentrate on conjuring a specific spirit type within that class. For example, a mage could choose to Concentrate in Conjuring Earth Elementals, thus gaining a bonus to summon, control and banish them. Magicians of all disciplines can also Concentrate in conjuring watchers (which represent a unique spirit class).

Ally Spirits

Characters may use a Concentration in Ally Spirits to improve their chances of success in all Conjuring Tests involving their own ally spirit.

Free Spirits

Because each free spirit is a unique being, characters cannot learn a general Conjuring Concentration for free spirits. However, characters may learn a Conjuring Specialization for a *specific* free spirit with which they are familiar. The character need not know the spirit's true name to learn this Specialization, but will not be able to use Conjuring on the spirit until he learns its true name. Particularly single-minded (some say obsessive) magicians and mundanes have been known to learn Conjuring for a specific spirit and spend years seeking its true name in order to use their Specialization.

ENCHANTING

Characters may use the Enchanting Skill to make and analyze magical materials such as foci, fetishes and alchemical radicals.

Mundane Use: The Talismongering Concentration (see below) does not require magical ability and can be learned equally well by mundanes and magicians alike (indeed, many successful talismongers possess no magical gifts).

Concentrations and Specializations

Talismongering: The Talismongering Concentration increases a character's aptitude in gathering materials for magical use and refining them, making fetishes and ritual materials, and identifying magical materials. Talismongers can further Specialize in each of those individual tasks (gathering/refining materials, making fetishes and ritual materials, magic item identification).

Alchemy: Alchemy is the art of refining raw materials into alchemical radicals that are useful for making magical items. The alchemical process also produces the magical metal orichalcum that is so vital in many enchanting processes. Characters can learn an Alchemy Specialization in each of the arcana (Herbs, Minerals and Metals). An expanded list of magical supplies and costs appears in the Magical Equipment Table, p. 157.

Artifcing: Characters use the Artifcing Concentration to create magical foci and reduce the bonding cost of ready-made foci. An enchanter can Specialize in a particular type of focus as listed in the **Shadowrun** rulebook or **Grimoire II**, but very few enchanters can afford such a narrow field in their art. These rare few are extremely skilled, however, and command the highest prices for their masterpieces of enchanting work.



SORCERY

The Sorcery Skill allows characters to manipulate astral energies to create magical effects in the real world. Sorcery is the broadest magical skill, covering all aspects of controlling and shaping the energies of astral space to the magician's will. The Sorcery Skill allows the individuality of the magician to shine through. While magical theory represents the "facts" of magic, sorcery represents the "art." Each mage manipulates magic as he or she understands it. Harlequin, Sally Tsung and Gordo the Mage may all toss hellblast spells with the same effect (as far as a mundane can tell), but what each mage sees as the magic forms at his or her fingertips depends on the individual (see **Spell Signatures**, p. 97). For example, Gordo always visualizes his magic as shooting from a giant fire hose. Hey, it works for him.

Mundane Use: Mundanes have no use for the Sorcery Skill, because it is based entirely on the manipulation of energies that they cannot access. While it is theoretically possible for a mundane to learn the Sorcery Skill, it would be extremely difficult to do so without any way to practice what he or she learns. A mundane character who knows Sorcery and who somehow finds himself on the astral plane (for example, through an astral gate created by a free spirit) could use Sorcery to engage in astral combat. Quite frankly, most people have better things to do with their time and Karma than wait and train for such an unlikely combination of events.

Concentrations and Specializations

Astral: The Astral Concentration covers the use of Sorcery in the astral plane: astral (melee) combat and the complex manipulations of metamagic. The Astral Concentration of the Sorcery Skill does not apply to spellcasting while astral projecting or on a metaplane. A character may further Specialize in either Astral Combat or Metamagic. Physical adepts with the astral perception power often learn a Specialization in Astral Combat.

Forensic Magic: This Concentration deals with the peculiarities of magically gathering and using criminal evidence. Characters mainly use this Concentration to find and gather samples of evidence that can function as material links for ritual sorcery. If the magician finds a usable sample, this Concentration increases his chances of making a successful Forensic Magic Test (see p. 35, *Grimoire II*).

Spellcasting: The Spellcasting Concentration improves a character's aptitude in the right-here-and-now magic that addresses an immediate need. Magicians learn to quickly channel astral energies into a preset pattern defined by the spell formula. Characters may Specialize in one of the five spell categories. Combat mages and many street magicians learn the Spellcasting Concentration of the Sorcery Skill in order to draw on immediate bang-for-the-buck effects.

Ritual: The Ritual Concentration represents the opposite side of the coin from spellcasting. Ritual magic builds up power slowly, but allows the character to cast more complex spells and to coordinate his efforts with other magicians in order to draw on even greater power. Academic magicians and some R&D wage mage types tend to be most proficient at ritual magic, and the Ritual Concentration of the Sorcery Skill is highly recommended for followers of voodoo. The few mundanes who bother to learn Sorcery often choose to learn ritual magic. Characters may Specialize in one of the five spell categories.

Spell Defense: The Spell Defense Concentration allows magicians to redirect hostile magical forces back into the astral and away from the target of those forces. If the magician can use metamagic, this Concentration also applies to Shielding. Bodyguard magicians and those who specialize in the creation of wards often learn the Spell Defense Concentration. Characters may Specialize in one of the five spell categories.

Spell Category: A magician can learn a Concentration in one of the five spell categories (combat, detection, health, illusion, manipulation). Shamanic and elemental adepts often learn a Concentration for spells in their own area of expertise, as do magi-

cians with a specific spellcasting focus, such as combat sorcerers or healers. Characters may further Specialize by technique (spellcasting or ritual sorcery). Note that a magician who Concentrates in a spell category reduces his skill in all other spell categories, including spell defense against spells outside his Concentration.

All Concentrations and Specializations reduce the character's effectiveness at the general skill while increasing his effectiveness in the Concentration and Specialization of that skill (see p. 70, *SRII*). Because the Magic Pool is based on the skill, Concentration or Specialization being used during the character's action, the Magic Pool changes according to whether the character is taking his action using the general skill, the Concentration or the Specialization. As usual, a magician may allocate any number of dice from his Magic Pool for spell defense.

Zorch the street mage has a Sorcery Skill of 6, with a Concentration in Spellcasting and a Specialization in Combat Spells—he can really kick some butt. This configuration gives Zorch Sorcery 8 for casting combat spells, Sorcery 6 for other types of spellcasting and a rating of 4 for all other uses of the Sorcery Skill. When Zorch throws a fireball at a bunch of gangers, his Magic Pool is at 8 dice (he cannot use all of those dice for casting his spell, however, because he may only use a number of Magic Pool dice for any action equal to his Magic Attribute, which is 5). When he attempts to heal one of his chummers who's been shot, his Magic Pool is at 6 dice. If he needs to use spell defense to deflect a toxic shaman's acid spell, his Magic Pool is at 4 dice.

NEW SKILLS

The following new skills add to the skills, Concentrations and Specializations described in the *Shadowrun* rulebook.

ETIQUETTE (MAGICAL)

As a group, the Awakened tend to be fairly tightly knit. Though they may ascribe to different opinions, world views and lifestyles, something about all magically active people sets them apart from the mundane world and encourages them to close ranks when threatened. The Magical Concentration of the Etiquette Skill allows a character to communicate effectively with the unique subculture of the magically active. Characters with this skill know the right things to say and do when dealing with magicians and their affairs: where, when and how they meet, the ranking and customs of social circles, what to say and what to avoid saying, and so on. Certain mundanes learn this skill, especially if, like tallsmongers, they must deal extensively with magicians. Characters may Specialize in this skill according to magical tradition or specific geographic area.

Mundane Use: This skill is entirely mundane and can be learned and used by any character.

AURA READING (PSYCHOMETRY)

A character can use the Special Skill of Aura Reading (also known as Psychometry) to gain information by assensing auras in

astral space (p. 145, **SRII**). Characters may use their Aura Reading skill rating in place of their Intelligence when making an Astral Perception Test to gain information from an aura. This skill defaults to Magical Theory and to Willpower on the Skill Web, but not to Conjuring, Sorcery or Enchanting. Physical adepts who can use astral perception and the astral adept (see **Astral Adepts**, p. 110) can also use this skill. Mundanes cannot use this skill.

Assensing Cyberware

Assensing a subject's aura gives the magician a basic idea of the subject's Essence and Magic Ratings, which in turn offers a crude means to determine if someone has cyberware. In other words, if a person possesses a very low Essence Rating, he or she most likely carries cyberware. The assensing does not reveal to the magician anything about the kind of cyberware carried or its function, though at the gamemaster's discretion, a magician who scores a high number of successes on an Astral Perception Test might be able to determine the general location of implanted cyberware. For example, he might notice that the target's aura varies slightly around the left arm. Bioware is even more difficult to detect by assensing. To determine if an assensing magician detects the presence of bioware, the gamemaster should make an Astral Perception Test against a Target Number of 10 minus the target's Body Index.

The assensing magician may use the Aura Reading Skill for the required Astral Perception Tests.

Detecting Assensing

A target magician may attempt to catch another magician in the act of reading his or her aura. If a character attempts to determine if a magician is using astral perception to assense him or her, the player makes a Perception Test against a target number equal to twice the assensing magician's Magic Rating. If the character is capable of astral perception but not astrally active, subtract 2 from the target number. An astrally active character will automatically know if a magician is attempting to assense his aura.

ASTRAL STEALTH

The degree of stealth that a character can achieve in the physical world is not possible in astral space, mainly because all living things display bright auras on the etheric plane that cannot be hidden. An astrally active character cannot hide in shadows, rely on background activity to distract his opponent, hide his tracks or make use of the Stealth Skill. A character can mask his true nature and trick his opponent into believing he is mundane or is less powerful by using metamagic, but the glowing aura of a living being cannot be magically concealed. Characters attempting to hide in astral space must use material cover (non-living objects such as walls, vehicles, roads, large paintings and so on) to block their auras from observers. Gamemasters may apply the Cover modifiers (p. 185, **SRII**) and the astral perception modifiers (p. 86, **Grimoire II**) to Perception Tests made in astral space when the target is attempting to use material cover. Characters may also attempt to cover their auras in the astral plane by using the Astral Static spell to interfere with Perception Tests.

SPELL SIGNATURES

The effects of a **Shadowrun** spell remain pretty much the same from one magician to another: a fireball is a fireball, no matter who casts it (see **Sorcery**, p. 95). However, the way a spellcaster manipulates magic to get that "same effect" can vary greatly from one magic user to the next. For example, one magician might use the same color for all visible spell effects, another might accompany all spells with a specific image or sound. In addition to unique visual or audio effects, shamans may incorporate elements of their shamanic mask into their spells. These various effects comprise the magician's spell "signature," a recognizable characteristic that another magician can find as distinctive as a written signature.

In **Shadowrun**, knowledge is power. A magician's spell signature identifies him as uniquely as a fingerprint and provides a perspective into his relationship with magic. The way the magician's mind controls and processes the magical essence needed to cast spells creates his spell signature. Though spellcasters taught by the same instructor might seem to possess similar signatures, they can be more accurately characterized as variations on a theme. In theory, a magician can learn another spellcaster's magical tradition and heritage, and even how or where he was trained from his spell signature—a very powerful bit of knowledge. If a magician can identify an opponent by his spell signature, with repeated exposure to that foe he can learn the types of spells and magical tactics his opponent prefers and judge his strengths and weaknesses. That knowledge will allow him to create an appropriate strategy for battling that particular mage, which will make him a valuable asset to any team likely to encounter that magic user.

Because a magician's spell signature represents the unique way he manipulates astral energy on the physical plane, spells cast in astral space or seen from astral space cannot reveal a spellcaster's signature. Only magic users with the Sorcery Skill, including the sorcerer, shamanic and elemental adepts, possess a spell signature. Corporations make a practice of hiring spellcasting adepts for the express purpose of observing and learning to recognize other spellcasters' signatures, to create reference "portfolios" of magical signatures.

As with nearly everything in **Shadowrun**, there are ways for the gamemaster to use magic signatures to seriously mess with their players' heads. For example, because magicians trained by the same people may have very similar signatures, characters may mistake their enemies for their allies and drop their guard if they suspect that the mage they are fighting is someone they know. Once the concept of spell signatures is introduced into the game, magically active characters must contend with the paranoia that someone might be studying their signature every time they cast a spell. Ultimately, however, the gamemaster determines the importance of spell signatures in his game.

OBSERVING A SPELL SIGNATURE

A magician may attempt to observe another magician's spell signature by making a Perception Test against the Magic Rating of the magician being observed. This is a Simple Action. The

gamemaster should use all of the standard perception modifiers (see p. 185, **SRII**). The gamemaster can reduce the target number (to a minimum of 2) if the character knows the spellcaster is going to cast a spell. The decision to observe the spell must be made during the same combat turn as the casting. After that any trace of the physical manipulation of magic through the caster is gone.

A single success means the character observes the spell signature.

IDENTIFYING A SPELL SIGNATURE

Observing and identifying a spell signature are two completely different matters. These two things must take place within the same Combat Turn, meaning that the spell must be cast while the observing player has two phases of action left before a new combat turn.

A character must observe the spell signature before making any attempt to identify it. In order to identify another magician's spell signature, a magic user must block his own magical preferences, a task that requires a certain amount of concentration and therefore takes a Complex Action. A magician attempting to identify a spellcaster's signature makes a Signature Test using his Sorcery Skill (or the Forensic Magic Concentration) against a target number equal to the Sorcery Skill of the magic user casting the spell. The magician need not have line of sight to the target spellcaster, but must be able to see the spell "effect" or the target of the spell. Modify the skill used for the Signature Test by +1 for each initiate grade of the character attempting to identify the spell signature. The target magician also adds 1 die to his Sorcery Skill for each initiate grade he holds. A single success reveals the target magician's spell signature. No successes means the magician cannot suppress his magical preferences sufficiently to identify the other magician's spell signature.

If a magician wants another magician to be able to identify his spell signature (a useful ability for two mages on the same team), he may describe it. In this case, the magician attempting to identify the target magician's spell signature makes a Signature (2) Test.

If a mundane character is attempting to identify a magician's spell signature, increase the Signature Test target number by 4.

A gamemaster may want to include an optional "recognizing" test. This is a standard Perception Test against whatever target number the gamemaster chooses (use the Skill Success Table on p. 68, **SRII**, for guidelines). If the initial Signature Test took place during an important event (the magician's team won a stunning victory, the team lost four members to a particularly spectacular magic effect, a new paranormal creature was born, an evil company was put permanently and dramatically out of business), the spellcaster is the character's personal nemesis, the player's character increased his initiate grade, or the signature is so unique that the character couldn't possibly forget it, the gamemaster may decide the character will automatically recognize it and waive this optional Perception Test.

The gamemaster may choose to increase the Perception Test target number to recognize a spell signature if the character has not seen the signature for a significant length of time. He may also increase the target number if the target spellcaster has undergone

any extreme changes in the interim, such as suffering Magic Rating loss, increasing his initiate grade or altering his spell signature (see below).

Kretch finds himself in a fire fight again. He's watching a mage chuck some pretty killer hellblasts from the inside of a warehouse. Kretch can't see the mage (nor does he know who he or she is working for), so he decides the best plan is to study up on the mage's spell signature. Because the mage in the warehouse went first (with an initiative of 21, while Kretch's are at 15 and 5), Kretch decides to use a Simple Action (at 15) to observe the signature. He makes a successful Perception Test and sees the ripples of the astral and physical world collide.

On Kretch's next phase (5) he tries to read the signature and identify it. Kretch is a Grade 1 initiate with a Sorcery Skill of 6. (No forensic magic for him.) He rolls his seven dice for the Signature Test and gets 10,9,5,4,2,1, and 1. Because the combat mage inside is a Grade 4 initiate with a Sorcery Skill of 5, the Target Number for the test was 9, so Kretch has rolled 2 successes. Had Kretch failed the Signature Test (he just can't break through his personal image of a big neon corkscrew), he would have had to start over on his next turn with another attempt to observe the spell signature.

The gamemaster has decided not to tell Kretch if he was successful until he rolls a "recognizing" Perception Test. She gives this Perception Test a Base Target Number of 8 (Kretch has seen this signature before, but well over a year ago). Kretch succeeds again. The gamemaster describes the signature, saying it looks like light going through a prism; a very different signature than Kretch's big neon orange corkscrew. Hey, he does remember that prism thing—it belongs to some yakuza chick he thought he wasted in a run a long time ago.

The gamemaster has decided the "yakuza chick" has a personal vendetta against Kretch, and so the mage will show up to plague Kretch at every opportunity. The gamemaster decides that after observing and identifying the spell signature, Kretch remembers it automatically because the yak mage has become his worst nightmare. From now on, he will not need to make any more "recognizing" tests.

ALTERING THE SPELL SIGNATURE

Though a magician cannot mask his spell signature, he can attempt to alter it. Beginning with initiate Grade 1, a character can attempt to alter his spell signature as part of the initiation process. If a character decides to alter his signature during initiation, he cannot remove a geas and does not add the new initiate grade to his Magic Attribute Rating. He receives all the other bonuses of his new initiate grade, however.

To alter his spell signature, a character must unlearn how he uses and interacts with magic and then relearn those processes.

The character makes a Sorcery Test against his Magic Attribute Rating, adding 1 die per initiate grade to the total Sorcery dice. No other dice can be added to this test. A minimum of 2 successes means the character succeeded in learning to use magic a different way.

If the test is successful, the magician may make a slight alteration to his signature, though some similarity must remain between the old and new signatures. For example, Kretch can change the color of his corkscrew to black, or he can change the corkscrew shape to a neon-orange dagger. Kretch should not be allowed to change his signature to a giant pie in the face, though a giant neon-orange pie might be acceptable. The gamemaster has final approval over all spell signature alterations.

If the attempt to alter the spell signature fails, the mage continues to use his or her "old" signature to manipulate magic. For each unsuccessful attempt to change the spell signature, increase the target number for each future attempt by 1. This modifier represents that fact that the character's attempt to change his signature is in fact reinforcing his magical process.

MAGIC LOSS

Perhaps the most frightening thing that can happen to a magic user is the permanent loss of all or part of his or her magic skill. Inappropriate medical attention, a mortal wound, and the presence of cyberware represent only the broadest paths to such loss. The following optional rule offers a more realistic effect regarding the use of stim patches.

STIM PATCHES (OPTIONAL RULE)

The **Shadowrun** rulebook states that stim patches have the potential to reduce a magician's Magic Attribute Rating. However, the current rule makes it possible for a magician to use Rating 1 stim patches one after another with very little chance of failing a Magic Test (except for the chance of all 1s). To better reflect the spirit of this rule, the gamemaster should keep track of the total rating of stim patches used by a magician in a 24-hour period and require the character to make a single Magic Test against that total. If the character fails the test, the player rolls 2D6. If the result is equal to or less than the character's current Magic Rating, the magician permanently loses 1 point of Magic, as if he had taken a Deadly wound.

METAMAGIC

As increasing numbers of initiated magicians gain access to magic's higher mysteries, they discover new metamagical powers and new uses for existing powers. The gamemaster should examine the following additions to metamagic and decide whether or not to incorporate them into his game. If he chooses to add these powers to his magic system, the gamemaster should decide if they represent new powers or simply outgrowths of existing powers. However the gamemaster chooses to use them, these new powers should remain rare and mysterious for quite some time.

The associated area of metamagic appears in parentheses following the name of each new ability.



REFLECTIVE SHIELDING (SHIELDING)

The reflective shielding ability functions in much the same way as the normal metamagical ability of shielding (p. 45, **Grimoire II**). The magician allocates shielding dice as usual, but rather than increasing the opposition's target number for the attack, the reflective shield produces a different effect. If the successes rolled *only* with the shielding dice to defend against the attack exceed the successes rolled by the attacking magician, the spell rebounds and attacks the casting magician with a Force equal to the net number of successes, up to a maximum of the original Force. The defending magician then makes a Spell Success Test for the rebounded spell.

Talon is attacked by a wage mage and throws up a reflective shield using the 6 Magic Pool dice he allocated for defense. The attacking magician throws a Force 4 mana bolt spell, augmented by 3 dice from his Magic Pool. The wage mage rolls 7 dice against a Target Number of 6 (Talon's Willpower) and gets 2 successes. Talon rolls his 6 shielding dice against a Target Number of 4, achieving 4 successes. The mana bolt rebounds against the wage mage with a Force of 2, and Talon makes a Spell Success Test using 2 dice against a Target Number of 6 (the wage mage's Willpower).

A magician hit by a reflected spell may use unallocated Magic Pool dice as well as spell defense or shielding dice to resist the effects of the rebounded attack. Eventually, reflected shielding may force an attacker to exhaust his defense dice resisting his own spells, leaving him open to the defender's attack. A reflected spell can be reflected again by the original caster if that magi-

cian is also an initiate. If the spell's Force drops to 1, an attempt to reflect it dissipates it instead. Spells cast through ritual sorcery can be reflected (providing the target allocated enough Magic Pool dice), in which case the spell affects equally all members of the casting ritual circle.

Even before the Awakening, both Western and tribal magic systems described this kind of shielding as possible, and initiates of both traditions use reflective shielding. Initiates cannot combine reflective and standard shielding.

CLEANSING (DISPELLING)

Similar to dispelling, cleansing is a metamagical technique that allows an initiate to clear astral "clutter" from the etheric plane. The ability has two main uses: eliminating astral traces left behind by the use of sorcery, the presence of spirits and so on; and clearing away temporary background count (see **Temporary Background Count**, p. 104).

To cleanse an astral area of the traces left behind by spell-casting or the presence of spirits, an initiate makes a Sorcery Test against a target number equal to the Force of the phenomenon that caused the trace, minus the initiate's grade (minimum Target Number of 2). Each success on this test increases by 1 the difficulty of subsequent tests made to find traces of specific activity in astral space. Following the Sorcery Test, the magician must make a Willpower Test to resist Drain equal to the Drain resisted by the magician who created the astral traces or background count. Centering may be used against this Drain. Cleansing only affects the astral presence of activity on the etheric plane; the burn and blast marks and other physical damage caused by a spell remain.

Felicia, a Grade 1 initiate, is attempting to cleanse the astral traces of a Force 5 mana bolt spell that she used to fell a guard barghest. She makes a Sorcery Test against a Target Number of 4 (the force of the mana bolt minus her initiate grade) and scores 3 successes. (Felicia also needs to make a second Drain Resistance Test to resist the Drain of cleansing.) When the corp's wage mage later examines the site for clues to who and what killed the barghest, his target number for spotting Felicia's handiwork increases by 3.

In order for an initiate to use the cleansing ability to clear away temporary background count, the cause of the background count must first be removed. For example, an attempt to cleanse the background count created by a poisoned river will not be effective until the physical pollution is cleared from the water. Cleansing does not affect lasting, long-term background counts of sites imbued with powerful emotions, such as the Great Pyramids or Auschwitz, nor can cleansing dispel the background count created by the Astral Static spell. As always, the gamemaster has final say on whether or not a specific background count can be affected by cleansing.

Cleansing the temporary background count also erases any other astral traces associated with the event that caused the background count, such as sorcery or the presence of spirits. If a magician wishes to assense an area for information, he

must do so before he or any other magician cleanses that part of the astral plane.

An initiate may only attempt to cleanse an area whose background count is at a level less than or equal to his initiate grade. Make a Sorcery Test against a target number of (Background Count x 2). The background count is reduced by 1 level for every 2 successes. Following the Sorcery Test, the initiate must resist (Level)D Drain using Willpower. The initiate may use his Centering Skill to reduce Drain.

After completing his study of a murder site, Dr. O'Malley, a forensic magician, works to clear the miasma of evil that hangs over the area. O'Malley is a Grade 2 initiate with Sorcery 6. The crime created a Background Count of 2. O'Malley makes a Sorcery Test against a Target Number of 4 and achieves 4 successes, enough to reduce the background count to 0 and eliminate the eerie feeling that hung over the area.

FOCUS BLOCKING (DISPELLING)

The metamagical technique of focus blocking allows an initiate to attempt to deactivate another magician's focus by severing the astral link between the focus and the magician. The initiate must spend a Complex Action to use astral perception and see the focus. The character makes a Sorcery or Enchanting Test against a target number equal to the rating of the focus. If the test is successful, the focus is deactivated, but otherwise undamaged. If the owner wants to use the focus, he must spend a Simple Action to reactivate it. An initiate can block any focus with a rating equal to or less than his initiate grade. Following the Sorcery or Enchanting Test, the initiate must resist Drain of (Focus Rating)/M. The magician can only block one focus per test. Focus blocking has no effect on sustained, quickened or anchored spells, but can affect spell locks.

WARDS

This section expands the rules for wards as described on page 92 of **Grimoire II**, to allow magicians to create several different types of wards.

ATTUNED WARDS

Standard wards are astral barriers that block all movement in astral space. Even the ward's creator cannot penetrate the barrier it creates. While this is fine for most uses, on some occasions the ward's creator may want to be able to move freely through the ward. In this case, a magician may create an attuned ward, a type of ward that matches its creator's aura. Because the ward and the magician's aura exist on what can be viewed as the same wavelength, the ward's creator can pass through his own astral barrier at will, while the ward functions normally to block the movement of all other astral presences.

In addition to arranging to be protected by physical bodyguards, magicians often construct attuned wards around their bodies before astrally projecting or questing to keep unwanted astral presences away from the vacant body. The cost for creating an attuned ward is 1,000 nuyen in material per Force Rating.

The only way for a second magician to penetrate a standard ward is to defeat the ward in astral combat, and such an attack always alerts the ward's creator to a hostile astral presence. Attuned wards may be defeated in astral combat or with the metamagical ability of dispelling. An initiate may attempt to "synchronize" his aura with that of the ward's creator; if he succeeds, the ward "recognizes" him and allows him to pass through the barrier.

For an initiate to synchronize his aura with an attuned ward, the magician must make a standard dispelling attempt against a target number equal to the Force or the Barrier Rating of the ward, whichever is higher. Reduce the target number by 2 if the attuned ward was created by a non-initiate magician. For every 2 successes, reduce the Barrier Rating by 1. If the successes reduce the Barrier Rating to 0, the magician can pass through the ward.

Note that the ward is not dispelled nor is the barrier destroyed; the magician has just momentarily "widened" the attunement of the spell to accept his aura. A successful dispelling attempt allows only the dispelling initiate to move through the ward. The ward will not admit a second person.

If the dispelling attempt fails to reduce the ward's Barrier Rating to 0, the initiate cannot bypass the ward.

CONCEALMENT WARDS

The concealment ward does not block the passage of astral beings, but makes it more difficult to use detection spells, assensing, and critter powers such as Search within the boundaries of the ward. A concealment ward also increases the target number of the Sending Test for ritual sorcery. Add the Rating of the ward to the target number for these tasks. Concealment wards cost 500 nuyen in materials per Force Rating of the ward.

Initiates may create a variation of the concealment ward called the masking ward. A masking ward offers all the advantages of a concealment ward, and also masks any magical effect or phenomenon within its bounds to appear mundane. The magical effect or phenomenon must be of a Force equal to or less than the Force of the ward. For example, a magician who wanted to plant a Rating 3 spell lock in a rival's office cubicle would have to erect a Force 3 or greater masking ward to increase the chances that the lock would remain undetected. However, this ward can be penetrated in the same manner as a magician's personal Masking. The magician attempting to penetrate the masking ward makes a Magic Success Test against the Force Rating of the ward. Subtract the Force of the ward from the number of successes. If the result is equal to or greater than the initiate grade of the magician that created the ward, the viewer sees through the masking ward.

ALARM WARDS

An alarm ward does not block the passage of astral beings or magic; indeed, it is difficult to detect in astral space as anything other than a faint shimmer. Magicians may make an Astral Perception (Ward Rating) Test to detect an alarm ward. An alarm ward simply alerts its creator when an astral entity crosses its boundaries. If a magician or spirit attacks and destroys the ward, its creator knows immediately. Alarm wards can be attuned so that the alarm will sound when anyone other than the ward's creator passes through the ward. Initiates may synchronize their

auras to sneak through an alarm ward in the same way as for an attuned ward. Alarm wards cost 500 nuyen in materials per Force Rating of the ward.

WARDS AND FOCI

Standard wards attempt to block all astrally active entities, everything from active foci to sustained, locked or quickened spells. If a character carrying one of these items (or spells) tries to pass through a ward, the gamemaster makes a Success Test using a number of dice equal to the ward's Force against a target number equal to the Rating of the item or spell. If the gamemaster achieves a number of successes equal to or greater than the item Rating, the item is destroyed. Any other result means the item or spell passes safely through the ward. The gamemaster may choose to keep these tests secret, only revealing the loss of the spell or foci when the character attempts to use it.

An active item or spell passing through a ward may create a slight visible discharge of energy, an astral echo-shimmer. Characters may spot this effect by making a Perception Test against a target number equal to the difference between the Rating of the item and the Force of the ward. For example, a spell lock (Rating 1) passing through a Force 5 ward would have a Target Number of 4. A Rating 5 weapon focus passing through the same ward would have a Target Number of 2 ($5 - 5 = 0$, minimum Target Number of 2).

SPIRITS

This section expands on the published **Shadowrun** rules for spirits.

MANIFESTING

Though all spirits can manifest, most prefer to remain in astral form to perform their services whenever possible, assuming manifest form only if they are commanded or required to do so. As a general rule, spirits in astral form can only exercise those powers that affect themselves or their summoner, such as Guard, Concealment or Aid Sorcery. In order to use its powers on another subject, the spirit must manifest, thus becoming vulnerable to being disrupted in combat.

COMBAT

When a mundane person attacks a manifest spirit in hand-to-hand combat, he is engaging in a kind of struggle of wills with the spirit. Because skill is of less use against a spirit than unshakable courage, the character fights using Willpower rather than a relevant Combat Skill. Combat Pool dice cannot be added to Willpower Tests for attacking spirits, but they may be used to dodge the attacks of manifest spirits.

Because the physical combat mostly serves as a representation of the struggle that actually takes place between the character and the spirit, the physical properties of the character's weapon are less important than its symbolic properties. Symbolically, a sword is a sword, and against a spirit an ancient broadsword is just as effective as a modern carbon-steel monoblade.



In game terms, technological enhancements to melee weapons such as monofilament edges, laser attachments, Dikote™ and so on do not allow the character to inflict additional damage when fighting a manifest spirit. Use only the base Damage Code of the weapon to calculate damage. A character's own Strength enhancements *do* increase the weapon's damage, provided these enhancements are magical in nature (spells, adept abilities and so on) or the character paid Essence or Body Index for the enhancement (i.e., cyberware or bioware enhancements). Any other damage enhancements do not carry the force of the character's living will and cannot affect the spirit.

Blade the street ronin is fighting an elemental using his Dikote™-covered katana. He usually inflicts 12S damage with the katana, but Blade gains no benefits from the Dikote™ against the elemental. Therefore, his sword inflicts 11M damage.

NATURE SPIRIT DOMAINS

The **Shadowrun** rulebook and **Grimoire II** provide detailed rules for conjuring nature spirits. This section offers clarifications for those rules.

In terrain that meets the qualifications of multiple nature spirit domains, such as a wooded mountain slope, the conjuring shaman must choose a single domain with which to interact. If the shaman chooses one domain and then shifts his attention to a different domain, he is considered to have left that domain and any nature spirit performing services for the shaman will depart.

Sandra Willowfall is stuck on the slope of Mt. Rainier, playing hide-and-seek with some Salish-Shidhe troops. She calls upon the forest spirit to conceal her from the troops. Unfortunately for Sandra, one of the troopers gets lucky and spots her despite the spirit's help. She decides to go to her backup plan and cause a rock slide to disable their jeep, so she shifts her focus to the mountain and calls upon its spirit. The forest spirit fades along with the concealment it was providing, and the the rest of the patrol spots the shaman as she sings the song to call up the mountain spirit. It had better be a big one.

A shaman may only conjure a single nature spirit for any given domain, though he may give the spirit a command and then move from its domain. The spirit will continue to carry out the shaman's command to the best of its ability until the task is completed or until the spirit's time of service expires. The shaman can immediately conjure a new nature spirit in the domain to which he moved without penalty.

Street shaman Tommy Dre gets an unexpected visit at his doss from Lone Star. He calls up the hearth spirit he'd summoned earlier that day and tells it to keep the Star boys busy for a while, then jumps out onto the fire escape and swings down into the alley, where he conjures a city spirit to conceal him so he can slip past the cruiser out front.

FOCI

This section offers one new focus and describes the game implications of focus addiction.

CENTERING FOCUS

The centering focus enhances a character's concentration, allowing the magician an additional number of dice equal to the Focus Rating for Centering Tests. The magician can only gain a number of additional dice from the focus equal to or less than his Centering Skill, and the focus must be active for the magician to gain this bonus. Magic users who carry centering foci usually use one that complements their Centering Skill, such as a musical instrument.

FOCUS ADDICTION

When a magician relies too heavily on foci, these devices begin to serve as a "crutch" for his magic; in turn, the magician's natural magical abilities eventually weaken in the same way that a muscle deteriorates without regular use. Any time a magician uses a number of foci with a total rating higher than his Magic Attribute, he must make a Magic Test against a target number equal to the total Foci Rating. (The total Foci Rating includes active foci only, not bonuses granted by totems, spirits or local magical forces such as background count.)

If the Magic Test is successful, the magician suffers no effect from overuse of foci. If the test fails, roll 2D6. If the result is less than or equal to the mage's Magic Rating, he permanently loses 1 point from his Magic Attribute.

A magician who loses 2 Magic Attribute points due to focus abuse must take on a "focus" geas. This limitation means that the character may only use his magical power through a focus. This means the character may now cast, without penalty, only the magic for which he possessed foci at the time he was forced to take the focus geas; he must add 2 to the target number for all other uses of magic. For example, if a character carried one power focus, a manabolt spell lock, an invisibility spell lock, a hearth spirit focus and a combat spell focus at the time he took on the focus geas, he could only use his foci to cast invisibility spells and manabolt and other combat spells normally, and summon, control and banish hearth spirits normally. He would be forced to add 2 to the target numbers for all other uses of magic.

The focus geas can be the first step on the road to the way of the burnout. A magician who is most effective using foci will be tempted to use multiple foci, which may repeatedly result in his losing additional Magic Attribute points. Magicians who overuse foci quickly find themselves on a rapid downward slide.

The focus geas may be shed like other geasa upon initiation (p. 38, *Grimoire II*). A magician who chooses to ignore the focus geas created by his addiction suffers from "withdrawal," which has the same effects as those described in the **Way of the Burnout**, p.52, *Grimoire II*.

A magician whose Magic Attribute is reduced to 1 can no longer lose magic from overusing foci, though a character with a focus geas must continue to observe that geas—unless he chooses to ignore it. This explains why so many burned-out mages feel free to pile on the foci: they've got nothing left to lose.

Gus the street mage has Magic 5 and a whole truckload of foci: two spell locks, a Rating 4 power focus, a Rating 3 spirit focus and a Rating 3 fireball spell focus. He keeps the spell locks active all the time. He and his chummers run into some trouble during biz, and Gus activates his spirit focus to deal with a hostile elemental, resulting in an active Foci Rating total of 5 (3 + 2 [one for each for the spell locks]). He's still in safe territory. Later on, Gus wants to throw a really killer fireball, so he activates his power and spell foci, giving him a total active Foci Rating of 9 (including the spell locks). Gus has to make a Magic Test against a Target Number of 9 to see if his excessive use of foci has any effect. He fails the test and has to check for Magic Attribute loss. Gus rolls 2 dice with a result of 4. Yipes! Gus loses a Magic Attribute point. Gus is a hurting mage. Now at a Magic Rating of 4, Gus needs to get rid of one or both of his spell locks or he'll have to make a Magic Test to determine whether or not he's addicted to his foci every time he uses one of his other foci. Either way, Gus is on his way to total burnout!

BACKGROUND COUNT

An explanation of the phenomenon of background count, powerful natural or manmade influences that can affect the astral plane, appears on page 89 of *Grimoire II*. This section expands on that material by describing different types of astral terrain and their effects on magic.

MANA LINES

Energies in astral space often flow in "streams," thin ribbons of mana that follow the contours of the land. Though known by many names—leys, feng lung, songlines, and dream paths, among others—modern magical theorists call them mana lines. Mana lines represent currents of astral power that a magician can tap into and use to enhance or strengthen his or her magic.

Mana line ratings range from 1 (the weakest and most typical) to 4 (the strongest lines, such as the great leys of the British Isles or the Australian songlines). A magician standing on a mana line may add a number of dice equal to the mana line rating to his Magic Pool so long as his magic does not conflict with the energies of the line or the land. Multiple magicians in contact with the same mana line can all tap the mana line simultaneously.

The gamemaster determines the location and strength of all mana lines in his game, though mana lines should remain fairly rare. Traditionally, the especially strong mana lines represent sites of great significance for many cultures. Generally speaking, places that man has civilized (such as the modern sprawl) evidence few, if any, mana lines, while wilderness areas and ancient sites of worship often lie on active mana lines.

POWER SITES

Locations tend to accumulate magical power if exposed to magic over a long period; other sites seem to be naturally more magically powerful than others. Caves, grottoes, mountains, beaches, wells, crossroads and cliffs are traditional places of

power for magical workings. Such places often lie at a junction where several mana lines cross. Power sites are rated from 1 to 5. Magicians whose magic is in harmony with the energies of a power site can add a number of dice equal to the power site rating to their Magic Pool. Just as with mana lines, power sites are generally limited to isolated places and are rarely found within the boundaries of the sprawl. The gamemaster determines the rating and significance of power sites. As a point of reference in developing a workable scale, the gamemaster may consider the site of the Great Ghost Dance to be the single most powerful magical place in the Awakened Sixth World.

ASPECTED POWER

Mana lines, power sites and background count are often "aspected," which is to say that the energies are aligned to favor a specific kind of magic. Over time, locations can build up powerful impressions from the emotions experienced there, which can shape the astral terrain in various ways that affect magic. For example, a place that has been long devoted as a sacred site for nature magic might grant extra dice only to those magicians conjuring nature spirits. The same site might possess a background count that interferes only with the magic of those who are not nature magicians.

Gamemasters can use aspected power sites as a means of balancing the effects of magic in their **Shadowrun** games. For example, if an adventure pits a magically powerful opponent against the runner team, the gamemaster may have his character repeatedly defeat the runners in the small battles, then set the climax of the story at a site where the non-player character's magic is inhibited and the runner team's magic is enhanced.

TEMPORARY BACKGROUND COUNT

Much of the background count described in **Grimoire II**, such as that found at highly sacred or polluted sites, is a permanent phenomenon, barring some major change in the location. Various ebbs and flows in the stuff of the etheric plane, however, can produce temporary eddies and currents that cause short-term background counts. For example, especially strong releases of emotion or magic that impress a great deal of energy into the etheric medium, including extreme violence, powerful spells, riots, massive rock concerts and ecstatic religious rituals, can create a temporary background count. Once the source of the etheric impression is gone, the background count will fade, lasting a few hours to several days or weeks (at the gamemaster's discretion), depending on the strength and intensity of the original impression.

AWAKENED ODDITIES

The **Shadowrun** rules make only minor distinctions between magical traditions. All magicians use magic in the same general way, and there is no game difference between a manablast cast by a rigid-minded wage mage, a neo-anarchist Coyote shaman, a druid, an elven path follower, or a houngan. The Conjuring Skill is the same no matter what type of magician is using it. Even spirits follow the same basic rules, though their exact capabilities may differ.

The various magical traditions described in **Shadowrun** products primarily offer roleplaying hooks to allow both players and gamemasters to create unique and interesting magician characters and NPCs for their adventures. Rather than making every spell-tosser the runners encounter the same-old same-old, the gamemaster may use the material from any of the fictional pieces presented earlier in this book or published in other **Shadowrun** products to throw the occasional "wild card" character into an adventure. After all, the Awakening is only 40 years old, and nobody knows *everything* about magic. Keep the players guessing about the exact nature of what they are facing.

The following guidelines offer hints for gamemasters who wish to include non-traditional magicians in their campaigns. Keep in mind that these manifestations of magical talent remain very rare, the kind of abilities that are written about in professional journals and compose the subject of scholarly research; gamemasters should introduce these manifestations of magical ability sparingly.

Gamemasters must decide whether or not to allow players to create starting characters who manifest their magical talents in these ways. These characterizations are not meant for starting characters, but if a player decides that her character thinks "magic ain't nuttin' but a bunch of mind tricks" and wants to play her magic-user character that way, the gamemaster should feel free to give it a shot.

PSIONICS

There are some few who still choose to believe that magic in the Sixth World is some kind of manifestation of "the psychic power of the mind." Some magicians even choose to define their own abilities in terms of psionics rather than magic. All of the known psionics are hermetics, usually the equivalent of Sorcery adepts, though some rare psionics are actually full magicians. Even those who may have the ability to conjure (in game terms) rarely, if ever, do so, for they believe there is nothing to conjure but what is in the mind. Psionics also avoid using physical spells; mana spells are their bread and butter ("it's the power of the mind at work"). All psionics work their magic under some kind of *geas*, usually the self-created concentration *geas*. Basically a combination of the time, incantation and gesture *geasa*, this special *geas* allows the psionist to concentrate using whatever means necessary to evoke the power of the mind. Psionics may require a few minutes or more to cast a spell (the "concentration time" of the *geas*); that, added to the psionics' fondness for broad gestures and screaming "focus and clear your mind" at the top of their lungs as they prepare to use their power usually makes them unwelcome as shadowrunners, but their magic works just the same.

Psionics are rarely invited to join magical groups for initiation, as not believing in magic puts a real a damper on before-dinner conversation. Most psionics self-initiate, using an ordeal of meditation, mental asceticism or thesis. All the standard initiate rules apply, except that a psionic initiate can never remove his *geas*. Even when a psionic uses metamagic, he must be able to explain the power as a phenomenon of his mind. That is a fairly simple explanation for centering, shielding and dispelling, but masking, anchoring and quickening require some fairly complex mental

acrobatics. A psionic will use metamagical abilities that are difficult to rationalize as mental powers; he just has to work that much harder to justify them.

If a psionic starts to believe in magic, he or she automatically loses 2 points from his or her Magic Attribute rating and must take a second *geas* (this *geas* is in addition to the standard psionics *geas*). If the character denies either *geas*, he or she faces the Way of the Burnout. In some cases ignorance is bliss.

RELIGION

Another way magic manifests for those not quite able to believe in its existence is demonstrated in the way that evangelistic magicians and "street saints" focus their magical abilities through their faith. The gamemaster can use these unusual characters to make players wonder about the *real* source of an NPC's strange abilities. Sure, that thunderbolt *looks* like magic, but will a mana barrier really turn aside the wrath of an unspecified god?

Shadowrun makes no judgments about the value of any individual religious belief. For the purposes of post-Awakening magic, all belief systems are equally significant. The dogma counts for less than the individual's faith in that dogma, which turns the belief system into an effective magical tool. There is no religion that is "better," magically speaking, than any other.

Gamemasters who wish to include bonuses for religion-based magicians should use the totems offered in the **Shadowrun** rulebook as a general guideline. They may also find the idols described in the **Germany Sourcebook** useful.

Religion-based magic does not fall easily into a "they do this and they never use that" breakdown. Each character's take on his religion is so unique that the gamemaster and the player must together decide exactly how the belief manifests magically. Use the following guidelines to discourage players from setting up their characters as omnipotent, "my character thinks he is The Big Kahuna and Ruler of the Universe so he can do everything" beings. The religion-based magician must be either shamanic or hermetic in nature. A religion-based magician must also have a *geas*, such as his power can only be used in a place of worship, only on Sundays, only on holy days, or it must be channeled through the religion's icons. Religion-based magicians view their magic as a gift from their deity, and the *geas* must fit appropriate parameters.

If the religion-based magician ignores his *geas*, apply the same penalties that befall the psionic. Religion-based magicians must also self-initiate, as no teachers or magical groups would count them as members. The gamemaster must approve the ordeal the player chooses to fit his character's mindset, though a search for holy relics might be appropriate for nearly every religion.

POP OCCULTISM

Because most "magicians" in this category are frauds or charlatans, they make interesting NPCs but frustrating player characters. ("OK, today is Tuesday and the third of the month. Does my character have use of his magic today?") The pop-occult magician might claim to possess great magical powers, but just be a skillful con artist with a good special-effects man. (The team magician says his aura looks mundane, but can he be *sure* the bad guy's not mask-

ing?) For the rare, genuine magician who follows some outdated, off-the-shelf magical philosophy, use the standard magic rules. Most such individuals are adepts, not full magicians. The gamemaster may use the guidelines for creating a religion-based magician to determine appropriate *geasa* and ordeals for these magicians.

SELF-CREATED TRADITIONS

Because a magic user who follows a self-created tradition represents the potentially most unbalancing type of **Shadowrun** magician, such characters should be limited to NPCs. The gamemaster can use magicians following self-created traditions to foil player expectations now and then, just as a reminder that the denizens of the Sixth World actually know very little about how magic works. If the gamemaster allows a player to design his own magical tradition out of whole cloth, the player should use the published traditions as a model for the basic abilities of the new tradition; the self-created tradition should not offer any abilities that no other magical tradition can offer.

PARANORMAL ANIMAL TOTEMS

The great majority of the published **Shadowrun** shamanic totems are animals or archetypes that have been part of some culture's belief system for centuries. When the Awakening brought to life creatures from ancient myth, certain rare shamans also felt the call to follow these new totems.

Paranormal animal shamans represent the newest breed of shaman appearing in the Awakened world, and a player character who chooses a paranormal animal totem must prepare to face some intense backlash. Because very few shamans hear the call of paranormal animal totems, the paranormal animal shaman will almost always be alone. Even large sprawls like Seattle will only have a handful of these shamans, and those few most likely will not follow the same totems.

Further, the lack of historical worship of the paranormal animal totems may encourage other, more traditional shamans to either shun paranormal animal shamans as freaks or even attempt to kill them out of the conviction that they must be toxic shamans. Hermetic mages usually stay out of the "what totem is better" argument, but even that community is of a divided opinion. Some have trouble classifying the paranormal shaman, while others feel that the Awakened world has so few rules that it makes as much sense for there to be a Gargoyle totem as a Rat totem. As with most magical issues in the Awakened world, the gamemaster should decide how a paranormal animal totem fits into his individual campaign.

GARGOYLE

A creature of living stone, Gargoyle is patient above all else, able to remain motionless for hours, silently observing. He is a fierce fighter, willing to wait and watch for the ideal moment to strike and rend his prey. From his silent perch high above the city, Gargoyle sees much and knows the value of knowledge.

Favored Environment: Urban

Advantages: +1 die for detection and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring city spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for conjuring Spirits of the Waters. Gargoyle shamans are plotters and schemers. They prefer to carefully observe and gather information before making a move, planning their actions for maximum advantage. They refuse to act hastily and will retreat if caught unaware, in order to plot their next move. The Gargoyle shaman must live in either a skyscraper or castle-like structure, which usually requires a high or luxury lifestyle. Their homes always feature some sort of accessible perch, walkway or balcony near the roof.

GRIFFIN

Griffin is a proud and fierce hunter, the savage lord of the winds. A primal creature, Griffin is intimate with the dance of life and death, hunter and prey. Griffin may terrorize his target in combat, but he will honor and respect a capable opponent, for the hunt is a sacred task, not a sport. Living high in his mountain lair, Griffin sees far and so learns the secrets of the prey he depends on for life.

Favored Environment: Mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Sky

Disadvantages: Griffin shamans are proud and do not suffer indignity from those they consider beneath them (which is most everyone else). Any time the gamemaster judges that the Griffin shaman has been insulted or offended, the shaman must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number of 4 to avoid becoming enraged. If the shaman rolls 2 or fewer successes, he or she fails the test and flies into a berserk rage. For 3 turns, the shaman attacks the offender using his or her most powerful physical or magical weapon. The rage ends after 3 turns or when the victim has been killed or incapacitated.

Griffin shamans are honorable combatants and will declare the target of their attack, which is always the most powerful opponent they face in any battle. They will attack only that target until the shaman or the enemy dies or is incapacitated. If a third party steps into to "help" the shaman, the shaman will consider it an insult and must make the Willpower Test described above.

LEVIATHAN

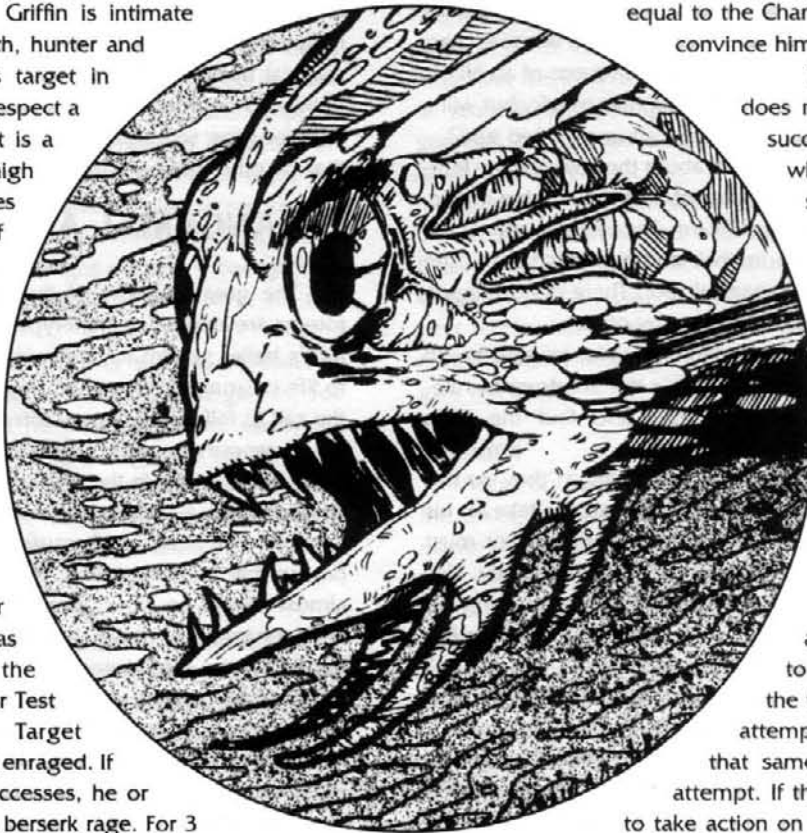
Great Leviathan dives to the deepest and darkest depths of the sea, where he lives in eternal night. He carries his majestic bulk gracefully in the heart of the waters and his song gives his wisdom and knowledge to all the creatures of the deep. Life is as simple and as complex as the movements of the tides and the endless dance of life in the sea.

Favored Environment: On or near the sea

Advantages: +1 die for health and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for illusion spells. Leviathan shamans are almost preternaturally calm and unhurried, and slow to react at times. A Leviathan shaman must be convinced, by use of an opposed test, that he or she is needed. The character trying to convince the shaman to take action makes a Charisma, Negotiation or Etiquette (Magical) Test against a target number equal to the unmodified Intelligence of the Leviathan shaman. The Leviathan shaman rolls a number of dice equal to his or her unmodified Intelligence against a target number equal to the Charisma of the person trying to convince him or her.

If the Leviathan shaman does not achieve the highest net successes, he will go along with what is required of him. These shamans will then pursue their goal with a single-minded purpose, gearing up for the exact task or action requested. If the plan changes, the Leviathan shaman must be convinced again (as above) to go along with the change. If the Leviathan shaman achieves the highest net successes on the test made to convince him to act, he declines to respond to the call to action. Modify the target number of any further attempts to convince him to take that same action by +1 per failed attempt. If the Leviathan shaman agrees to take action on a repeated attempt to convince him, he must subtract 2 from all Initiative rolls.



PEGASUS

In myth, Pegasus leaped full grown from the severed neck of the gorgon Medusa. A creature of beauty born of blood, Pegasus is wild and free. He is skittish and shy, avoiding strangers as potential enemies, as elusive as the wind itself. He fights fiercely against the bridle and only the bravest can earn his respect and friendship. Pegasus is loyal to such people, but not blindly so. An arrogant rider can still be brought low if he gets above himself.

Favored Environment: Rural area under the open sky

Advantages: +2 dice to detection and health spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Sky

Disadvantages: Pegasus shamans cannot bear captivity or limits on their freedom of movement. If they voluntarily enter into a building or enclosed area, they must make a successful Willpower (4) Test every hour they stay inside, up to a number of hours equal to their

Willpower Attribute. If all those tests succeed, the shaman may remain inside as long as necessary—he's sucked up his fear and steeled his will to do what has to be done. If the shaman fails this test, he no longer needs to make the Willpower (4) Tests to keep his composure, but must add 1 to all target numbers while he remains inside.

A Pegasus shaman involuntarily confined (imprisoned, caught in a natural disaster, and so on) automatically suffers a +1 penalty to all target numbers. If involuntarily confined for a number of hours equal to or greater than his Willpower Attribute, the shaman must make a Willpower (4) Test to avoid going into a death frenzy. Magic Pool dice cannot be used for this test. If the shaman succeeds in this test (achieves at least 1 success), he or she need not make the test again for a number of hours equal to the number of successes.

Failure on this test sends the Pegasus shaman into the death frenzy, a single-minded, all-out attempt to escape. Increase all the shaman's Attributes by 2 during the death frenzy. The Pegasus shaman will immediately try to reach the nearest window, door, or exit and will run over, past or through anything standing in his way. He will not fight unless opponents try to stop him. The gamemaster secretly keeps a running total of any damage the shaman takes during the frenzy, though neither that damage nor any penalties apply during the frenzy. If the character's damage exceeds the Physical column and his Body Rating, the shaman continues to live for a number of minutes equal to his Willpower Attribute, still possessed by the frenzy, then dies. If the shaman succeeds in escaping, the frenzy ends a number of minutes later equal to his Willpower Attribute. All damage taken during the frenzy takes effect at that moment. If the damage is enough to kill the shaman, he or she dies.

At his discretion and according to the demands of his game, the gamemaster may modify the number of minutes a shaman can survive the death frenzy. He may also choose to change the circumstances under which the shaman must resist the death frenzy. For example, if the shaman is confined in a cage outside, trapped only by an electrified field, or locked in a room with lots of windows, the gamemaster may judge that the shaman will take longer to panic.

PHOENIX

Bright and proud, Phoenix symbolizes beauty and rebirth. When the time comes for her to die, Phoenix builds her own funeral pyre of the finest materials, then ignites it in a blaze of glory. She rises anew from the ashes to begin the cycle again, once more young and vibrant. The song of Phoenix is legendary in its magnificence, for Phoenix is a great artist and appreciates beauty.

Favored Environment: Desert and fields

Advantages: +1 die for health and illusion spells; can conjure Spirits of the Great Fiery Firmament (see p. 143, *Tír na nÓg*)

Disadvantages: Phoenix shamans are flamboyant with a flair for the dramatic. They must assign a value of at least 4 to Charisma during character creation. Phoenix shamans must also know a performance skill such as a musical instrument, singing or dance, which may also be used as a Centering Skill or geas. Finally, Phoenix shamans have a reputation, like their totem, for rising from the ashes. They can survive physical overflow damage of Body Rating x 2. Each time the shaman's damage overflows the Physical column of the Condition

Monitor, however, reduce the total by 1. Over time, this can effectively reduce the shaman to having no overflow at all.

UNICORN

Fierce and free, Unicorn is a creature of the wild. She is shy and shuns the presence of man, save only the purest of heart. Though she prefers to avoid conflict with (meta)humanity, she is a staunch defender of the wilderness, protecting it unto death. Unicorn cannot abide corruption, and the touch of her horn serves as a panacea for all manner of toxins and diseases.

Favored Environment: Forest

Advantages: +2 dice for health and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Land. Upon character creation, a Unicorn shaman receives the Aura Reading Skill (see p. 96) at one-half his starting Sorcery Skill Rating at no extra cost. The shaman may increase this rating using standard skill improvement rules (p. 190, *SRII*).

Disadvantages: Unicorn shamans must follow a strict moral code, upholding the sacredness of the wild and all its creatures. They will tolerate no corruption and work to root it out wherever they may find it, even at great personal cost. Unicorn shamans must double all Essence and Magic Attribute reductions caused by adding cyber- or bioware to their bodies, due to its unnatural and corrupting effects.

TOTEM CREATION

Shadowrun products offer an extensive variety of totems from many different cultures and traditions, a selection that will continue to expand as new areas of the Sixth World are explored and described in future products. (See the Totem Table, p. 151, for a complete list.) It is entirely likely, however, that some **Shadowrun** players and gamemasters have concepts for totems yet to be covered in print. This section provides guidelines for creating new totems.

Like all aspects of the mystic arts, totem creation cannot be reduced to mere number crunching. Totem design requires as much art as science, so do not regard these rules as hard and fast. Gamemasters should always allow common sense and good judgment about their own campaigns to prevail over statistics.

WHY A NEW TOTEM?

The first question the gamemaster should ask is, "Is this new totem really necessary?" Explore the possibility that the concept proposed by the gamemaster or player fits with an existing totem from published **Shadowrun** material. If the new totem is simply a variation of an existing totem, the gamemaster can use the game statistics of the old totem and substitute the description of the new totem. For example, Serpent and Wyrms are very similar figures among the Irish and Welsh druids, so their game statistics (presented in *Tír na nÓg* and the *London Sourcebook*, respectively) are the same even though they are two distinct totems.

The gamemaster may also consider modifying existing totems to suit the desired new totem. Gamemasters should take care not to make the totem's advantages or disadvantages too extreme. No totem should be inherently more or less powerful than any other.

If, after considering the above options, the gamemaster still chooses to create or allow the creation of a new totem, he should use the existing totems as models for constructing and balancing the new totem.

ARCHETYPES

The totem archetype is a symbol for certain qualities, and forms the basis of a totem's nature. For example, Coyote is an archetypal Trickster figure, while Bear is a Healer. Some archetypes vary from one culture to another, while others remain fairly constant. **Shadowrun** totems usually represent the most universal qualities of the totem.

While creating the totem, ask what qualities the image of the totem brings to mind. What typical feats and actions are normally associated with the image? Remember, it is not the physical, real aspects of the archetype that are important, but the *image*. The totem is not a bear or even *the* bear, but Bear, the mythic archetype of all bearkind.

Use these qualities (both good and bad) to determine the totem's nature. Is it sly and tricky like Coyote? Stern and proud like Eagle or gentle and playful like Dolphin? These personality traits are reflected by the totem's shamans, who must act in accordance with their totem's Way to retain their power.

Totem archetypes are generally animal figures, but other cultural archetypes will serve just as well. For example, the idols of European nature magic (see pp. 149–151, **Germany Sourcebook**) are humanlike mythological archetypes. Other magical traditions follow totems of mythical creatures or even places that have become invested with significant meaning. The gamemaster always has final say on whether or not a given archetype is suitable for use as a totem.

ADVANTAGES

All totems are better at some things and worse at others, so it is only natural that the totem provides both benefits and drawbacks when called upon for magic. In general, the totem provides a bonus die (or dice) to one spell category and for conjuring a class or type of spirit. For example, Bear is a strong and sensitive healer, so he provides +2 dice for health spells. Forest is Bear's favored domain, so Bear shamans gain +2 dice for conjuring forest spirits. Do not feel confined by the dice, however; if you feel that the realm of the totem covers more than one spell category or should offer additional advantages, simply be sure that the disadvantages balance out. Rural Snake shamans, for example, use +2 dice for healing, illusion and detection spells, but will not fight except for food and in self-defense, and suffer a penalty of -1 for spells cast during combat.

Totems may also modify certain target numbers or create other, minor effects.

DISADVANTAGES

Just like advantages, following a totem implies certain drawbacks. Snake and Rat are not fighters, so their shamans subtract dice from Combat spells; Wolf and Bear can go berserk when wounded and Owl does not work well in the daylight.

Consider the qualities of the archetype to determine the totem's weaknesses, and use these to balance out the advantages

the totem grants. Required behaviors can be drawbacks if they sometimes hinder the shaman or are difficult to overcome (usually requiring a Willpower Test).

BALANCING IT OUT

Balance the totem's advantages and disadvantages. Totems offering big advantages should require big drawbacks, while totems like Coyote have no bonuses, but no disadvantages either.

If the answer to the question, "Will everyone want to play this totem rather than any other one?" is yes, the totem is probably too powerful and needs more or stronger disadvantages. Likewise, if no character in his right mind would follow the totem, it may be too weak or better suited for non-player shamans (like the insect and toxic totems).

Be fair but firm when working out totem modifiers. Generally, several small modifiers serve game balance better than one large modifier. A +2 dice bonus to health and manipulation spells is far more balanced than +4 dice to just one category.

EXAMPLES

The following examples describe the thought processes that might go into creating a new totem. Prairie Dog and Fire-Bringer are suitable for use as player-character totems.

Prairie Dog

A gamemaster is developing a totem based on the fictional Prairie Dog shaman described in **The Ways of Magic**, p. 15.

First, the gamemaster consults the existing totem descriptions, finding that Dog and Rat are the two closest totems to the one he wants. Unfortunately, neither is exactly what the gamemaster has in mind for Prairie Dog—Rat is secretive, suspicious and NO FUN; Dog is loyal and friendly, but too much of a fighter for Prairie Dog.

The gamemaster then lists all of the qualities he can think of that embody the archetype of Prairie Dog. Prairie Dog is a community-minded, gregarious character. He is quick and playful, but acutely aware of how vulnerable his small size makes him, and so is always on the alert. Prairie Dog rarely fights, preferring to hide in his intricate underground lair and stay one step ahead of predators.

With these ideas in mind, the gamemaster begins to look at totem modifiers. He decides that the totem will provide a bonus to detection and illusion spells, to reflect Prairie Dog's quick and nimble character. Prairie Dog is also fun-loving and gregarious, so the gamemaster gives the shaman a bonus of +1 die for any Charisma-based test. Because Prairie Dog lives in intricate tunnels under the ground, the gamemaster also grants a small bonus for conjuring any land-based spirits. Prairie Dog shamans suffer a penalty to combat spells, because they consider it much easier to run than to fight.

PRAIRIE DOG

Prairie Dog is playful, fun-loving and always interested in meeting new people to add to his family. He is not naive, however; he keeps an eye out for potential danger and always knows where to run and hide. In his small way, Prairie Dog defines the Awakened world, being both suspicious and friendly, wary and welcoming.

Prairie Dog shamans make it a point of pride to meet everyone who lives near them, whether they live in a huge multiplex of apartments or a small rural community. They especially like to borrow and swap items, because it gives them an excuse to talk to people. Prairie Dog shamans will always know multiple ways to get from one place to another. They rarely use the same route coming and going, preferring to weave intricate paths and patterns to and from their destinations.

Favored Environment: Any environment except water
Advantages: +2 dice for detection spells; +1 die for illusion spells; +1 die for Charisma Tests; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Land
Disadvantages: -2 dice for combat spells.

Fire-Bringer

A player is designing a shaman who uses European nature magic, a belief system based on anthropomorphic totems known as idols. None of the idols in the **Germany Sourcebook** appeal to the player, so she decides to create a new idol based on the mythic archetype of Prometheus, the Greek Titan who gave fire to mankind.

She begins by studying some of the myths about Prometheus. She decides that the idol, known as the Fire-Bringer, is a thoughtful, creative and caring archetype. He is also prone to act without thinking and willingly goes to great lengths to uphold his convictions, defying law and authority if necessary. As the bearer of fire and light, he is a figure of truth, generosity and progress. Followers of the Fire-Bringer tend to be crusaders, very cause-driven and devoted to the ideals of truth and duty.

With a firm grasp of the idol's attributes, the player begins looking at totem modifiers. A bonus to detection spells seems an obvious choice for a figure devoted to truth and bringing light into the darkness. Since the Fire-Bringer is also considered a powerful creator and shaper, she decides the totem will offer a bonus to manipulation spells. In most stories about the Fire-Bringer, he is described as a great friend of humanity, so the player assigns a bonus for conjuring Spirits of Man.

The gamemaster considers the new idol and agrees that it is sufficiently different from the existing idols to warrant a new totem. He suggests that the player assign a penalty to illusion spells, since the Fire-Bringer's devotion to truth makes him a poor deceiver. He also requires Fire-Bringer shamans to be willing to risk their safety for the benefit of their friends and associates. The final design of the idol appears as follows.

FIRE-BRINGER

The Fire-Bringer is the friend and ally of man. He risked everything to steal the secret of fire from the heavens and give it to humanity as a gift and tool. He represents a figure of kindness and concern, but his good intentions sometimes get him in trouble and his plans sometimes fail to work out the way he envisioned them. He is a shaper and creator, forming new things out of the primal clay and breathing the fiery spark of life into them.

Favored Environment: Urban



Advantages: +2 dice for detection and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of Man

Disadvantages: -1 die for illusion spells. Fire-Bringer shamans selflessly devote themselves to the betterment of others, even at the expense of their own welfare. While a Fire-Bringer shaman is not required to sacrifice his life for the benefit of humanity, he will generally do anything short of making that sacrifice. Most Fire-Bringer shamans devote themselves to some cause that they follow with great zeal.

ADEPT RULES



These rules expand the adept rules presented in **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, and the **Grimoire, Second Edition**. In addition to describing a new adept type and offering optional rules for playing a physical magician (an adept that can also cast spells), the **Adept Rules** section provides twenty-three new adept powers.

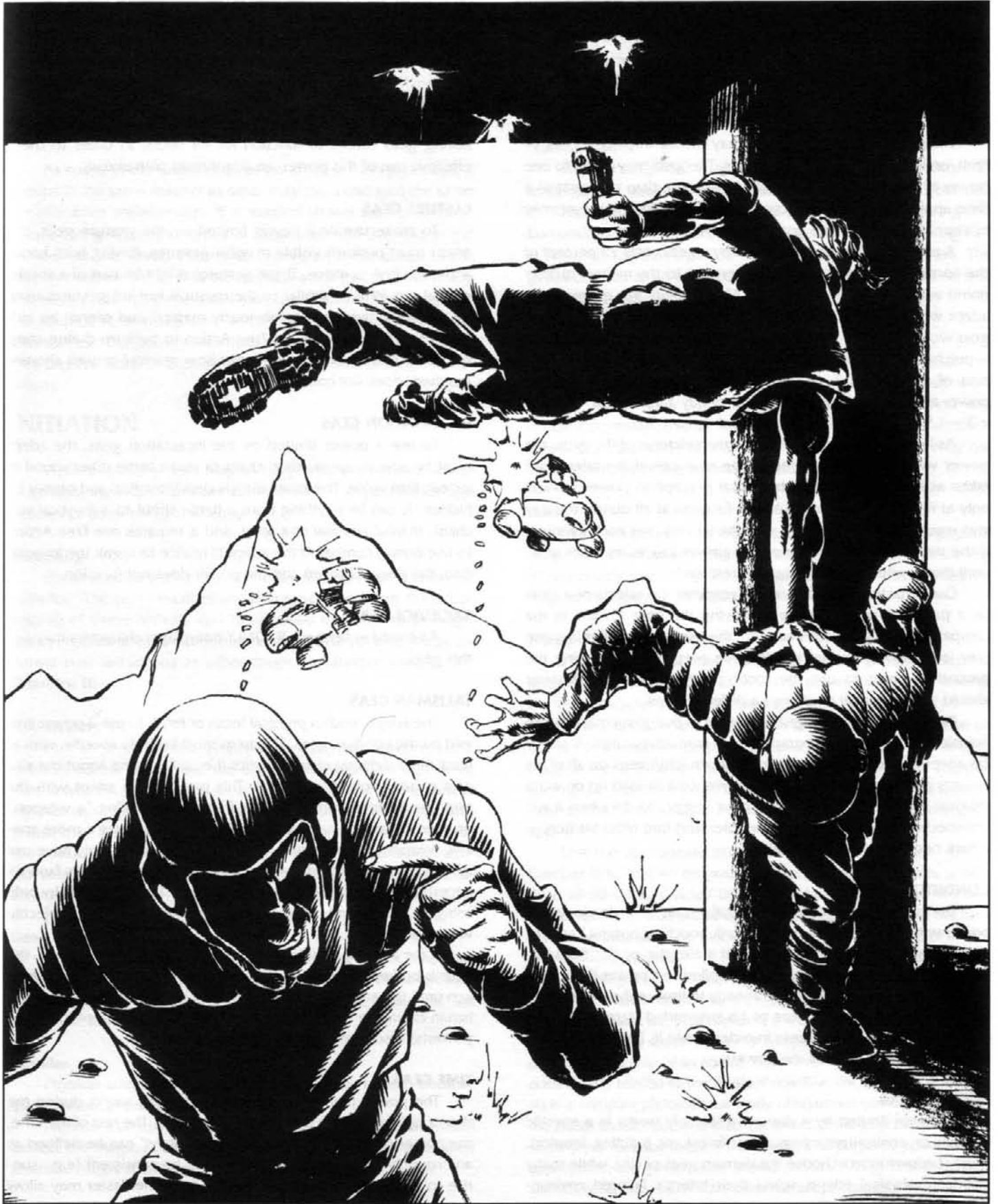
The player and gamemaster can use the development of a physical adept character's Way, as described in the **Adepts** fiction section (p. 51) as a roleplaying element in the character's growth. The player may also decide to use his adept character's Way as a foundation for building the character concept and selecting the adept's powers. The character's Way might also help in choosing appropriate geasa for the character's powers (if desired).

ASTRAL ADEPTS

Astral adepts are standard Magic Priority B adepts who possess the ability to access the astral plane but can perform no other magic. Astral adepts can use astral perception and astral projection normally and may learn and use all of the magical skills associated with perception and projection (such as Sorcery for astral combat). They cannot make active use of any other magical skills on the physical plane (Sorcery, Conjuring or Enchanting). They can become initiates, and they gain the ability to perform astral quests and project to the metaplanes upon doing so. The only metamagic they can use is the masking power. They can bond foci, but only gain bonuses from power and weapon foci. Astral adepts often find applications for their talents as "clairvoyants" and trackers.

SHAMANIC PHYSICAL ADEPTS

Shamanic physical adepts use the normal rules for totems with one major exception: these adepts do not receive Sorcery or Conjuring bonuses or penalties (because they cannot use those skills). They must accept any applicable limitations, which may be considered non-removable geasa for game purposes, and may receive any applicable bonuses of their chosen



totem. Shamanic physical adepts also have an additional option for initiation, a variation of the astral quest known as the vision quest (see **Initiation**, p. 113).

GEASA

The player of a physical adept may choose to place a *geas*, or limit, on his or her character's powers. The *geas* may apply to one power or many, and an adept can have more than one *geas* at a time applying to different powers in combination. A player may not apply more than one *geas* to a power.

A physical adept power limited by a *geas* costs 75 percent of the normal Magic cost (round fractions up to the nearest quarter point) with a minimum cost of .25 Magic Points. For example, an adept who purchased the astral perception power with the time *geas* would pay only 1.5 Magic Points ($2 \times .75 = 1.5$). If the power is purchased in levels, the reduction in cost is applied to the *total* cost of the power. If an adept is purchasing the body control power at Level 3, he or she would only pay 1.25 Magic Points ($.5 \times 3 = 1.5$; $1.5 \times .75 = 1.125$, rounded up to 1.25).

As long as the adept adheres to the strictures of the *geas*, the power works normally. In the above example, if the adept had taken as her time *geas* that her astral perception power worked only at night, the power would not function at all during the day and would function normally after the sun had set each evening. If the *geas* is broken, however, the power ceases to work at all until the conditions of the *geas* are restored.

Gamemasters should carefully consider the effects of a *geas* on a particular power before approving the *geas* for use in the campaign. If the *geas* does not limit the use of the power in some way (such as a *geas* that requires the adept to be touching the ground in order to use the rooting power), the gamemaster should ask the player to choose a different *geas*.

Part of the fun of the *geasa* concept is that gamemasters can occasionally exploit the characters' *geasa* in adventures. A physical adept may choose to accept a domain (city) *geas* on all of his powers and take advantage of the lower cost to load up on extra magical goodies, but what's the poor fragger to do when a run unexpectedly takes him out of the 'plex and into tribal territory—where none of his powers work?

CONDITION GEAS

The adept must achieve a specific state in order to use a power with this *geas*: e.g., being drunk, touching natural Earth, or meditating. If the adept is not in that state, the power does not work. Note that this *geas* cannot be applied to a power if the *geas* is something that must be done already to invoke the power (i.e., an adept could not take a *geas* on his suspended state power that required him to be motionless in order to use it, because motionlessness is already part of the power).

DOMAIN GEAS

A power limited by a domain *geas* only works in a specific domain or environment (e.g., city, forest, or building interior). Most shadowrunners choose the domain *geas* of city, while many shamanic physical adepts select their totem's favored environ-

ment as the place where their power is greatest. A common version of this *geas* limits the power to working within the confines of the adept's homeland or native city.

FASTING GEAS

Whenever the adept eats or drinks, a power limited by the fasting *geas* ceases to function for 24 hours. In order to make effective use of this power, an adept must plan ahead.

GESTURE GEAS

To make use of a power limited by the gesture *geas*, the adept must perform visible magical gestures, having both hands and arms free to move. These gestures might be part of a special martial arts kata or similar to the mystical kuji-kiri gestures used by the ninja, but they are obviously magical and cannot be hidden. The gestures require a Free Action to perform during combat. Note that an attack, no matter how graceful or well choreographed, does *not* count for this *geas*.

INCANTATION GEAS

To use a power limited by the incantation *geas*, the adept must be able to speak, sing, chant or make some other sound in a clear, firm voice. The incantation is clearly magical and cannot be hidden. It can be anything from a battle shout to a mystical war chant, martial arts *kiai* or a song, and it requires one Free Action to use during combat. If the adept is unable to speak the incantation, the *geas* is broken and the power does not function.

SACRIFICE GEAS

As stated in **Grimoire II**, ONLY non-player characters may use this *geas*.

TALISMAN GEAS

The adept needs a physical focus or fetish to use a power limited by the talisman *geas*. This item must be fairly specific, with at least three defining characteristics (i.e., a flat stone about the size of a quarter veined with red). This prevents an adept with the improved armed combat power from simply taking "a weapon" or even "a sword" as a talisman; he must designate a more specific weapon. For example, a samurai adept might only have use of the improved armed combat power while wielding his family's ancestral katana. A Native American might fulfill this *geas* by only using a self-crafted bow to practice her improved projectile weapons power.

If the adept is unable to touch, use or wield the talisman, the *geas* is broken. If the talisman is lost or destroyed, the *geas* is broken until the adept can regain it or acquire another one. If the talisman is unique and it is lost or destroyed, the adept loses the power(s) associated with this *geas* *permanently*.

TIME GEAS

The power limited by the time *geas* only works during the day or night or during one season of the year. The rest of the time, the power does not function. "Day" or "night" can be defined as any roughly 12-hour period, but should be consistent (e.g., sunrise to sunset or noon to midnight). The gamemaster may allow



other types of time geasa, such as lunar based (the power only functions while the moon is either waxing or waning) or even astrological. As a general guideline, the time geas should render the power useless about half the time.

MAGICAL GROUPS

As noted in the **Grimoire II**, physical adepts can join magical groups in the same manner as other magicians and gain the same benefits from membership. If a magical group admits physical adepts along with other types of magicians, add 2 to the target number for the group's test for creating an astral contact. This penalty does not apply if all the physical adepts joining the group are required to have the astral perception power, which allows the adept(s) to be more than "astral dead weight" in making the Contact Test. The penalty also does not apply if the group admits only physical adepts, because they all have a similar magical paradigm.

INITIATION

While physical adepts may undergo initiation individually or in groups, certain differences exist between adept initiates and initiates of other magical disciplines.

ORDEALS

Physical adepts may use the following types of ordeals for initiation. The text describes any differences between the adept version of these ordeals and the ordeals used by other magicians. Physical adepts submitting to an ordeal receive the same Karma cost reductions as other magical characters (see p. 38, **Grimoire II**).

Asceticism

Due to their greater emphasis on physical development, physical adepts rarely take the asceticism ordeal, though some adepts who do not concentrate on physical development, such as mystics and "ghost hunters," have been known to do so. This ordeal may involve arduous ritual combat or tests of endurance. The attribute reduced as a requirement for this ordeal cannot benefit from the increased physical attributes power, though the character can apply the attribute boost power to this attribute.

Deed

All physical adepts may perform the deed ordeal, and may submit to the deed ordeal more than once. When the adept submits to this ordeal, he must forfeit any Karma award for the adventure in which the deed takes place.

Familiar

Physical adepts cannot undergo the familiar ordeal, because they cannot conjure ally spirits.

Physical magicians may submit to this ordeal, but they must deduct the Magic Point spent to conjure the ally spirit from their effective Magic Attribute (see **Physical Magicians**, p. 119).

Geas

A physical adept may accept a geas as an ordeal for initiation. This geas affects one or more of the adept's existing powers whose total cost equals .5 Magic Points. Accepting an ordeal geas does not affect the initial cost of the power(s) (the cost cannot be reduced retroactively), and this geas cannot be removed through further initiation.

Physical magicians may submit to the geas ordeal either by limiting their adept powers as above or by taking a geas that applies to all of their active magical skills (Sorcery, Conjuring and Enchanting). This is in addition to any geasa the physical magician is required to have based on his effective Magic Attribute. The geas accepted as an ordeal *cannot* be shed through initiation (see **Physical Magicians**, p. 119).

Meditation

Physical adepts may submit to the meditation ordeal, but characters who focus on physical development (i.e., they were created with higher Physical Attributes) sometimes find this ordeal extremely difficult. The adept may use improved attribute power bonuses when making the Meditation Tests, but may not take advantage of the boosted attribute power.

Oath

Many magical groups made up mainly or partially of physical adepts require that new members submit to the oath ordeal. This is particularly true of secretive organizations such as the Oni-do ninja or Tir Tairngire's Paladins.

Thesis

The gamemaster may choose to allow a physical adept to prepare an alternate sort of thesis that serves as a master treatise on the character's area of specialization, such as Miyamoto Mushashi's *Go-Rin-No-Sho* (A Book of Five Rings), a treatise on the art of swordsmanship. The thesis encompasses the adept's magical world view and all of his knowledge of his Way. The thesis may be a book or other text, a complex work of art, a masterfully crafted weapon, or any other work that the gamemaster approves.

Use the appropriate skill (Athletics, Military Theory, Armed Combat B/R, and so on) with a Target Number of 5 and a base time of 30 days, divided by the number of successes. No successes indicates that preparation of the thesis takes twice the base time. The thesis can be worked on in smaller segments of time if the character wishes.

A thesis prepared by a physical adept has all of the properties of an ordeal thesis prepared by a magician. The thesis acts as an astral link to its creator, and if all copies of the thesis are destroyed, the creator immediately loses 1 point of Magic (with an equivalent loss in powers, in the case of an adept). The powers lost should generally be ones closely related to the thesis, if possible. For example, if the thesis is a complex philosophical study of unarmed combat techniques, the adept should lose one level (or more) of the improved unarmed combat power if the thesis is destroyed. If no particular power seems appropriate, the gamemaster should choose 1 Magic Point worth of abilities at random to remove from the adept character.

Vision Quest

Only shamanic physical adepts may perform this variation of the astral quest ordeal (see **Shamanic Physical Adept**, p. 110). Generally, the adept must meditate and fast in solitude in his totem's favored environment for as many days as the desired grade of initiation + 1. Follow the standard rules for the astral quest ordeal. The adept cannot perform the vision quest for any purpose other than initiation and, as with other ordeals, the vision quest may only be undertaken once.

REMOVING GEASA

Unless specifically stated otherwise (as in the case of ordeal geasa), a physical adept can choose to drop a geas from one of his powers upon achieving a new initiate grade. The adept must immediately be able to pay for the cost difference in Magic Points upon achieving the new grade. If the adept possesses the required amount of good Karma, the geas disappears and the adept may use the power without restriction. If the adept has a geas that applies to multiple powers it can be shed from one power at a time. If the adept does not have sufficient Magic Points from one initiation to remove the geas, the limitation remains until the character has enough Karma Points to "pay off" the geas. A physical adept may only shed one geas from one power per grade of initiation.

A shamanic physical adept cannot remove a totem-based geas.

METAMAGIC

Physical adept initiates can use the metamagical abilities of masking and centering. Physical adept initiates with the astral perception power gain a special Astral Pool equal to their initiate grade which can be used for Astral Tests.

Masking

All physical adept initiates may mask their auras to appear as mundanes or non-initiate physical adepts. Adepts who possess the astral perception power may also attempt to penetrate the masking of others per the standard **Grimoire II** rules. Physical adepts can also use deliberate masking to conceal foci and to penetrate attuned wards.

Centering (Optional Rule)

The gamemaster may allow an adept initiate to use centering to resist the Drain caused by the boost attribute power. Physical adepts may choose from a broad variety of Centering Skills, but the gamemaster should not allow an adept initiate to use any Combat or Athletics skill as a Centering Skill (as stated in **Grimoire II**, Centering Skills should not have much practical application outside of helping the adept focus). Some common Centering Skills for physical adepts appear in the **Adepts** fiction section, p. 55.

FOCI

Physical adepts may use weapon foci and the centering focus described on page 103 of the **Rules** section. They lack the necessary magical abilities to use any other type of foci. Physical adepts cannot make foci, but may bond suitable foci that they acquire.



ESCAPE ARTIST (NEW SKILL)

The Escape Artist Special Skill is a Concentration of the Athletic Skill that allows the user to escape from restraints and confinement such as ropes, handcuffs and other bindings by means of contortion and manual dexterity. The difficulty for an Escape Artist Test is based on the complexity of the restraints, as shown on the Escape Table, below.

ESCAPE TABLE

Restraint	Target Number
Ropes	4
Handcuffs	6
Straitjacket	8
Containment Manacles	10

The base time to escape is 5 times the target number in minutes. If the Escape Artist Test succeeds, the character will escape in a number of minutes equal to the base time divided by the number of successes. A failure means that the character cannot break free. The character can try again after the base time has expired. For example, if a character tries to break free of handcuffs and fails, he can try again after 30 minutes.

Physical adepts with the pain resistance power gain an additional advantage in using this skill because they can safely dislocate joints and twist them in otherwise painful contortions. The ability to resist each Wound level reduces the target number of the Escape Artist Test by 1. For example, an adept who can resist up to Moderate damage may subtract 2 from the target number, an adept who can resist Serious damage may subtract 3, and so on. Any use of the pain resistance power to counter penalties from injuries that the adept currently suffers does not count toward this bonus. Physical adepts with the flexibility power subtract 1 from the Escape Artist Test target number.

Toshi is captured and worked over by some corporate goons, then slapped into handcuffs and locked up. Toshi has Escape Artist 5 and 4 levels of the pain resistance power. He is currently suffering from Moderate Stun damage. His Target Number to escape from the handcuffs would normally be 8 (6, plus the damage modifier). Toshi has enough pain resistance power to negate the effects of the damage, reducing the Target Number to 6. Toshi can also ignore an additional Light level of damage, and so he subtracts 1 more from his target number, making it a 5. He scores 1 success on his Escape Artist Test and works his way out of the cuffs in 5 minutes. Toshi then begins planning how to get out of the cell to pay back the corp goons.

LEARNING PHYSICAL ADEPT POWERS

The current **Shadowrun** rules place no limits on physical adepts who wish to purchase new abilities with Magic Points gained through initiation. The player simply states which new power he wants to give his character and spends the appropriate number of Magic Points.

For purposes of game balance, gamemasters may wish to limit access to some physical adept abilities (such as the new ones listed in this book, as well as those in **Grimoire, Second Edition**). The gamemaster may simply rule that certain physical adept powers can only be gained by learning them from an experienced user. This tack would allow some adepts to possess abilities limited to them or members of their magical group. Gaining such exclusive powers would require the adept to seek out a suitable instructor who is also willing to teach the power. Searching for a teacher and offering him or her an appropriate reward for sharing the secrets of his or her powers may become a quest used as the basis for adventures—as well as allowing the gamemaster to integrate new powers into his campaign at his own pace.

The gamemaster may also simply limit the list of abilities from which players may choose for their physical adept characters during character creation. These powers might be presented as the abilities of the “higher mysteries,” powers that cannot be gained until after play begins, when the physical adept has earned some Karma and (hopefully) wisdom.

NEW PHYSICAL ADEPT POWERS

BLIND FIGHTING

Cost: .5

Physical adepts with the blind fighting power possess a mystical “sixth sense” that allows them to function more effectively in darkness or under other conditions in which the adept is unable to see (such as being blindfolded). The blind fighting power reduces the visibility penalty (blind fire, full darkness) to +4. Targets attacked by an adept using this power still gain the normal bonuses from cover.

COUNTERSTRIKE

Cost: .5 per level

The counterstrike power gives the adept a particularly strong ability to strike back at attackers. For each level of the power, the adept rolls an additional die for Counterattack Tests in melee combat, either armed or unarmed. These dice can only be used for counterattacks, not for damage resistance or any other type of attack.

DELAY DAMAGE

Cost: 2.5

The delay damage power allows a physical adept to inflict damage in unarmed melee combat that does not take immediate effect. Before making his attack, the adept declares the use of the delay damage power and then makes a normal Attack Test against the target. The target makes a Damage Resistance Test as normal.

If the attack is successful and the target does not completely resist the damage, the delay damage power converts the attack into a “charge” of astral force that lingers in the target’s aura for up to 24 hours. After a predetermined period, defined by the adept when the attack is made, the damage from the attack (Stun or Physical, per the standard rules for the attack) takes effect against the target as if the attack had occurred that instant.

Once the delayed damage attack has been set in motion, it requires no further attention or effort from the adept. A target can only be under the effects of one delay damage attack at any given time. Anyone who observes the target of a delay damage attack in astral space will see the magical charge in the target’s aura. The charge can be removed before it takes effect by making a Dispelling Test against a target number equal to the Power of the attack, with a Drain equal to the attack’s damage code.

Physical adept assassins with the delay damage and killing hands powers are capable of striking a victim with the confidence that the target will die hours later, when the adept has secured an alibi hundreds of miles away.

DISTANCE STRIKE**Cost:** 2

The distance strike power allows a physical adept to use the medium of astral space to make an unarmed attack over a short distance and strike a target without physically touching the target. The power has a range in meters equal to the adept's Magic Attribute and inflicts the standard damage for an unarmed attack. To use the distance strike power, the adept makes an Unarmed Combat Test as normal, ignoring Reach modifiers. The target uses Combat Pool dice and Body to resist the attack as a ranged attack; in other words, the target cannot counterattack, and if the target rolls more successes on his Combat Pool or Threat Rating dice than the attacker's successes, the attack is a complete miss.

Falcon uses his distance strike power against a corporate guard. Falcon rolls his Unarmed Combat of 6, plus 4 Combat Pool dice, against a Target Number of 4, gaining 6 successes. The guard makes his Damage Resistance Test using his 4 Body dice plus 5 Combat Pool dice against Falcon's Strength of 5 modified by his own 2 points of Impact armor for a Target Number of 3, earning 6 successes. Falcon's killing hands do a base 5M damage, so the guard takes a Moderate wound.

If an adept possesses either the killing hands power or the distance strike power and wishes to purchase the other, double the cost of the second power purchased. For example, Falcon's player purchases the killing hands power for that character at character creation. At initiate Grade 1, if the player wants to purchase the distance strike power, it will cost 4 Magic Points.

EMPATHIC SENSE**Cost:** .5

The empathic sense ability gives an adept a limited form of astral awareness that allows him to sense the feelings of those around him, to a range of the adept's unaided line of sight. The adept makes a Perception (4) Test to gain a general impression of a subject's current emotions (love, anger, fear, and so on). The greater the number of successes, the more detailed the information the adept learns. Metamagical masking can defeat this power, but if the adept using the empathic sense power is also an initiate, resolve an attempt to penetrate the masking normally.

ENHANCED COORDINATION**Cost:** .25 per level

An adept with the enhanced coordination power may use both hands equally well. Each level of this power counts as 1 level in the Ambidexterity Special Skill (see **Off-Hand Training**, p. 81, **Fields of Fire**). The adept must have at least 1 level in the Ambidexterity Skill in order to buy this power, and may not have more levels in the enhanced coordination power than he has levels in the Ambidexterity Skill.

FLEXIBILITY**Cost:** .25 per level

The flexibility power makes an adept's limbs unusually limber, able to twist and bend more than a normal person's. For each

level of this power, the adept may add 1 die to tests made to slip out of ropes, handcuffs and other such bindings as well as tests made to escape from a hold in unarmed combat. The adept can also make Flexibility Tests to squeeze through small openings and passages that would be difficult for a normal person of the character's size to fit through, such as transoms, ventilation ducts, and other close quarters. The gamemaster may determine appropriate target numbers for such tests.

FREEFALL**Cost:** .25 per level

For each level of the freefall power, the adept can fall a distance of 2 meters without suffering injury or making a Damage Resistance Test, provided that the surface the adept falls onto is not in itself dangerous. If the adept falls a distance greater than the allowance of the freefall power, subtract the maximum distance cushioned by the power from the distance fallen before calculating damage. If the adept falls onto a dangerous surface—an alley covered with shards of glass or a burning floor, for example—he can still use the freefall power to avoid falling damage, but will take damage dependent on the surface and the gamemaster's discretion.

IMPROVED PHYSICAL SENSES**Cost:** .25 per improvement

The improved physical senses power is described on page 125, **SR11**. The following information offers specific variations of this power. Use the Perception and Success tables as guidelines for Perception Test target numbers and information gained per success in using the improved physical senses power.

Direction Sense: An adept with an Improved physical sense of direction almost never gets lost and can easily retrace his own

PERCEPTION TABLE

Condition	Target Number
Subject in line of sight	4
Subject beyond visible/sensor range	6
Subject present only in astral space	10

SUCCESS TABLE

Successes	Results
1	General information, no details
2	Minor details with some inaccuracies
3	All details accurate, some minor details obscure
4	Complete, detailed information

steps. He can almost always tell what direction he is facing, whether above or below the local ground level. This ability is especially useful for tribal hunters, guides, spies and runners who pursue other, similar occupations.

Flare Compensation: The adept's eyes adapt quickly to intense light, allowing him to avoid long-term damage from flash grenades and similar weapons. The flare compensation power functions exactly like the cybernetic version of flare compensation. Reduce the effects of BrightLight flash-paks (p. 46, *Cybertechnology*) by half.

High-Frequency Hearing: The adept can hear sounds of a higher pitch than normal human hearing, such as dog whistles and those ultrasonics used in rangefinders and targeting devices.

Improved Scent: Adepts with the improved scent power can identify scents in much the same way as a bloodhound. They can identify individuals by scent alone, and can tell if someone whose scent they know has been in an area recently. The strong smells of most sprawls may dampen or confuse this ability.

Improved Taste: The adept can recognize the ingredients of food or beverage by taste alone. A successful Perception Test allows characters with the Chemistry, Physical Sciences or related skills to identify ingestive poisons and drugs concealed in food or drink. A successful Perception (3) Test allows adepts with the Survival Skill and the improved taste power to determine if a sample of water is pure enough to drink.

Low-Frequency Hearing: The adept can hear sounds of a lower pitch than normal human hearing.

Sound Dampening: The adept's ears are protected from loud noises and adjust quickly to sudden changes in the ambient noise level. The sound dampening power functions exactly like the cybernetic damper enhancement.

IRON WILL

Cost: .5 per level

The iron will power makes an adept's will exceptionally resistant to outside influence. For each level of this power, the adept rolls an additional die when resisting any attempt to control, affect or alter his mind. This power does not defend against mana-based combat spells.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

Cost: 1 per level

An adept with the magic resistance power possesses a strong, unconscious resistance to sorcery. In the same manner as initiates who possess spell defense, the character adds 1 die per level of this power to Resistance Tests made against spells. Only the adept may use these dice; he cannot give extra protection against sorcery to others. The magic resistance power does not interfere with spells accepted voluntarily and does not defend against critter powers. If a physical magician with the magic resistance power attempts to make active use of the Sorcery Skill for casting spells, subtract 1 die from the character's Magic Pool per level of the power to represent the interference caused by the character's general resistance to the magical energies. Initiate physical adepts who possess this power do *not* gain the benefits of shielding.

MAGIC SENSE

Cost: 1

The magic sense power offers a limited form of astral awareness that allows an adept to sense magical energies and effects within a radius equal to the adept's Magic Attribute x 5 in meters.

The adept is astrally active while using this power, open to the energies of astral space and therefore vulnerable to astral attack. If the adept does not have astral perception, he is incapable of defending against astral attack and must simply take his chances. The adept may use a Free Action to "turn off" his magic sense power, at which point the adept is no longer astrally active. The magic sense power cannot be activated and deactivated in the same Combat Phase.

MISSILE MASTERY

Cost: 1

An adept with the missile mastery power possesses such a highly developed talent for throwing weapons that, in his hands, normally harmless items such as pens, credsticks and ID cards become deadly weapons. Adepts make attacks with such items using Throwing Skill. Unorthodox missiles such as pens have a base Damage Code of (one-half adept's Strength, rounded down)L. Impact armor resists damage from such missiles. Items with an edge or point inflict Physical damage, while blunt objects do Stun damage. Adepts using the missile mastery power to throw standard missile weapons, such as shuriken and throwing knives, add 2 to the weapon's Power Level.

NERVE STRIKE

Cost: 1

The nerve strike power allows an adept to magically inflict damage that affects a target's nervous system. To use the nerve strike power, the adept makes a standard unarmed melee attack, using the Unarmed Combat Skill against a base Target Number of 4 modified by the target's armor. Rather than inflicting damage, for every 2 net successes gained in the adept's Unarmed Combat Test, reduce the target's Quickness Rating by 1. If the target's Quickness is reduced to 0, the target is paralyzed. Quickness lost in this fashion is recovered at a rate of 1 point per minute. The nerve strike power is only completely effective against (meta)human opponents. When used against critters, the base Target Number is 6 (or higher, if the gamemaster determines that the critter has an unusual anatomy). Targets that lack functional nervous systems, such as machines, spirits and zombies, are immune to this power.

QUICK DRAW

Cost: 3

The quick draw power allows an adept to draw and use a single melee weapon or firearm in one action. In other words, the adept need not spend 2 actions to draw and ready the weapon and attack; drawing the weapon and the attack occur in the action used for the Attack Test. If using a weapon requires a Complex Action, the adept may draw the weapon and attack in a single phase. If the weapon requires only a Simple Action to use, the adept can draw it and make 2 Attack Tests in a single Combat Phase. If the character

wants to use the quick draw power for both firearms and melee weapons, he or she needs to buy the power twice.

Note: Because the quick draw power almost certainly will unbalance the game, the gamemaster may choose not to add it to his campaign. If both the gamemaster and players agree to add the quick draw power to their game, the gamemaster may increase the cost as a way to maintain game balance.

QUICK STRIKE

Cost: .25 per level

Physical adepts with the quick strike power seem to possess a supernatural ability to leap into action with startling suddenness. Each level of the power allows the adept to roll an additional die when making Reaction Tests for Surprise against an opponent. These dice do not apply to tests made by the adept to avoid being surprised or for any other type of Reaction Test or Initiative roll.

RAPID HEALING

Cost: .5 per level

The adept recovers more quickly than normal from all forms of injury, using magical energy to boost the healing process. Each level of the power adds 1 die to the adept's Body Attribute for purposes of Healing Tests as well as Body Tests made to determine if the adept suffers a crippling injury from a Deadly wound. The rapid healing power does not increase resistance to injury, toxins or pathogens, but does allow the adept to recover from their effects more quickly. The rapid healing power cannot counteract possible magic loss due to Deadly wounds, the effects of goblinization, or incurable diseases such as cancer or HMHV.

ROOTING

Cost: .25 per level

The rooting power allows the adept, by spending a Simple Action and concentrating for a moment, to extend the force of his aura to "root" himself to the ground and become an immovable object. Each level of the power adds 1 die to all tests the adept makes to resist being knocked down, thrown, levitated or otherwise moved against his will. The adept cannot move while using this power, but can otherwise act normally (including making attacks), modifying all target numbers by +2.

SIXTH SENSE

Cost: 3

The sixth sense power gives an adept a magical ability to sense immediate personal danger. When potential danger threatens, the gamemaster makes a secret Perception Test using the adept's Intelligence against a target number based on how obviously the danger stands out: 4 for threats in the adept's line of sight (such as someone about to pull a gun), 6 for threats beyond the line of sight (such as a concealed sniper or trap) and 10 for threats in astral space (such as a spirit or ritual sending). A successful test gives the adept a general feeling of danger, and he cannot be Surprised by the threat. The adept does not learn the nature of the threat, only how near or far away it lies and the relative level of danger. The adept can only sense dangers that threaten personal harm.

Note: Because the sixth sense power almost certainly will unbalance the game, the gamemaster may choose not to add it to his campaign. If both the gamemaster and players agree to add the sixth sense power to their game, the gamemaster may increase the cost as a way to maintain game balance.

SMASHING BLOW

Cost: 1

The smashing blow power allows an adept to focus magical energy into a devastating strike designed to smash through barriers. The adept makes an Unarmed Combat Test against the Barrier Rating of the target. Add the successes to the adept's Strength and compare the result to the unmodified Barrier Rating, determining the effect according to the Barrier Effect Table, p. 98, **SR11**. This power can be devastating when combined with the increased strength or strength boost powers.

Slash 'n' Burn needs to get through a door that has a Barrier Rating of 6. He takes a moment to concentrate and focus his inner energies, then with a mighty rebel yell strikes the door with a smashing blow. Slash's player rolls his Unarmed Combat of 6 against a base Target Number of 4 (the gamemaster decides there are no modifiers). He generates 3 successes. Added to Slash's Strength of 5, the result of 8 reduces the Barrier Rating of the door by 1. Slash's next roll generates 4 successes for a total of 9. Because that result is more than 1.5 times the reduced Barrier Rating, the door's rating is reduced to 4 and Slash punches a half-meter wide opening in it.



SPELL SHROUD

Cost: .25 per level

Adepts with the spell shroud power possess the ability to "cloak" their presence in astral space, making them difficult to detect by spells designed to do so. For every level of the power, the adept adds 1 die to Resistance Tests against detection spells only. If the spell cannot be resisted, increase the target number to detect the adept by 1 for every 2 levels of the spell shroud power. Note that his power does not affect Masking Tests and attempts to read the subject's aura via astral perception or otherwise spot the character in astral space.

TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE

Cost: .25 per level

The adept's body is exceptionally resistant to extremes of heat and cold. For each level of the temperature tolerance power, the adept gains an additional die for resisting the effects of exposure to extreme temperatures. This power does not protect the adept from exposure to physically harming agents such as open flames or the freezing cold of the Antarctic Ocean, but will help the character resist the effects of sources of extreme heat such as burning coals, heatstroke and sunburn, as well as frostbite and exposure to below-zero temperatures.

TRACELESS WALK

Cost: .5

An adept with the traceless walk power possesses a very limited form of magical levitation that allows him to move over soft or brittle surfaces like snow, sand or thin paper without leaving any visible traces of his passage. If the adept with this power makes a successful Stealth Test, he can walk across nightingale floors (designed to creak when walked on) without a sound and will not even trip ground-based motion/vibration sensors. The adept cannot walk across liquid surfaces (but can cross deep snow without sinking) and can still be tracked by means other than visual cues, such as scent.

PHYSICAL MAGICIANS (OPTIONAL RULE)

Gamemasters may wish to limit physical magicians to non-player characters.

Physical magicians are Magic Priority A characters that follow a different path from most other magicians. Rather than devoting all their time to studying ways to control the energies of astral space, physical magicians channel some of their magical ability into improving their physical abilities in the same manner as physical adepts, while honing the rest of their magical talent on traditional magical skills such as Sorcery and Conjuring.

The physical magician character spends Magic Attribute Points on physical adept powers according to the standard **Shadowrun** rules, but must allocate at least 1 point to his Magic Attribute Rating for using magical skills (Sorcery, Conjuring and Enchanting).

She Who Knows the Night is a physical magician. She spends 4 points of her initial Magic Attribute to purchase the adept powers improved stealth, combat sense, improved unarmed combat and killing hands. The remaining 2 points she treats as her Magic Rating when using magic skills for casting spells or summoning spirits. If she casts spells with a Force greater than 2, She Who Knows risks Physical damage from the Drain.

As with physical adepts, Magic Points allocated cannot be changed. Additional Magic Attribute Points gained through initiation can be applied to either new adept powers or to raise the character's Magic Attribute, but such points cannot be "split up," putting half a point into a power and the remaining half toward the Magic Attribute. The point must be allocated to one or the other, and the character must decide how to use the Magic Point before attaining the new grade.

If a physical magician suffers magic loss from cyberware, Deadly wounds or Essence loss, subtract the lost points from those set aside for the character's magical skills *first*. If magic loss reduces the adept's effective Magic Attribute to 0, the character permanently loses the ability to make active use of magical skills. The character may still take initiate grades and buy new powers, but the delicate balance that allowed him or her to use active magic is gone. Treat the character as a normal physical adept from that point on.

Physical magicians must use their magical skills within either the shamanic or hermetic tradition. Shamanic physical magicians follow totems and use totem modifiers just like standard shamans and shamanic adepts. Physical magicians purchase and use physical adept powers in the same manner regardless of tradition.

Like other magicians, physical magicians must submit to a geas on their use of magical skills for every 2 points of Magic Attribute lost as normal, and for every 2 points allocated to physical adept powers at character creation. The character may choose not to take geasa, but that means he can never become an initiate or else loses any current initiate grades.

Physical magicians may also submit to geasa on their adept powers, in the same way as physical adepts (see **Geasa**, p. 112).

Because they focus so much of their talent on the physical aspect of magic, physical magicians begin without access to astral space. They may purchase and use the adept power of astral perception normally, but can never use astral projection. If they purchase the astral perception power, physical magicians may use all the metamagical abilities. If they choose not to purchase that power, they may only use masking.

Physical magicians with the astral perception power can use centering in the same way as other magicians. Physical magicians without astral perception may purchase the physical adept power of enhanced centering in order to use centering for physical and other types of skills.

Physical magicians may bond and use foci normally. The additional Magic Attribute the character gains from using a power focus only enhances the physical magician's effective Magic Attribute, not his or her adept powers.

VOUDOUN RULES



In **Shadowrun**, voodoo is an actively practiced version of the shamanic tradition. Instead of following one of the animal totems of standard shamanism, the practitioner of voodoo believes in and is guided by various mystical beings, much like the idols of European nature magic (pp. 134–35, **Germany Sourcebook**, and the Totem Table, pp. 151–155). These beings, called loa, are seen as deities; like the ancient Greek and Norse gods, they represent the personification of beliefs and qualities rather than living beings.

The relationship between the voodoo shaman (the houngan) and his or her patron loa (the mait tete) is similar to that between a shaman and his or her totem, though there are some important differences. First, a houngan may contact and gain benefits from a loa other than his mait tete, something unheard-of in traditional shamanism (see **Contacting New Loa**, p. 125). Second, the loa demand payment for their services, a tribute that can take many forms (see **About the Loa**, below). Finally—in the most dramatic difference between voodoo and traditional shamanism—the loa actually inhabits the houngan's body when called. This process, called "mounting" or "riding," allows the loa to interact with the physical world (see **Calling the Loa**, p. 124).

The following rules modify the standard **Shadowrun** shamanic magic rules for use with voodoo. Unless otherwise stated, all magic rules from the **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, rulebook and the **Grimoire, Second Edition (Grimoire II)**, apply to voodoo.

ABOUT THE LOA

This section describes the various loa of the voodoo tradition in **Shadowrun** game terms. Except for their ability to manifest through their followers, the loa function exactly like totems (p. 119, **SRII**). Each entry describes the loa and its general area of influence, what happens when it manifests, its mait tete powers, and the gifts it bestows. For information on calculating specific gifts, see **Calculating Loa Gifts**, p. 123. In addition to the major loa described below, a houngan can also call "bought loa" (see **Bought Loa**, p. 124) and conjure work loa (see **Conjuring Work Loa**, p. 127).



In the following entries, *Manifestation* describes how the loa appears when it mounts a follower. *Mait Tete* describes the bonuses granted to a houngan who has a specific loa as a patron; the houngan retains these powers as long as he or she keeps that loa as a mait tete. The houngan may use mait tete bonus dice for dealing with spirits when making any test involving that type of spirit, including Banishing and Resistance tests against the spirit's powers. The mait tete is selected during character creation just like a totem, and the various advantages listed function like normal totem advantages. A houngan cannot change his or her mait tete loa, though it is possible for a houngan to lose contact with all the loa including his or her mait tete (see **Unwilling Possession**, p. 131). *Gifts* describes the abilities that the presence of the loa enhances; the loa's host loses these special powers when the loa dismounts. Finally, *Petro Rite* gives the name of the Petro version of each loa and describes its sphere of influence.

Keep in mind that the loa are powerful beings with almost total control over those they mount. A houngan or serviteur who fails to demonstrate the proper respect for the loa or treats them like servants to be ordered around will quickly suffer their displeasure (see **Unwilling Possession**).

AGWE

Agwe is like the Sea he rules: strong and gentle, but capable of sudden violence. He is proud and takes his role as a ruler seriously. Rituals to honor Agwe tend to be involved and complex affairs, and the loa's followers are often capable diplomats and gracious hosts.

Manifestation: Agwe's mounts act in a regal and dignified manner. To reflect Agwe's role as Ruler of the Sea, the mount must immediately splash himself or immerse himself in water. Agwe will remain only as long as the mount is wet. He has been known to spontaneously mount followers who find themselves in danger in or on the sea.

Mait Tete: Those with Agwe as their mait tete gain +2 dice for illusion spells and +2 dice for banishing water spirits.

Gifts: Agwe increases his mount's Body and Charisma, as well as Swimming Skill and all Social skills.

Petro Rite: Agwe retains the same name, but his sphere of influence is the dark and destructive sea.

AZACA

The eager "younger brother" of the other loa, Azaca is concerned with the growth and prosperity of the land, especially cultivated land. Followers of Azaca tend to be rural caretakers of farming communities and the like.

Manifestation: He tends toward impulsive behavior, and mounts must make a Willpower Test to restrain the loa's exuberance enough to follow carefully laid plans and strategies.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete loa, Azaca grants +2 dice for casting health spells and +2 dice for banishing Spirits of the Land.

Gifts: Azaca increases his mount's Quickness and Body, as well as enhancing Stealth (in rural areas only) and all skills dealing with plant life, woodcraft or agriculture.

Petro Rite: None.

DAMBALLAH WEDO

This ancient, primal loa harkens back to voodoo's African origins. Damballah Wedo (usually known simply as Damballah) often moves with slow dignity and grace, but can react with surprising suddenness if required to do so. Damballah is often difficult to communicate with and couches his wisdom in metaphor and riddles.

Manifestation: Damballah is the least human of the loa. Those mounted by him act like snakes, writhing on the ground, hissing and often climbing trees.

Damballah rarely speaks in any human tongue; in order to speak and be understood normally, a houngan mounted by Damballah must make a Willpower Test.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete loa, Damballah grants +2 dice for detection spells and +2 dice for banishing Spirits of the Air.

Gifts: Those ridden by Damballah increase Intelligence and all Knowledge skills.

Petro Rite: None.

ERZULIE

The loa of love and passion is both the eternal innocent and the world-wise seductress. She is the female companion to many of the other loa in her various manifestations, and she is loved and desired by all. More than mere lust, Erzulie's desire is the motivating passion that drives all life.

Manifestation: Those ridden by Erzulie become sensual and charming, gifted with incredible passion and charisma. The loa



loves gifts of fine clothes, perfumes and jewelry and prefers to wear such things whenever possible (even if her current mount is male).

Mait Tete: Erzulie grants +2 dice for detection and illusion spells.

Gifts: Erzulie increases her mounts' Charisma, as well as Etiquette, Negotiation and Psychology skills.

Petro Rite: Erzulie becomes Ge-Rouge, "The Red Eyes." She becomes the avatar of scorned love and jealous rage.

GHEDE

Dark and clever, Ghede is the most feared of all the loa. He respects nothing and laughs at mortals' fear of the twilight that awaits them at the end of their lives. He is a trickster and prankster who enjoys shocking people out of their preconceptions.

Manifestation: Those ridden by Ghede demonstrate sly cleverness and a wicked sense of humor. They usually dress in the loa's "formal" costume of top hat, black tailcoat and sunglasses, and carry a cigarette or cigar and a cane. Anyone ridden by Ghede must make a Willpower Test to resist an offer of food or drink.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete loa, Ghede grants +2 dice for casting health and manipulation spells.

Gifts: Ghede increases his mounts' Intelligence, as well as Biotech and Negotiation skills. His mounts are also immune to the effects of pain, gaining a point of Pain Resistance equal to the manifestation's Force (as the physical adept power; see p. 126, **SR11**). The mount is also immune to the effects of intoxication, though poisons or pathogens may still affect him.

Individuals mounted by Ghede suffer a penalty to all Etiquette Test target numbers equal to the loa's Force unless the mount makes a successful Willpower Test to restrain Ghede's sarcastic, ribald sense of humor. Reduce the penalty by 1 for each success achieved in the Willpower Test.

Petro Rite: Ghede becomes Baron Samedi; his sphere is graveyards, evil magic and zombies.

LEGBA

Legba is the divine messenger of the loa, the opener of the way and the boundary figure between the visible and invisible worlds. He is the first loa invoked in ritual so that he may open the way for the others, and is respected for his great wisdom and authority. Followers of Legba are among the wisest of hougans.

Manifestation: Individuals mounted by Legba act like old men. Their limbs become weak, twisted and bent, and they walk slowly and painfully. To reflect this, reduce the mounts' Movement to 1 meter per Combat Phase. In contrast to his weakened body, the mount's voice becomes forceful and commanding, filled with wisdom and charisma.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete, Legba grants +2 dice for casting detection and manipulation spells.

Gifts: Legba increases Social and Knowledge skills, as well as Charisma.

Petro Rite: Legba becomes Carrefour, the Abysmal Night; his sphere is demons, night, darkness and ill chance.

LOCO AND AYIZAN

Loco and Ayizan are the First Priest and Priestess of voodoo, raised to the status of loa. They are the archetypal masculine and feminine. Together they are balanced, each completing the other. Loco mounts only male hougans, Ayizan only female hougans.

Manifestation: Both Loco and Ayizan manifest subtly. It is often difficult to realize that they have mounted at all until the mount speaks or acts.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete, Loco grants +2 dice for detection spells and Ayizan grants +2 dice for health spells. As the primordial hougans, both Loco and Ayizan grant +2 dice for calling other loa.

Gifts: Both Loco and Ayizan increase Psychology, Sociology and Etiquette skills. Loco also increases Magical Theory and Ayizan increases Biotech. Because they are more sympathetic to their hougans and serviteurs than the other loa, those mounted by Loco or Ayizan have an easier time making Willpower Tests in order to act independently; reduce the target numbers for all such tests by 2.

Petro Rite: None.

OGOUN

Ogoun is a direct and active force. He is power in all of its manifestations, and he takes the most direct and simple road to victory. Great warriors and politicians are often considered strong in Ogoun's essence, and his followers typically do well in those fields.

Manifestation: Ogoun's mounts act much like soldiers: marching about, barking out orders and taking command. Even normally weak or small people project a powerful aura of strength and leadership when ridden by this loa. The loa's mounts usually carry a military saber (traditional in the South) or any other type of sword, a symbol of Ogoun that allows the loa to demonstrate his presence by cutting the mount's skin against the sharp edge of the sword. The blade does no damage, because Ogoun's own iron skin protects his mount.

Mait Tete: As a mait tete, Ogoun grants +2 dice to combat and health spells.

Gifts: Ogoun increases Strength, Reaction and Combat skills. His mounts also gain magical armor from the loa's legendary iron skin, which acts as Impact armor equal to the loa's Force.

Petro Rite: Ogoun becomes the Iron Warrior, avatar of violence.

CALCULATING LOA GIFTS

The loa have broad powers, but are best known for the gifts they grant to their mounts. The loa increases a mount's skills and Attributes according to its nature for as long as it remains mounted. Apply the bonuses listed under each loa's gifts according to the following formula. For every 2 points of the loa's Force (round down), increase the given Attribute and/or skills by 1 point (add one die to those available for each given skill that the mounted character possesses). If the mount does not possess a listed skill, he or she gains it at a Rating of 1. Note that increases in Attributes can exceed racial maximums and are cumulative with bonuses from other enhancements.

Papa Jambo, a houngan with Conjuring 5, calls upon Legba to mount him during a ritual. He chooses to call the loa at Force 4 and rolls his 5 dice against a Target Number of 4, coming up with 3 successes. Legba mounts the houngan and adds 2 points to his Charisma as well as increasing all of Papa Jambo's Knowledge and Social skills by 2. This means that Papa Jambo rolls 2 additional dice when making any Knowledge or Social skill test.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a character ridden by a loa may be capable of other magical feats beyond his or her normal abilities, depending on the Force of the loa manifestation and the demands of the story. These could include (but are not limited to) altering the weather, healing mortal injuries and predicting the future. Use this device sparingly when needed to enhance the story line (see **Roleplaying the Loa**, p. 130).

BOUGHT LOA

Bought loa, or loa achete, are what houngans call free spirits. A houngan can convince a loa achete to serve by offering it some service or payment in return, or by using the spirit's true name to compel it (see **Grimoire II**, pp. 76–77). Payment is almost always an offer of Karma to the spirit in return for its service; compelling it to service by using its true name is a far more dangerous proposition.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a houngan can make an astral quest to Guinee to find the true name of a bought loa, or may invoke a loa with great knowledge, such as Legba, Ghede or Damballah, to learn the name. No matter how it is contacted, the loa will certainly demand a high price in exchange for such valuable information.

CALLING THE LOA

Each houngan begins with a connection to his or her mait tete loa, with whom the houngan has the strongest bond. That loa is considered the houngan's patron. A houngan may only call on a loa with whom he or she has established a connection; this may be the houngan's mait tete, but can also be other loa that the houngan has contacted (see **Contacting New Loa**, p. 125). Unlike idols or totems, the loa must be "called" or "called up." This means conjuring the spirit of the loa to "mount" the host's body and act through it.

To accomplish this, the gamemaster or the player of a houngan character selects a Force as the base power of the loa's manifestation in the host body. This Force cannot exceed the houngan's Magic Attribute; as the Haitian saying goes, "Little horses cannot carry great riders." The player or gamemaster then makes a Conjuring Test against the chosen Force of the loa's manifestation. This process counts as a Complex Action. If the test is successful, the "mounting" occurs in the same round. If the houngan does not have any actions left in this round, the mounting will occur at the end of the round and before Initiative is determined for the next round. The houngan cannot perform or maintain any other magical effect while calling up a loa. One success is sufficient for the loa to enter the character's body.

If the Conjuring Test fails, the houngan cannot attempt to summon that specific loa until after the next sunset.

THE MOUNTED HOUNGAN

While ridden by a loa, the houngan has limited control over his or her own actions. During its manifestation, the loa is in control. A mount who wants to wrest conscious control of himself away from the loa, or force the loa to take a specific action, must make a Willpower Test against a base target number equal to the loa's Force. The more powerful the loa's manifestation, the more difficult the spirit is to control. For every 2 successes achieved in the initial Conjuring Test, reduce the Willpower Test target number by 1.

The loa will depart when it has finished the task for which it was called or whenever it wishes to, at the gamemaster's discretion. If the houngan wishes the spirit to leave before the loa is prepared to depart, he or she must make another Conjuring Test with a base target number equal to the loa's Force. The loa may also be exorcised from the houngan's body by another magician using Banishing. Use the loa's Force as the target number and conduct the banishing according to standard rules (p. 143, **SR11**). During the banishing contest, neither the loa nor the mount may take any action except those necessary to keep the contest going.

While inhabited by the loa, the houngan functions as a dual-natured being. Attacks from astral space inflict damage on the loa: Deadly damage will disrupt the spirit and banish it but leave the mount unharmed. Any physical damage inflicted, including physical spells grounding from astral space, harms the houngan's body. If another character assenses a mounted houngan, he or she sees the houngan's astral image engulfed in the stronger presence of the loa.

DISMOUNTING

The houngan must use Willpower to resist (Force)D Stun damage when the loa "dismounts" from his or her body. This occurs regardless of how the loa leaves (banishment, the service is done, time runs out). Houngans may use Centering to help reduce this Drain.

After the loa has departed, the houngan may make a test to determine if he or she remembers what occurred while the loa was mounted. The houngan rolls a number of dice equal to his or her Intelligence and Willpower combined against a target number equal to the Force of the loa. Count the number of successes achieved and consult the Mount Memory Table.

Agwe, loa of the sea, has just left the houngan named Cajun Spice. Cajun discovers that his runner pals are all lying unconscious around him. He has no idea why, and so he attempts to remember what transpired while he was mounted. Cajun has Intelligence 4 and Willpower 5, so he rolls 9 dice against a target number equal to the mounting loa's Force (4). Cajun achieves 4 successes. He has vague impressions of being ambushed by somebody in uniform (he can't tell if it was the Star, corp security, or even another team of runners). He also has vivid, detailed memories of convincing the leader of

MOUNT MEMORY TABLE

Successes	Result
0-1	The houngan remembers nothing.
2-3	The houngan remembers vague, dreamlike images.
4-5	The houngan has clear memories of all the specific incidents the loa regards as important, whether the houngan considers them important or not.
6-7	As above, but the houngan remembers in a strangely detached way, as if he had been a third person watching his own actions.
8+	As above, plus the houngan remembers the loa's thoughts and feelings. This includes information about relationships between the various loa, the loa's feelings about the people associating with the houngan, and any "secret" information that the loa wants to pass on to the houngan.

the ambush—a Lone Star officer—not to run his pals into the station. Cajun Spice also remembers inviting the leader of the Star unit to his home for dinner. Cajun still has no idea why his friends are all unconscious or exactly where they are, but he has a dinner date with an attractive Lone Star captain and Agwe will never forgive him if he is not a gracious host.

FEEDING THE LOA

The relationship between a houngan and a loa is not a one-way street. As with standard shamanic traditions, the houngan must openly worship or honor the loa, especially his or her mait tete loa. The houngan must perform numerous yearly rituals of sacrifice to support the loa with whom he or she has bonded, ranging from simple meals laid out upon a honfour's altar (see **Honfours**, p. 66) to the complex and elaborate ceremonies such as those performed at the seaside to honor Agwe, in which a raft laden with food and gifts is sunk into the sea to decorate the loa's table.

These banquets are very important to the loa, and a houngan will usually invite other houngans to the biggest feasts. Keep in mind that a houngan cannot afford to displease any of the loa with whom he or she has bonded. If a player character is going to have a great feast, it is expected that he or she will represent his or her mait tete. If the character has bonded with other loa as well, those loa must be present in the form of another houngan who has the bonded loa as a mait tete. If a character fails to properly do the loa honor in this way, the loa may refuse future summons (see **Roleplaying the Loa**, p. 130).

In addition to meals, the houngan must feed the loa in another way. The houngan must sacrifice a part of his or her own being, in the form of Karma, to the loa with whom he or she has a bond. Each time a houngan calls up a loa, he or she must "feed" the spirit by paying a point of Good Karma. Each point of Karma allows the houngan to call the same loa as many times as the houngan needs it, for up to 24 hours from the first "feeding." Gamemasters may change this time limit depending on the relationship the houngan has maintained with the loa. For example, if the houngan has not called upon the loa or shown it the required honor, the loa may only answer the houngan's summons

for 12 hours per feeding. In extreme cases the loa may demand payment in Karma each time it is called (see **Roleplaying the Loa**).

If the houngan does not have the Karma to pay on the spot, the gamemaster may allow the loa to appear anyway. However, the spirit will expect to be fed eventually and will become enraged at any houngan who chooses to ignore such a debt. The houngan generally suffers a loss of Magic Points or unwilling possession (see **Unwilling Possession**, p. 131).

CONTACTING NEW LOA

As houngan advance in initiation, they may contact and make connections with loa other than their mait tete. To contact a loa, the houngan must undertake an astral quest to Guinee, the Land Beneath the Sea (see **Guinee**, p. 129). This astral quest has a rating equal to the number of loa to whom the houngan is currently bound. The final test in such an astral quest always occurs in the Place of Charisma, where the houngan must convince his or her chosen loa to accept the bond. This means that the player must keep in mind the relationships between the loa (see **About the Loa**, p. 120). The more loa the houngan is connected to, the more difficult it becomes to make new bonds, given the infighting and jealousy that sometimes exist between the loa.

If successful, the character expends a number of Karma Points equal to the number of loa to whom he or she has bonds and creates a connection to the new loa. If the houngan fails in his or her astral quest, the loa in question cannot be contacted again until after a different loa has accepted the bond.

Gasser is on an astral quest to bond with Damballah. Her mait tete is Erzulie, and so Damballah would be her second loa. Poor Gasser fails in her quest, so she cannot attempt to bond with Damballah until another loa has accepted her. She tries again, this time choosing Ayizan to be her second loa. The second astral quest is successful, and so Gasser can now make another attempt to bond with Damballah (though this time it's a bit tougher because she has bonded with two loa instead of one).

A houngan may also willingly limit himself to bonding only with his mait tete. For those houngans who prefer a relatively uncomplicated life, this may be the best choice; a single bond means the houngan never need worry about the current status of the relationships between the loa. Someone so dedicated to a single loa will draw favorable notice from that loa and may even gain greater benefits from his monogamous relationship. Each houngan must make his own choice in this matter, and no one style of practicing voodoo is considered more correct than any other.

SERVITEURS

Serviteurs are mundane followers of the voodoo religion who allow themselves to be mounted by a loa called by a houngan. Because they lack the bond with the loa that the magician possesses, serviteurs must make a Willpower Test against a target number of twice the manifestation's Force to convince the loa to do something against its wishes.

To be eligible for such possession, a character must undergo a ritual performed by a houngan to initiate him or her into the society of voodoo, not unlike the rituals magicians undergo to become initiates. The gamemaster determines the specific forms of these rituals using the ordeals found on pp. 39–41 of **Grimoire II**, but they will always reflect the mait tete of the houngan. Because all serviteurs are mundanes, the rituals will almost always involve some type of asceticism, deed, meditation or oath. The gamemaster may also choose

to create new ordeals that he feels better reflect the voodoo tradition. Whatever its form, the ritual creates the magical link necessary for the houngan to call up a loa to mount the serviteur. A player character must pay a flat fee of 10 points of Good Karma to become a serviteur, and must also pay a point of Good Karma when mounted by a loa (just as a houngan does).

A houngan player character can choose a serviteur to be one of his or her followers at the time of character creation. The character may gain only one serviteur in this fashion; all others must go through the process of Initiation.

Becoming a serviteur is considered a serious commitment in voodoo, and so player characters should not enter into it lightly. A houngan should take care to make sure of the would-be serviteur's sincerity before conferring such status upon that character. It is impossible to become a serviteur under false pretenses, for

one simple reason: even if the houngan can be fooled, the loa cannot. Player characters who abuse the loa's good will may well suffer their displeasure (see **Unwilling Possession**, p. 131).

HOUNGAN ABILITIES

Standard rules for shamanic magic apply to houngan player characters, with the following exceptions and clarifications.

SORCERY

Houngans use the Sorcery Skill in the same manner as other magicians. They cast spells in the same way that shamans do, and many voodoo shamans choose Concentrations in ritual sorcery. The optional rules for symbolic and sympathetic ritual links (p. 35,

Grimoire II) are recommended for voodoo rituals.

HONFOURS

A honfour functions in the same manner and for the same tasks as a standard shaman's medicine lodge (p. 123, **SR11**). Honfours have the same ratings and are built in the same manner as medicine lodges—materials for building one have the same costs.

METAMAGIC

A houngan initiate can use all types of metamagic. Traditionally, voodoo initiates only used centering and dispelling, but in the Awakened sprawls of 2057 they call upon all forms of metamagic as needed.

Because of voodoo's long history of ritual magic, centering has always been the most prominent form of metamagic

used by houngans. Initiates draw upon the rich heritage of voodoo for their centering rituals: drumming, ecstatic dance, chanting and the arcane Creole dialects of the islands all serve as Centering skills for houngans. More esoteric centering rituals include the drawing of vevers (mystic diagrams representing the loa) and the making and use of fetishes like the often misunderstood voodoo doll (see **Foel**, p. 128).

CONJURING

Houngans cannot conjure nature spirits or elementals. Instead, they use Conjuring Skill to call the loa with whom they have formed a bond. A voodoo shaman may use conjuring to banish nature spirits and elementals, but cannot attempt to take control of either type of spirit.



All other uses of conjuring are available to houngans. They can conjure watcher spirits, attempt to bind a free spirit if they know its true name, and substitute their Conjuring Skill for an Attribute when resisting an attack by a spirit (p. 143, **SR II**). Houngans may also conjure work loa, as described below.

Conjuring Work Loa

Work loa are a unique type of watcher spirit (p. 73, **Grimoire II**). Like standard watchers they are astral entities, unable to manifest in the physical world. Unlike standard watchers, they can inhabit a living creature. A houngan may conjure and bind a number of work loa equal to his or her Charisma. Work loa must be in the houngan's line of sight to receive new commands, but may travel out of line of sight to fulfill those orders.

Unlike any other spirit, work loa require a "vessel" to contain them. When they are not performing a service for their master, the spirits reside in a govi, an enchanted clay jar (see **Creating Govis**, below). Damage to the govi will also affect the spirits, and all the spirits contained in it are disrupted if the govi is destroyed. Fortunately for the houngan, the presence of work loa within a govi provides the vessel with armor equal to the total Force of the spirits present.

To conjure a work loa, a houngan requires a govi and a honfour with a rating at least equal to the Force of the spirit. The ritual takes a number of hours equal to the desired spirit's Force. At the end of that time, the houngan makes a Conjuring Test against a target number equal to the desired Force of the work loa. Each success on the Conjuring Test equals one service that the spirit will perform for the houngan. If the houngan achieves no successes, no spirit appears, but the houngan must still resist Drain.

Due to the unique characteristics of work loa, the houngan must calculate the Drain Code for conjuring them in the same manner as for elemental or nature spirits (p. 139, **SR II**), not for watcher spirits. The houngan uses Charisma dice rather than Willpower, adjusted as appropriate by foci or other modifiers, against a target number equal to the Force of the work loa. Consult the Conjuring Drain Table for the damage modifier, keeping in mind that every 2 successes generated in the Drain Resistance Test reduce the Drain by one level. If the Drain knocks out the houngan, the work loa remains as long as the govi has a Force Rating equal to or greater than that of the work loa. If the work loa's Force is

greater than that of the govi and the houngan falls unconscious from Drain, the work loa escapes from the govi and goes free (see **Bought Loa**, p. 124).

Work Loa

Anima voudoun laboris

Identification: Work loa are a class of spirits conjured by practitioners of voodoo. They exist solely on the astral plane and appear as bright, cloudy lights to astral senses. The spirits often take on a semblance or outline of a human form.

Magic Capability: Innate

Habitat: When called away from their home metaplane, work loa inhabit enchanted vessels designed to contain their essence.

Powers: Work loa have all of the abilities of watchers, plus a unique form of the Inhabiting power (p. 67, **Grimoire II**). The spirit may inhabit any normal critter (paranormal animals and sentient beings are too magically powerful to be inhabited). While inhabiting a host, the spirit functions as a dual-natured being and remains astrally active. The critter's Attributes are increased by the spirit's Force and the animal gains the powers of Immunity to Age, Immunity to Pathogens and Immunity to Normal Weapons. This type of possession counts as one service and lasts for 24 hours. Each additional day of possession counts as another service.

If the host body is destroyed, the work loa is disrupted. If a work loa gains its freedom while inhabiting a host, it becomes permanently bound to that host body.

Creating Govis

To construct a govi, the houngan first makes a physical vessel and lid using material from the area near his or her honfour. Traditionally, the houngan shaped clay or dirt, dried it in the honfour, etched it with images of the mait tete, and painted it before attempting to enchant it. The urban houngan of 2057 uses many other types of vessels, including bottles, cans, canisters, and other miscellaneous trash (though for some reason, glass bottles seem to work best). A govi cannot be bought, but it can be found. Because most of them are not sculpted "from scratch," modern govies require the addition of more personal touches than the traditional type to work, and so the houngan must draw or paint particularly elaborate designs on them and attach items of personal importance. Modern govies often contain animal bones, especially from dishes eaten by the houngan in any celebratory banquets held for the houngan's mait tete.

After making the govi, the houngan enchants it using a variation of the Enchanting Test (p. 25, **Grimoire II**). The govi must be created in the honfour and must have a Force Rating less than that of the honfour or the Enchanting Skill of the houngan, whichever is lower. Enchanting the govi takes a base time of 30 days and has a base Target Number of 5. No modifiers apply to this test. If the houngan achieves no successes after 30 days, he or she can stop

WORK LOA CONJURING DRAIN TABLE

Spirit's Force Rating	Drain Level
Less than half houngan's Charisma	(L) Stun
Houngan's Charisma or less	(M) Stun
Greater than houngan's Charisma	(S) Physical
Greater than twice houngan's Charisma	(D) Physical

the enchantment and start over; however, all the materials used to make the govi are wasted. The houngan must make a new govi, and cannot make a second Enchanting Test until another 30 days have passed. Once the houngan succeeds in enchanting the govi, he or she spends 1 point of Karma per point of Force to "activate" the govi. A govi can hold a number of work loa whose total Force equals double the govi's Force Rating; for example, a govi with Force Rating 4 can hold work loa with a total Force of up to 8.

The work loa "lives" in the govi until it is called upon to perform a service or services. If the work loa has multiple services to perform, it will return to the govi after it completes each service. The loa can enter or exit the govi as necessary, whether the lid is on or off. If the houngan wishes to command a service from a spirit in the govi, the govi must be in the houngan's line of sight, though the houngan can also astrally project to the govi and command the spirits from the astral plane. After performing all its services, the work loa returns to astral space.

In addition to serving as a holding container for work loa, a govi can hold astral links to other astrally active beings and things. Such a govi is created in the same way as one that holds a work loa, except that the houngan must bond the govi to himself (see p. 137, **SRII**) at a Karma Cost of 2 x the govi's Force Rating. The houngan then links the govi to a particular target using the following process. Note that such astral links can only be made to astrally active targets such as magicians, spirits or foci; mundane characters or objects are not affected. A free spirit can only be affected by such a link if the houngan knows the spirit's true name.

To form an astral link between the govi and a target, the houngan must astrally project to the target's location, carrying along the astral form of the govi. The houngan must then make an opposed test using Sorcery Skill against the target's Magic Rating or Force; the target resists using Willpower against the houngan's Sorcery Skill Rating. If the houngan is successful, he or she "steals" a tiny amount of the target's energy and thereby creates an astral link between the target and the govi. The govi may then be used as a material link to the target for ritual sorcery (p. 127, **SRII**). Modify the target number of Sendings against the target by -2 per govi. A govi can only hold one astral link at a time, though a subject can be astrally linked to more than one govi. (In these cases, the target has probably made someone very, very angry.)

When the link is being made, the target may fight back through astral combat. The target must destroy the govi (and will presumably also do as much damage as possible to the houngan attempting to make the astral link). If the target wins the battle, the link is broken and the target can no longer be magically linked to that particular govi. If the target backs down and the govi remains intact, reduce the target number for all Sendings against the target by 4 per govi. After a govi is linked to a target, anyone may attempt astral combat against it (and against anything that protects it, including the honfours, wards and even the houngan) to take back the stolen energy. Any number of attacks can be made against a single govi from astral space.

The govi can also be destroyed physically. Every govi, no matter what material it is made of, has a Barrier Rating equal to its Force; to destroy it, the attacking character must reduce this

Barrier Rating to 0. Spells cannot be linked or anchored to the govi to protect it, but it can be placed inside items that carry such magical safeguards. Once a govi is physically destroyed, any astral link it carried is broken.

If any attack—whether physical or astral—destroys the govi, both the creator of the govi and the target astrally linked to it suffer astral backlash. The govi's creator suffers Moderate Stun damage; the subject of the link suffers Serious Stun damage. Both the subject and the houngan may make a Willpower Test to reduce this damage against a target number equal to the govi's force; for every 2 successes achieved, reduce the damage by 1 level.

A houngan player character may begin play with a govi. This beginning govi has a Force of 1 and costs 3,000 nuyen from the player character's starting Resources. This cost reflects the time and effort the houngan put into making the govi rather than pursuing other things. (Govis are never sold; voodoo practitioners consider it insulting to compel any spirit to live in a "purchased" govi, and no houngan would do such a thing.)

FOCI

Houngans can create and use all the types of foci listed in the **Shadowrun** rulebook and **Grimoire II**. Standard spirit foci have no effect against the major loa; the loa are more powerful than mere spirits and cannot be commanded by such items. However, houngans may use other types of spirit foci to aid in banishing the loa.

FETISHES

Voodoo makes heavy use of fetishes for sorcery. Traditionally, houngans made their own, though talismongers in major urban areas almost always carry voodoo material (usually just for show and mood). Common fetishes include straw dolls, feathers, dried and preserved animal parts such as snake skins, rattles, drums, ceremonial jewelry and small bags of dried herbs. The famous voodoo doll is a simple fetish, though many astrally linked govi include one (it adds to the mystery).

LOA FOCI

A houngan may construct a unique enchantment known as a loa focus (p. 27, **Grimoire II**) to aid in calling up a particular loa. The formula for this focus requires the houngan to undertake an astral quest to Guinee with a rating equal to the desired rating of the focus. The houngan then asks the loa for special permission to create the focus and seeks advice in its construction. The houngan must already have established a bond with the loa to make the focus, and the astral quest required to design the focus must be made in addition to any quests the houngan makes in order to bond with new loa.

A loa focus provides additional Conjuring dice equal to its rating when the houngan calls up the loa for which it is designed. Use standard spirit focus values for Enchanting Tests and Bonding Costs.

SPIRIT FOCI

Houngans can create spirit foci to enhance their ability to conjure and command work loa. These follow the normal rules for spir-

it foci. A houngan can also construct a unique enchantment focus for conjuring a loa achete if he or she knows the spirit's true name.

GUINEE

Guinee, also called the Land Beneath the Sea, is the home of the loa. Every follower of voodoo, whether magically active or mundane, considers Guinee a holy place that defies description and full understanding. Houngan initiates can undertake astral quests to Guinee to make contact with other loa and form bonds with them. Some free spirits also appear to call Guinee their home metaplane, and houngans interested in contacting them make astral quests to Guinee in the same manner as other shamans make to the native planes of other free spirits.

Guinee exists as a part of the Metaplane of Man. How a houngan gets there and what he or she does there is up to the imaginations of the gamemaster and the player, within the following guidelines. The Dweller on the Threshold usually appears as the Petro version of the houngan's mait tete (what a Petro houngan encounters is too hideous to comprehend). If the player character's mait tete does not have a Petro version, the gamemaster can choose any Petro loa for the Dweller. The player character must "visit" all the loa to whom he or she has bonded, paying special attention to the mait tete loa. A houngan who does not show respect for all bonded loa fails the astral quest and faces punishment by the loa that he or she displeased (see **Unwilling Possession**, p. 131).

If the questing character wishes, he or she may feed Karma to a bonded loa while visiting it, before going to the Place of Charisma. This action nets the questing character 1 die per point of Karma spent to add to the Social Skill Test he or she must make to resist damage. The character may spend only 1 point of Karma per loa except for the mait tete loa, who will accept up to the quest's rating in Karma. If the gamemaster prefers to roleplay the astral quest rather than rely on dice, Karma fed to the loa represents hints, clues and things to look for when being tested by the new loa.

One of the many oddities about Guinee that plague magical theorists is that, while other metaplanes look different in each astral quest, Guinee seems to look approximately the same. Whether it remains unchanging because the loa have imprinted it or because everyone who goes there expects it to look the same is the subject of endless debate. Whatever the case, Guinee should look the same each time the questing character goes there. However, the Place of Charisma and the Citadel are left to the gamemaster to design.

PETRO RITES

Petro voodoo is a tradition of dark and violent emotion. For example, in Rada voodoo Legba is the Sun; his Petro counterpart, Carrefour, is Lord of the Night and master of the demons of ill chance, misfortune and destruction. As a Petro loa, Ghede becomes Baron Samedi, Lord of Death, cemeteries and zombies, and patron of black magic, who can turn men into ravening beasts. In the past, Petro was not regarded as evil; practitioners considered it a complement to the Rada rite, seeing neither as



entirely complete without the other. In the Awakened world, however, Petro has become darker and more negative, twisting and perverting the light of the Rada rite. As with any religion or magical tradition, there are those who use their powers for selfish and evil reasons; these people tend to become Petro houngans. Followers of Petro call upon the loa for power that is all-consuming and dangerous. Petro houngans are also the only ones who can create zombies. A player character cannot play a Petro houngan; practitioners of these rites may only be non-player characters.

ZOMBIES

Petro houngans can create three types of zombies: biochemical zombies (also known as "living dead"), corps cadavres (described on p. 30, **Paranormal Animals of Europe**) and loa zombies (sometimes known as "astral zombies"). The techniques for creating each type are briefly described below.

Biochemical zombies are created through "zombie powder," a combination of natural neurotoxins. The houngan must gather the necessary raw materials by hand; thus far, they are native only to the nations of the Caribbean League, though rumors of Petro houngans growing the plants in urban areas are increasing. Another rumor has it that some urban Petro houngans have been experimenting—so far with no known success—with various chemicals and materials from talismongers and similar sources.

In order to work, the powder must be ingested or touch the victim's exposed skin. The victim must make a Body Test against a target number equal to the Enchanting Skill of the powder's

creator. If the test fails, the victim sickens and falls into a death-like coma over the course of seven days. If the test is successful, the victim becomes ill but recovers within in 24 to 48 hours.

Once the "dead" victim has been buried, the houngan retrieves the comatose body and applies the second part of the formula, which reduces the victim's Willpower to 1. The houngan then uses a spell quickened or secured with a spell lock—generally a Control Actions spell—to control the victim.

A Petro houngan can also magically create zombies from the dead bodies of humans and metahumans. Through a combination of Sorcery and Enchanting, the houngan can create a corps cadavre. This process requires the houngan to use the Enchanting Skill, with a Base Time of 10 days and a Target Number of 4, to properly prepare the corpse. He or she then casts the corps cadavre spell, a manipulation spell (described below) to animate the creature. Once the corps cadavre has been animated, it will obey the commands of its creator until it rots away (within a month or two). Corps cadavres accept spoken commands from their creator. For additional details and game statistics, see p. 30, **Paranormal Animals of Europe**.

Corps Cadavre

When cast on a specially prepared corpse, this spell animates it as a corps cadavre. The caster of the spell can issue simple commands to the creature to carry out basic tasks.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Duration: Permanent (20) **Drain:** [(F/2) + 2]S
Target: 6

To make a loa zombie, a houngan can command a bound work loa to use its inhabitation power to animate a human or metahuman corpse. The host body uses its original physical statistics plus the Force of the spirit; its mental statistics are equal to the work loa's Force. This type of zombie also gains Immunity to Age, Immunity to Toxins and Pathogens, and Immunity to Normal Weapons. Each 24 hours that the loa inhabits the body counts as one service. The work loa can be fought in astral combat while inhabiting a body and can also be banished normally.

Generally speaking, cybernetic or magical enhancements that a corpse possessed while living do not function for it as a zombie because they require a functional biosystem and/or living spirit to work. Locked or anchored spells are the only exception to this rule; these may continue to function at the gamemaster's discretion if they are physical spells. However, the zombie's condition may alter or reduce their effects.

BOCORS

In the voodoo tradition, a bocor is a magician who practices magic without a loa as guide and patron. In **Shadowrun** game terms, a bocor may simply be a hermetic mage, shaman or adept who is not a practitioner of voodoo. A bocor may also be the voodoo equivalent of a burned-out mage, a houngan who crossed the loa one too many times and has therefore lost contact

with his or her mait tete. These burnouts are lost and lonely, often desperate to re-connect with the loa they abandoned; because of this, they may be prepared to do just about anything if they believe it will help their cause. Their desperation may make them threatening or sympathetic, depending on the needs of the story in which they appear. If such a houngan is used as a non-player character, the gamemaster may boost the character's Magical Threat Rating if he or she so desires.

A non-player character bocor can also be something considerably more dangerous: a toxic follower of a twisted form of voodoo, bent on destruction and death in order to gratify what he or she perceives as the desires of violent and angry loa. Such individuals are ruthless and frightening. At the gamemaster's discretion, this type of bocor might have a greatly enhanced Magical Threat Rating.

VOUDOUN PLAYER CHARACTERS

For characters who follow voodoo instead of the usual hermetic or shaman traditions, character creation works just as it does with hermetics and standard shamans. Human characters must allocate Magic as Priority A, and metahuman characters must allocate it as Priority B. Though a character of any race can be a follower of voodoo, the majority of houngans in the **Shadowrun** universe are humans and orks. All voodoo player characters practice the Rada rite. Petro rites are off-limits to player characters, and Petro houngans should only be used as the opposition.

Voodoo seems to thrive wherever people are oppressed and denied their rights. The tradition is slowly becoming more prevalent in the metropolises of **Shadowrun**, though some consider it just a blip on the Awakened world's radar screen. The strength of voodoo comes from the fact that its followers believe in it as both a magical system and a mundane religion, much like Native American totem worship. Despite the efforts of some to prove that voodoo is everything from a toxic version of shamanism to a fluke in the magical continuum, the tradition continues to grow. The player playing a voodoo character must understand that voodoo is a religion as well as a magical tradition. Voodoo has many mundane believers, and so a houngan may be a spiritual leader with mundane followers as well as an individual magician.

The houngan player character has a different approach to magic than other magicians; he or she sees it as a force to be used only with the guidance of the loa. Those who do not heed a loa's wisdom when using magic are considered bocors, and followers of voodoo tend not to trust them. Though this attitude is gradually changing with the hermetic understanding of magic, prejudice remains strong among the poorer and less educated.

ROLEPLAYING THE LOA

The greatest challenge in playing a houngan is roleplaying the mounting of a loa. Rather than reduce the houngan to a non-player character for the duration of the loa's stay, players may use the following guidelines when roleplaying this experience.

A houngan being "ridden" by a loa should not behave as he or she normally would; the character's behavior should be totally unrecognizable even to friends. For a general idea of how a given loa

might act, see **About the Loa**, p. 120, and also **Major Loa**, p. 60). What the houngan does under the loa's influence during each specific mounting is up to the player and gamemaster, with the gamemaster being the final arbiter. Keep in mind that the loa always has its own agenda, which comes out in the houngan's actions.

Stoner, a street samurai, has fallen victim to some kind of poisoning. Stoner's buddy Big Jam calls upon his mait tete, Ghede, to mount him so that the loa's presence can enhance his Biotech Skill and let him keep his pal alive until they can get him to a street doc. Big Jam succeeds at all the necessary tests and Ghede takes over Big Jam's body. Ghede likes a party, and wants to go find the nearest food, drink and fun; he doesn't particularly want to be bothered saving Stoner. Big Jam must struggle with the loa to make it do what he wants; he must overcome the Force of Ghede's mounting with his own Willpower. Big Jam wins the struggle—he promises Ghede that they will find the nearest nightclub and have a rip-roaring good time with unlimited food and drinks if Ghede lets him help his friend first. Ghede agrees to the bargain.

Much later, Ghede dismounts from Big Jam just as the nightclub owner screams closing time. Big Jam must now try to remember what he did in the past five hours, and hope he has enough cred to pay the tab.

Even though the loa is in control of the houngan's body, the houngan remains aware of what is happening. The player character is still present in his body, watching himself act and speak under the loa's influence. This awareness makes it possible for the houngan to influence the loa; however, to compel a powerful loa to do something against its inclination is not an easy task. It is made harder by the feeling of detachment that comes over a mounted houngan; he sees himself as if he was watching a third party, and so must overcome his own feeling of inertia as well as the loa's will in order to compel it to act.

Being mounted by a loa has certain physical consequences for the character as well. The sheer power surge of the loa's entrance produces a corresponding exhaustion when the loa leaves, and a houngan from whom a loa has just dismounted will feel intense fatigue and at least momentary disorientation. He or she also often feels an overwhelming need to eat, drink or sleep (or all three, depending on the choice of the player and gamemaster). If the houngan does not cope particularly well with this kind of shock to his system or if he is tired to begin with, he may be unable to remember clearly what happened while the loa possessed him. The detached quality of the houngan's memories add to his or her disorientation.

With every mounting, the gamemaster determines if the houngan player character has paid proper respect to the loa. Many players may find it easier to roleplay a houngan who is bound only to his or her mait tete; such a character need not worry about paying respect to multiple loa or inadvertently offending one by honoring another with whom the first has a quarrel. Also, devotion to a single loa usually means that the loa

will grant special favors or even adjust payments and length of service (see **Feeding the Loa**, p. 125).

Wisdom of the Loa

The loa are powerful spirits capable of imparting a great deal of knowledge. A houngan will often call up a loa so that it can answer questions the houngan may have. Most of the time other people ask the loa the questions, then report its answers to the houngan after the spirit has departed.

No game system is presented for imparting information through the loa. How much a given loa can or will tell the player characters in any situation is up to the gamemaster. As a general rule, the loa do not tell all they know about a subject; also the information they give is frequently incomplete or biased. The loa may also put a price on its knowledge, to be paid either in Karma or by performing a special service for the loa. Finally, loa are not omniscient, and may simply not know much about matters outside their sphere of influence. For example, Azaca will not know the latest twists of corporate politics, nor will Erzulle know about stock trends. The gamemaster is advised to use the wisdom of the loa sparingly as a means to keep adventures and story lines moving in the right direction. Remember also that a loa can appear in order to aid a follower without being called if the loa sees fit.

UNWILLING POSSESSION

The gamemaster can use unwilling possession as an adventure hook, as a means of warning a character who is acting in a way likely to offend the loa, or as an object lesson for a character who has been especially disrespectful. Gamemasters should reserve this sort of manifestation for a character who has committed serious offenses against the loa.

Houngans and serviteurs cannot resist an unwilling possession. Other characters possessed by a loa for whatever reason should treat the possession as a use of the possession power common to free spirits (p. 80, **Grimoire II**) at a Force chosen by the gamemaster. Unlike a mounting, unwilling possession strips the character of all control over his actions; despite being able to watch everything that is going on, he cannot influence the loa in the slightest. A loa who possesses a houngan or serviteur in this manner is doing it to show him or her who's boss, and so devotes all of its considerable power to controlling the character's every move and word. As its parting act of punishment, the loa ensures that the possessed character will remember absolutely everything in excruciating detail after the loa departs—especially the terrifying sense of utter helplessness that the character felt. If a possessed character has been especially disrespectful, the loa will intensify that fear, leaving the character a small, gibbering heap on the ground for several minutes. At the gamemaster's discretion, a character may relive the possession in horrible nightmares for weeks after the experience.

In the most severe cases, a loa can inflict a mortal wound on a houngan, thus reducing his or her Magic Rating. If a loa takes such an action, the character loses his or her bond with that loa and may never get it back. If the houngan's mait tete causes a mortal wound, the player character loses all contact with all the loa and becomes a bocor (see **Bocors**, p. 130).

STREET GRIMOIRE



The **Street Grimoire** presents new, street-tested spells and elemental effects. As always, gamemasters may prohibit the use of any spell, or modify these spells before allowing them to be used in their games. The gamemaster and players should agree on the new spells they will add to their campaign before introducing them into play.

ELEMENTAL EFFECTS

Use the following elemental effects in the same way as those published in the **Grimoire, Second Edition**. As with the effects listed in **Grimoire II**, these elemental effects occur only with physical spells.

Each effect creates primary and secondary damage. Primary damage is determined by the Damage Code of the spell cast that caused the elemental effects. Primary effects may react with armor and other defenses as well as representing the more traditional side effects of the spell.

The gamemaster determines the power and prevalence of secondary effects. Secondary effects always affect the area around the spell. For example, the secondary effects of a light-based spell may burn out optical scanners and cameras in the spell's immediate vicinity.

Because spell names do not always accurately reflect the nature of the spell (physical, manipulation, and so on), players and gamemasters should read the spell description carefully to determine if casting the spell might create elemental effects.

LIGHT

Primary Damage: Subject suffers a Glare effect penalty (see Visibility Table, p. 89, **SR11**) for 1 Combat Turn after the attack, unless the character has the flare compensation adept power or cybernetic flare compensation. If the gamemaster determines that creatures with an allergy or vulnerability to sunlight may take additional damage from this effect, increase the damage of the spell 1 level.

Secondary Effects: The secondary effects of a light-based spell rarely ignite flammable materials, but may if the effect passes through glass or any magnifying substance. This effect will



overload optical scanners and surveillance cameras without shielded, polarized or colored lenses.

SAND

Primary Damage: The sand effect produces a high-velocity jet or cloud of sand that shoots toward the subject in the style of a mechanical sandblaster. The effect does tearing, abrasive damage and is resisted by Impact armor (one-half damage, round down). The smothering effect of sand attacks inflicts an extra Wound level against manifested air elementals.

Secondary Effects: Sand gets into everything. It can get under clothing (itching and possible skin burn), into machinery (guns jam, motors stop working) and will slow movement (double all movement modifiers). This secondary effect does not affect airtight clothing that is not ripped by the primary damage of the sand effect, and munitions and machinery that are fully sealed against the environment. Affected machinery and guns remain jammed until cleaned.

SMOKE

Primary Damage: The smoke effect creates a thick cloud of heavy smoke that suffocates the subject. The smoke effect inflicts Stun damage; a sustained effect can cause that damage to eventually overflow on to the subject's Physical Condition Monitor. If the spell creating the smoke effect was cast in an area occupied by a manifested air elemental, the effect causes no damage.

The smoke effect reduces visibility for everyone in the area. The targeted character adds 4 to all Visibility Tests. All others in the area receive a +2 visibility modifier. Smoke lasts 1 round longer than the spell that created it.

Secondary Effects: The smoke effect can cause characters without access to uncontaminated air to gag and have trouble breathing.

All those within the area of the smoke effect take Light Stun damage each turn the smoke persists. Because smoke also dampens sound, add 2 to the target number for all Perception Tests made within the smoke effect involving sounds and sound location.

COMBAT SPELLS

REDIRECT

The redirect spell sends the energy of an incoming physical or melee attack back against the attacker in the form of a powerful mental shock.

To use the spell, the target magician must have a higher Initiative than the attacker and must delay his action. The target magician makes a Spell (4) Test. If his successes exceed the attacker's Attack Test successes, the target magician avoids the attack and sends it back to the attacker, who suffers Stun damage with a Damage Code equal to the initial attack. The target magician must resist Drain equal to half the Force of the spell at a Damage Level one less than the Damage Level of the initial attack. If the attacker and the target magician achieve the same number of successes, the redirect spell has no effect and the target magician takes damage from the initial attack.

The attacker may resist the Stun damage with Willpower. Armor has no effect.

Redirect spells may be anchored to places or objects (see p. 47, *Grimoire II*).

Type: Physical

Range: LOS

Target: 4

Damage Level: Same as original attack

Duration: Instant

Drain: Special

ROT

The rot spell causes inanimate organic matter such as leather, wood, meat, paper and the like to decay rapidly and disintegrate. To cast the rot spell, the magician makes a Spell Test against an appropriate target number from the Object Resistance Table, p. 130, **SRII**.

Note that the rot spell is effective against loa zombies, which are actually animated corpses. Against such zombies, the spell causes a base Damage Level of Serious. The target number is the zombie's Body Rating modified by any armor or magic.

Because ghouls, vampires, banshees and other such undead are altered living creatures rather than dead beings, the rot spell does not affect them. This spell does not affect zombies created by zombie dust, or corps cadavres (see **Zombies**, p. 129).

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Object Resistance Table
Damage Level: S **Duration:** Instant
Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$

SHATTERSHIELD

The shattershield spell is specifically designed to break through magical barriers such as wards. The spell strikes the barrier with a single attack. If the attack is successful, reduce the Barrier or Ward Rating by 1, and for every 2 successes beyond the first, reduce the Barrier or Ward Rating by an additional 1 point. For example, 3 successes reduce the Ward Rating by 2, 5 successes reduce it by 3, and so on. Theoretically, a character can shatter a ward with a single spell.

To use the shattershield spell against astral barriers (such as wards or mana barriers), the spellcaster must be astrally active and able to assense the barrier when the spell is cast.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Force (R)
Damage Level: D **Duration:** Instant
Drain: $(F \div 2)S$

DETECTION SPELLS**ANIMAL SPY**

The animal spy spell enables a magician to perceive his surroundings using the senses of any non-paranormal animal. The animal must be within a range of meters in a circle around the caster determined by the following formula: Spell Test Successes \times Magic Attribute \times 5.

The spellcaster has no control over the animal's actions and cannot target spells using the animal's eyesight. As long as the magician sustains the spell, he can switch to the senses of any other animal within the spell's range by spending a Simple Action.

If the gamemaster believes that a targeted animal would have some reason to resist this spell (most animals would be completely unaware of it), he may make a Willpower Test against the Force of the spell. If the test succeeds, the spell does not affect the animal.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $(F \div 2)L$

ASTRAL SENSE

The astral sense spell enables the spellcaster to sense the presence of astrally active forms within the spell's range (spellcaster's Magic Attribute \times 5 meters), even if the character is not astrally active at the time. To use the spell, the magician makes a Spell Success (10) Test. All standard modifiers apply to this test. Each success on the Spell Success Test allows the character to sense astrally active forms of a Force or Magic rating equal to the number of successes. For example, 3 successes allow a character to sense all the items of Force or Magic Rating 3 or below within range, but not a Rating 5 ward.

This spell cannot differentiate between spirits, spells and other astrally active forms such as foci and wards.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 10
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $(F \div 2)M$

CATALOGUE

The catalogue spell is a simple area-effect spell that enables the spellcaster to compile a comprehensive, itemized list of all of the non living items within his line of sight. If the Spell Test succeeds, the caster becomes able to write or dictate a list of all the items in a manner similar to automatic writing. (If the spell's area of effect contains items that the magician would not recognize on sight, they will be listed as "unknown.") The spell cannot catalogue what the spellcaster cannot see. A warehouse full of boxes, for example, will list the number of boxes rather than what the boxes contain. As soon as he produces the list, the caster forgets the exact items and quantities.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) - 1]L$

DIAGNOSE

The diagnose spell provides the spellcaster with information on any illnesses, injuries or other medical problems from which the subject suffers. To use the spell, the magician makes a Spell Success Test against a target number equal to 10 minus the subject's Essence Rating. For 1 success, the spell reveals whether the subject is healthy or ill and provides a general idea of the subject's Essence (high, average, dangerously low, hey—you're dead!). For 3 successes, the spell reveals specific illnesses or injuries, and for 5 successes it reveals even difficult-to-detect viruses (such as HMMVV) and internal injuries.

This spell does not differentiate between low Essence due to deadly wounds or as a result of cyberware. The magician can only tell that something serious happened to the target's body.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 10 - Target's Essence Rating
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) - 1]M$

ENHANCE AIM

The enhance aim spell allows the spellcaster to reduce a fellow character's ranged attack target modifiers by 2. The effect is not cumulative with modifiers from smartgun links, smartgoggles



or laser sights, but does enhance non-electronic rangefinders and scopes. A magician may cast this spell on himself, but the penalty for sustaining the spell will cancel out the targeting modifier unless the magician uses some other means, such as a spell lock or spirit, to sustain the spell.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** (F ÷ 2)S

FORETELLING

The foretelling spell gives the spellcaster a brief insight into the probabilities surrounding a future event. If the Spell Success Test is successful, the magician receives either a brief vision of the circumstances surrounding a specific event or the answer to a single yes-or-no question concerning some future event.

Precognition is a very speculative area of magical study, and so the effects of a foretelling spell are not entirely predictable. Use it as a means of providing information, hints and foreshadowings to the players, but do not provide them with definitive answers about the future.

Many magicians make use of fetishes such as crystals, mirrors, cards, yarrow sticks, bones and rune stones when casting this spell.

*The gamemaster must handle this powerful, dangerous spell with great care to avoid upsetting the balance of his game. Do not allow the foretelling spell to ruin planned events—as always, the truth and degree of information provided is at the gamemaster's discretion.

Type: Mana **Range:** Self
Target: 10
Duration: Instant **Drain:** (F ÷ 2)D

NIGHT VISION

The night vision spell grants the target the low-light vision modifiers listed on the Visibility Table, p. 89, **SR11**.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** (F ÷ 2)L

TRANSLATE

The translate spell sets up a low-level telepathic connection between two willing subjects. The connection allows the subjects to converse with one another as if both spoke the same language. Generally, the spell translates a speaker's intent more accurately than his exact phrasing, so it is no replacement for the tact of a skilled translator. Nevertheless, international corporate and government types often use translate spells to conduct transactions and negotiations. The number of successes the spellcaster achieves on his Spell Success Test indicate the quality of the translation.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** [(F ÷ 2) + 1]L

X-RAY VISION

The x-ray vision spell enables a willing subject to see through inanimate barriers. For each success on the spellcaster's Spell Success Test, the subject can see through 1 Barrier Rating Point of non-living objects. The subject must spend a Simple Action to do so. The line of sight provided by the x-ray vision spell fulfills the LOS requirement for casting other spells.

The x-ray vision spell does not enable subjects to see through living or magical barriers, and does not work in astral space.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** [(F ÷ 2) + 2]S

HEALTH SPELLS

ALLEVIATE ALLERGY

The alleviate allergy spell allows the spellcaster to reduce the effects of an allergy suffered by the spell's target. For example, an alleviate severe allergy spell would protect a vampire exposed to sunlight. Because it does not aid against vulnerabilities, however, the alleviate allergy spell would not protect the vampire from an attack with a wooden weapon.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** Nuisance: (F ÷ 2)L
Mild: (F ÷ 2)M
Moderate: (F ÷ 2)S
Severe: (F ÷ 2)D

AWAKEN

As soon as the awaken spell is cast, the target of the spell wakes up and is immediately aware of his or her surroundings. Spellcasters can also use the awaken spell to revive unconscious subjects, though such targets will remain conscious for only one minute per success before lapsing back into unconsciousness.

Type: Mana **Range:** Touch
Target: 10 – Subject's Essence Rating
Duration: Instant **Drain:** [(F ÷ 2) – 1]L

BLINDNESS

The blindness spell magically renders a subject blind for the duration of the spell. The spell affects the brain's ability to receive visual information, and so it affects subjects with cybereyes as well.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Body (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** [(F ÷ 2) + 1]D

CAUSE ALLERGY

The cause allergy spell inflicts on the subject an allergic reaction of the spellcaster's choice (subject to gamemaster approval). The allergy must be triggered by a specific material. See the Allergy and Severity Table, p. 46, **SR11**, and the critter allergy description on p. 220, **SR11**, for guidelines.

Subjects of the spell are afflicted with the standard effects of the allergy. Severe allergies to some substances (such as sunlight or iron) may be fatal if sustained long enough.

The alleviate allergy spell cancels the effects of this spell.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: 10 – Subject's Essence
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** Nuisance: $[(F/2) + 1]L$
Mild: $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$
Moderate: $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$
Severe: $[(F \div 2) + 1]D$

CRIPPLE LIMB

The cripple limb spell enables a caster to incapacitate any organic limb by touching it. The affected limb becomes useless for the duration of the spell.

Type: Mana **Range:** Touch
Target: Body (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $(F \div 2)S$

FAST

The fast spell enables a voluntary subject to ignore feelings of hunger or thirst for 48 hours, beginning when the spell is cast. The spell does not alleviate the subject's need for nourishment or hydration—only his desire for them. Wealthy individuals often use the fast spell as a "diet spell."

Type: Mana **Range:** Touch
Target: Body
Duration: Permanent (10 turns) **Drain:** $(F \div 2)L$

INTOXICATION

The intoxication spell causes a subject to feel the effects of inebriation. The subject suffers penalties to all actions as if a number of boxes equal to the spellcaster's successes were filled in on the subject's Stun Condition Monitor (see the Damage Modifiers table, p. 112, **SR11**). The penalties do not reflect actual damage—only the spell's effects. If the casting magician scores 10 or more successes on his Spell Success Test, the subject remains conscious but becomes incapable of action.

Magician targets may use the antidote or detox spells to resist the effects of intoxication. Blood filters do not resist the effects because the inebriation is not physical; there are no toxins actually in the target's blood.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Body (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$

NUTRITION

The nutrition spell provides a voluntary target with a full day's nourishment and hydration—essentially, a shot of pure mana. The nutrition spell does not satisfy feelings of hunger or thirst.

Type: Mana **Range:** Touch
Target: 4
Duration: Permanent (15 turns) **Drain:** $(F \div 2)L$

PARALYZE

The paralyze spell overrides and paralyzes all of a subject's voluntary muscles (yes, the target can still breathe), rendering the subject unable to move or speak while the spell is sustained. To resist the spell's effects, the subject can make a Willpower Test each round against a target number equal to the spell's Force. If any of the subject's Willpower Tests yields more successes than the caster's Spell Test successes, the paralyze spell is broken.

Cyberware may continue to work as long as it can function independently of the body's functions, such as a datajack, dermal plating, or tactical computer.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]D$

ILLUSION SPELLS

AGONIZING PAIN

The agonizing pain spell inflicts crippling pain on a target. If the spell is successful, the target suffers temporary Stun Damage of 1 box on the character's Condition Monitor for each success. The Stun Damage target modifiers apply to all tests the target makes.

If the spellcaster achieves 10 or more successes, the pain incapacitates the subject, leaving him unable to move or act. Note that the target need not "recover" from the agonizing pain spell; he suffers no real damage.

If the target makes a successful Willpower Test against a target number equal to the spellcaster's total number of successes, he may ignore the spell's effects and perform 1 action.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$

CHAFF

The chaff spell, a variation of the chaotic world spell (p. 155, **SR11**), adds 1 to the target numbers for use of all non-living sensing devices, including weapon targeting systems such as the smartgun link.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Object Resistance Table
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) - 1]S$

CROWD SCENE

The crowd scene spell creates an area-effect illusion of a fairly homogenous scene of people milling about. The "crowd" appears to be a fairly typical one for the area where it appears, provided the spellcaster is at least passing familiar with the place. The image is not solid and makes no sound, and anyone physically interacting with the crowd immediately knows that it is an illusion. Otherwise, a character can make a Resistance Test against a target number equal to the spellcaster's successes multiplied by 2, to determine that the scene is an illusion.

The crowd scene spell can be used to provide cover or distraction. The entertainment industry sometimes uses the spell for

special effects and to replace extras; because the spell is physical, cameras and other sensing devices register the image.

Type: Physical

Range: LOS

Target: 4

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$

DISREGARD

The disregard spell places a voluntary subject "outside" the perceptions of other individuals. The subject remains visible and detectable by mechanical means, but individuals simply disregard or fail to notice the subject. A character may defeat the spell by making a successful Intelligence Test against a target number equal to twice the number of successes the spellcaster achieved on his Spell Success Test.

Type: Mana

Range: Touch

Target: 4

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $(F \div 2)M$

DREAM

The dream spell enables a magician to transmit a dream image to a sleeping subject. Dream images cannot cause actual harm but may entertain, relax or frighten the subject. Subjects who experience nightmares do not recover from Mental or Stun damage while the nightmares persist, nor do they receive any rest during such periods. Subjects vividly remember dream images when awakened.

A subject may discern that a dream image results from magical means by making a successful Intelligence Test against a target number equal to twice the number of successes achieved by the spellcaster.

The dream spell is often cast via ritual sorcery as a means of sending warnings, threats or torment to an enemy. Modern psychologists and dream therapists may use it as well.

Type: Mana

Range: LOS

Target: Willpower (R)

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $(F \div 2)L$

FLARE

The flare spell creates a bright flash of light that temporarily blinds a target. To use the spell, a magician must make a Spell Success Test against a target number equal to the target's Quickness. At the same time, the targeted character makes an opposed Quickness Test against a target number equal to the spell's Power. If the target possesses either the adept power of flare compensation or the cyberware version, reduce the target number by 4 (to a minimum of 2).

Each net success scored by the spellcaster blinds the target for 1 Combat Turn.

The flare spell creates a physical illusion, so cameras and cybereyes (even those with flare compensation) can be affected by the spell.

Type: Physical

Range: LOS

Target: Quickness (R)

Duration: Instant

Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$

SILENCE

The silence spell is an area effect spell that creates a sound-deadening field. All sounds created within the area are deadened, and no sounds can pass into or through the area.

The silence spell is a physical spell, and so mechanical or electrical recording devices cannot detect sounds deadened by the spell. Verbal communication cannot be heard, and sonic attacks and critter powers that rely on sound (such as paralyzing howl) fail within the area affected by the spell. If the casting magician's position falls within the area affected by the spell, he suffers the effects of the silence spell.

The personal version of the silence spell has a Drain of $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$ and affects only a single subject.

Type: Physical

Range: LOS

Target: 6

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

CONTROL MANIPULATIONS

CALM ANIMAL

The calm animal spell causes a subject of animal-level intelligence to become calm and passive. Subjects engaged in combat reduce their target number to resist the spell by 2.

A target under the effects of the calm animal spell will attack only to protect itself. A magician casting the area-effect version of the calm animal spell must resist Drain of $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$. This version of the spell has a limited range.

Type: Mana

Range: LOS

Target: Willpower (R)

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 2]L$

COMPEL TRUTH

The compel truth spell forces a target to speak the truth as *he knows it*—whatever the target believes to be true is considered the truth for the purpose of the spell. The target may choose not to speak or to withhold information, but he cannot deliberately lie.

UCAS and CAS courts consider the use of the compel truth spell to extract confessions a violation of a suspect's right against self-incrimination. However, some of the Native American Nations (notably the Sioux) have been known to permit judicial shamans to use this spell (among others) to get to the truth.

Type: Mana

Range: LOS

Target: Willpower (R)

Duration: Sustained

Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 2]L$

FALSE MEMORY

The false memory spell enables the spellcaster to create and implant a false memory in the mind of a target. The spell may implant a completely new memory, or modify an existing memory and change how the subject remembers a particular event or piece of information.

A subject cannot distinguish between successfully implanted memories and his real memories. However, the gamemaster secretly makes a Spell Resistance Test for the subject each time he "recalls" the false memory. Tally the subject's successes. When that tally exceeds the number of successes the spellcaster

achieved on his initial Spell Test, the spell's effect ends. The subject recognizes the implanted memory as false and recalls any real memories obscured by false ones.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Permanent (20 turns) **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

POSSESSION

The possession spell enables a magician to enter a target's body with his own consciousness and control the target's body. If the target fails his Willpower Resistance Test and the spellcaster's Spell Success Test succeeds, the caster falls into a trance state and his consciousness takes control of the target's body.

The spellcaster may use the subject's physical skills with a +2 modifier for all tests for the duration of the spell. The occupying magician uses his own mental skills, but he cannot use his magic skills. Damage to the body of the target or the spellcaster affects the spellcaster's target numbers for any further tests made while in the body.

If the subject dies during the spell, the spellcaster must resist 8D Stun damage or die himself. If the spellcaster's body dies, the spellcaster dies with it and the spell is broken. Subjects have no memory of the time the spell was in effect.

*The use of this very powerful spell could easily upset the balance of the game if not handled carefully by the gamemaster. The gamemaster should use great discretion in allowing this spell in his game.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 3]S$

TERRORIZE

The terrorize spell fills a single target with fear of the spellcaster. If the target cannot resist the spell's effects with a Willpower Resistance Test, he or she is overcome with fear and must flee from the spellcaster as quickly as possible. Once out of sight of the spellcaster, the subject may make a Willpower Test each round to overcome the effects of the spell.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

TELEKINETIC MANIPULATIONS

CATFALL

The catfall spell psychokinetically slows a target's fall and ensures that the subject lands upright. Multiply the Spell Test successes by the magician's Magic Attribute to determine the maximum distance in meters that the subject may fall without danger of injury. If the subject falls a greater distance, subtract the maximum distance of the spell from the distance fallen before calculating damage.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]L$

DEFLECT

The deflect spell psychokinetically deflects physical missile attacks against a target. Every 2 successes the spellcaster achieves on his Spell Success Test provides the target with an additional Combat Pool die that the target can use only for Damage Resistance Tests against physical ranged attacks (the deflect spell does not protect against energy attacks such as lasers or energy manipulation spells).

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$

FLING

The fling spell enables the spellcaster to psychokinetically hurl a single object at a target. The hurled object's weight in kilograms may not exceed the spellcaster's Magic Attribute. The object is thrown with a Strength equal to the spell's Force. The caster must touch the item to be thrown.

Treat the spellcaster's Spell Success Test as a normal ranged-attack test to determine if the item hits the target. Throwing weapons propelled by the fling spell travel the standard range for the weapon type, based on the spell's Force.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: Ranged Attack Test
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $(F \div 2)M$

GECKO CRAWL

The gecko crawl spell enables a voluntary subject to crawl along vertical surfaces at half his normal Quickness Rating. Gravity still affects the subject, who falls if he jumps or pushes away from the vertical surface he is climbing on. If the subject is climbing a particularly slick surface, the gamemaster also may require him to make appropriate Athletics (Climbing) Tests.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$

TRANSFORMATION MANIPULATIONS

ALTER TEMPERATURE

The alter temperature spell is an area-effect spell that changes the ambient temperature. The spell alters the area's temperature by 5 degrees centigrade for every 2 successes on the spellcaster's Spell Success Test. The spellcaster chooses whether the temperature increases or decreases.

The gamemaster determines the effects of any extreme temperatures caused by the spell. Generally, sufficiently extreme temperatures cause characters without proper protection to suffer 4L Stun damage for each minute of exposure. The gamemaster may also determine that extreme temperatures interfere with the operation of some machines.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

BUG BARRIER

The bug barrier spell, created by Knight-Errant combat mages for use against insect spirits, creates a magical shield with effects similar to those of a mana barrier spell (p. 158, **SRII**). The barrier's Barrier Rating is equal to the spell's Force and blocks only insect spirits.

Additionally, the shield causes a painful magical feedback in any insect spirit that comes in contact with it. The feedback has a base Damage Code of (Force)L. Every 2 successes on the caster's initial Spell Test increases the base damage by 1 level. This damage is in addition to any resulting from astral combat with the barrier itself.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]D$

CLEAN AIR

The clean air spell is an area effect spell that clears all impurities from the air in the affected area, leaving the air clean and breathable. The gamemaster determines the target number for the Spell Success Test based on the airborne impurities present. Target numbers of 3 or 4 would be appropriate for smoke, fog and similar impurities, while complex nerve toxins might require target numbers as high as 10 or 12.

If this spell is cast on an open area where the air is moving (windy conditions), it clears only one area, which quickly mixes with the surrounding air.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$

CLEAN WATER

The clean water spell is an area-effect spell that removes impurities from a volume of water equal to a sphere with a radius equal to the spellcaster's Magic Attribute in meters. The gamemaster determines the target number for the Spell Success Test, based on the impurities in the water (3 for dirt and organic sediment, as high as 10 for industrial chemicals).

If this spell is cast on an open body of water, such as a river, it clears only one area, which quickly mixes with the surrounding water.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Permanent (10 turns) **Drain:** $(F \div 2)S$

CONTROL FIRE

The control fire spell enables the spellcaster to control normal flames within his line of sight. The caster makes his Spell Success Test against a target number equal to the Power of the flames. The gamemaster determines the strength of the fire by the nature of the fire's fuel and how long it has burned. While small camp fires or individual burning items have a Power of 3 or 4, the Power of flames consuming a building or forest fire might be as high as 15 to 20.

The caster can cause the flames to move up to 1 meter per success, provided the area of movement contains fuel for the

flames. He may also cause the flames to flare, increasing their Power by 1 for every 2 successes. The spellcaster may also choose to contain the flames where they are and allow them to burn out.

Though this spell does not affect magically sustained flames (such as fire elementals or firewall spells), it does affect flames created by spells such as ignite and the elemental effects of similar physical spells.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Power Rating
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

EXTINGUISH FIRE

The extinguish fire spell is an area-effect spell that extinguishes fires. The caster makes his Spell Success Test against a target number equal to the Power of the flames. The gamemaster determines the strength of the fire by the nature of the fire's fuel and how long it has burned. While small camp fires or individual burning items have a Power of 3 or 4, the Power of flames consuming a building or forest might be as high as 15 to 20.

Every 2 successes reduces the fire's Damage Level by 1 level, beginning at (Power)M. However, the fire regains 1 Damage Level per Combat Turn up to its initial strength. If the spellcaster achieves enough successes to reduce the Damage Level of the fire to 0, the fire is extinguished.

The extinguish fire spell has no effect on magically sustained fires (such as flame barriers or fire elementals) but does affect fires set by magical means such as ignite spells.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Power
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$

FIREWALL

The firewall spell creates a wall of fire. The wall's height in meters equals the spell's Force, and its length or radius equals the magician's Magic Attribute. The firewall causes (Force)M damage to anything that comes in contact with it and provides full visual cover for anyone behind it. A firewall is not solid and does not block attacks, though it detonates explosives and other munitions that pass through it.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]D$

FIX

The fix spell repairs cracks, rips, tears, fractures and other damage to inanimate objects. The weight of the item may not exceed the spellcaster's Magic Attribute in kilograms, and the character must have all the pieces of the object. To use the spell, the caster must achieve a single success on a Spell Success Test against the appropriate target number from the Object Resistance Table (p. 130, **SRII**). This spell makes only physical repairs, and will not restore magical bonds or properties of any kind.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Permanent (10 turns) **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$



FLAME AURA

The flame aura spell creates a rippling aura of flames around a voluntary target. The flame aura extends from the subject a number of centimeters equal to the spell's Force. The flames cause no harm to the target of the spell or anything carried or worn by the target.

Any successful melee attack against the subject inflicts damage on the attacker from the intense heat and flame. The attacker must resist (Force)M damage. Armor reduces the damage if the attacker strikes with an armored part of his body. When the target of the flame aura spell makes a successful melee attack, increase the Power of the Damage Code by 2.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$

FREEZE WATER

The freeze water spell has an area effect that freezes all water in the spell's area of effect into ice. If the spell is used in a large body of water, such as a lake or ocean, it freezes all of the water in range, creating a free-floating iceberg. Water freezing in containers or pipes may cause them to burst from the sudden expansion. Ice created by the spell melts normally according to the ambient temperature.

The freeze water spell does not affect the water that makes up living beings, manifested water spirits or water elementals.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$

GLUE

The glue spell magically causes two inanimate surfaces to bond together with a Force equal to the spell's Force Rating plus 1 for every 2 successes on the spellcaster's Spell Success Test. To separate the surfaces, a character must make a successful Strength Test against a target number equal to the Force of the bond. If either surface has a Barrier Rating lower than the Force of the bond, that surface is torn apart when the surfaces are separated.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

HEAT SHIELD

The heat shield spell creates a barrier that offers the target some protection from fire- and heat-based attacks resulting from flame projection, firebolt, fireball, hellblast, flame bolt and flame bomb spells, as well as other flame spells, flame powers, flame throwers and similar weapons. Subtract the heat shield spell's Force Rating from the Power of such attacks when determining damage.

The heat shield spell does not protect against the ignite spell or anything that lights a fire.

A magician casting the personal form of this spell must resist Drain of $[(F \div 2) + 2]L$.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$

LIGHT RAY

The light ray spell fires a beam of light at a target with effects comparable to those of a laser weapon. At the gamemaster's discretion, the light ray spell may produce elemental light effects (see p. 132).

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Damage Level: S **Duration:** Instant
Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 1]D$

MENTAL SHIELD

The mental shield spell provides protection against spells and powers that affect the mind, such as mind probe and control manipulation spells, mana-based illusions, and critter powers such as influence and desire reflection. For every 2 successes on the spellcaster's Spell Test, the subject gains 1 extra die to resist the effects of the listed spells.

The mental shield spell does not protect against mana-type combat spells.

Type: Mana **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F + 2) + 1]M$

MIST

The mist spell is an area-effect spell that creates a thick mist. The dense mist imposes the vision penalties for heavy fog (see the Visibility Table, p. 89, **SR11**). The fog persists as long as the spell is

sustained. When the spell is dropped, the mist dissipates quickly, based on the surrounding temperature, winds and other climactic conditions.

Type: Physical **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

NET

The net spell is an area-effect version of the bind spell (p. 131, **Grimoire II**). The spell traps and holds any target in the area of effect, though targets may resist the spell by making a Quickness Test against a target number equal to the spell's Force. The Barrier Rating for the magical "net" created by the spell is equal to the spellcaster's net successes.

Targets may break out of the net according to the standard barrier rules, or may attempt to do so through extraordinary effort. To break out under his own power, a character may increase his Strength Attribute for this purpose by making a Strength Test against a target number equal to the spell's Force. Every 2 successes on the test increase his Strength Attribute by 1. After breaking free, the character must make a Body Test to resist (Character's Strength)L Stun damage, representing the fatigue caused by his efforts.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Quickness (R)
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]D$

SAP STRENGTH

The sap strength spell reduces a living or inanimate target's strength. For every 2 successes on the spellcaster's Spell Test, reduce a living target's Strength Attribute by 1. If the Attribute is reduced to 0 or less, the subject is immobilized, unable to support the weight of his own body.

Against inanimate targets, compare the number of successes the spellcaster achieved in the Spell Test to the Barrier Rating of the target. If the successes exceed the Barrier Rating, the target collapses.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]S$

SHAPE EARTH

The shape earth spell allows the spellcaster to magically move and shape a quantity of earth in the spell's area of effect. A successful Spell Test against an appropriate target number from the Object Resistance Table (p. 130, **SRII**) allows the spellcaster to rapidly dig or fill holes, tunnels and trenches, push over earthen barricades, and perform other, similar feats. The spell also works on processed materials such as glass, metal and concrete. Any material the spellcaster reshapes reverts to its previous shape when the spell is dropped.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]D$

SHAPE WATER

The shape water spell works in the same manner as shape earth spell, but affects water and other liquids.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]D$

SMOKE CLOUD

The smoke cloud spell creates a cloud of thick, sulfurous smoke that covers an area with a radius in meters equal to the spellcaster's Magic Attribute. Each Combat Turn, the cloud inflicts Stun damage on all targets within the spell's area of effect, and adds 4 to all sight-based target numbers for tests made in the affected area. Armor does not reduce the damage, but a sealed breathing apparatus or air filter negates it entirely.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 4
Damage Level: M **Duration:** Sustained
Drain: $[(F \div 2) + 3]D$

SPIRIT BARRIER

The spirit barrier spell is an area-effect spell that functions like a mana barrier spell. However, the spirit barrier spell affects only spirits and other astral entities, such as astrally projecting magicians. All other creatures and objects, including dual-natured creatures or bonded magical items, can pass through the barrier normally. The spirit barrier's Barrier Rating is equal to one-half the spell's Force. Add the Barrier Rating to the target numbers of all Spell Tests for magicians attempting to cast spells through the barrier.

Type: Mana **Range:** Limited
Target: 6
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 2]M$

TEMPER

The temper spell alters inanimate materials to make them stronger. Make a Spell Success Test against an appropriate target number from the Object Resistance Table (p. 130, **SRII**). For every success on the Spell Test, increase the Barrier Rating of the item by 2. The weight of the tempered object in kilograms may not exceed twice the spellcaster's Magic Attribute.

Type: Physical **Range:** Touch
Target: Object Resistance
Duration: Sustained **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]M$

WIND

The wind spell is an area-effect spell that produces a wind in whatever direction the caster desires. The strength of the wind is equal to the Force of the spell. The wind scatters light objects such as paper and leaves. Freestanding items with a Barrier Rating lower than the spell's Force are knocked over. Living targets in the area of effect must make a Knockdown Test against a target number equal to the Force of the spell.

Type: Physical **Range:** LOS
Target: 6
Duration: Instant **Drain:** $[(F \div 2) + 1]S$



HOUNGAN (MAMBO)

"Papa Legba watches over the path you walked to find me. You need more than the help of some bocor magician, you need one who knows the world of les invisibles, who can speak with les Mysteres. I am such a one.

"Tell me your desire. I will call up the loa and seek their wisdom. If what you ask is in accord with their wishes, I can help you. If you believe in and honor their power, the loa will grant me the strength to be used in your cause. But know that the loa must be fed, and the price will not be small."

Commentary

The houngan is a magician who follows the path of the loa (a female houngan is often called a mambo). The houngan is primarily concerned with serving the loa well, for they are the wellspring of all life. If the loa guide the houngan into the world of the shadows, she will go there without question.

Attributes

Body: 5
 Quickness: 3
 Strength: 4
 Charisma: 3
 Intelligence: 3
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 6
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 3

Dice Pools

Combat: 5
 Magic: 5

Gear

Armor Clothing (3/0)
 Enchanting Kit
 Low Lifestyle (1 month prepaid)
 Medkit
 Portable Honfour (3)
 Streetline Special

Loa/Spell Set: Choose one mait tete loa from below (see pp. 122–123 for other powers and benefits of the loa).

Ogoun

(Grants +2 dice to combat and health spells)
 Manabolt: 4
 Powerball: 6
 Sleep: 5

Ghede

(Grants +2 dice to manipulation and health spells)
 Chaos: 4
 Entertainment: 3
 Invisibility: 5
 Mask: 3

Azaca

(Grants +2 dice to health spells and +2 when dealing with Spirits of the Land)
 Antidote Toxin: 3
 Heal: 5
 Hibernate: 3
 Stabilize: 4

Damballah

(Grants +2 dice to detection spells and when dealing with Spirits of the Sky)
 Analyze Magic: 4
 Analyze Truth: 5
 Clairvoyance: 3
 Detect Enemies: 3

Starting Cash: 11,090 ¥

Skills

Biotech: 3
 Enchanting: 4
 Etiquette (Street): 2
 Magical Theory: 3
 Sorcery: 5

Initiative: 3 + 1D6

Contacts

Choose (2) Contacts



STREET WARRIOR

"I know it's the image, but I wouldn't call myself a loner. Sure, I like a certain amount of time to myself, to meditate and focus, but the rhythm and bounce of the sprawl energizes me. I see chaos and unending flow in every motion, every noise, every action and reaction. But all that confusion and chaos has a pattern to it—an order of sorts.

"Okay, okay; so I've contributed a little to that confusion myself on more than one occasion. I consider it my humanitarian duty to see that things don't get boring. I also consider it my duty to see that everybody plays fair. That's the big red button for me, chummers. Play nice, and I'll stay nice too."

Commentary

The street warrior is a magician, though he prefers to call himself an adept. He focuses his power toward improving, enhancing and amplifying his own natural abilities. He's barely aware of the magic except at certain times, usually when the adrenaline is pumping and everything is on the line. Then he feels the power of his own unique magic. Beginning street warriors tend to focus on the martial arts, but any physical ability will do.

Attributes

Body: 5
 Quickness: 6
 Strength: 6
 Charisma: 3
 Intelligence: 4
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: 6
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 5 (6)

Skills

Armed Combat: 4
 Etiquette (Street): 4
 Stealth: 4 (6)
 Throwing: 6
 Unarmed Combat: 6 (8)

Initiative: 6 + 2D6

Dice Pool

Combat: 8

Contacts:

Choose (2) Contacts

Gear

Dodge Scoot
 Knife
 Lined Coat (4/2)
 Medkit
 Portable Phone w/Ear Plug Unit
 Shuriken (10)
 Simsense Player (w/4 program chips)

Adept Abilities

Improved Ability (Stealth + 2 dice)
 Improved Ability (Unarmed Combat + 2 dice)
 Improved Physical Senses (Low-Light Vision, Acute Hearing)
 Increased Reaction (+1)
 Increased Reflexes (1) (+1D6 Initiative)
 Killing Hands (6S Physical Damage, unarmed)

Starting Cash: 9,022 ¥

STREET SORCERER

"Don't give me any of that "real magician" drek, chummer. When you want the right tool for a job, you don't go out looking for a lot of features unless you've got nuyen to burn. You wanna pay for frills? Fine, I don't care. But if you just want what's needed to get things done, you want me. And if you doubt that I'm a "real magician" I've got a fireball with your name on it that says otherwise."

Commentary

The street sorcerer is a sorcery adept. He doesn't deal in spirits or astral space or any of that other drek—he's a spellcasting machine who does his work very well. This is the ticket you punch when your team needs magical support—meaning the right spell at the right time to get the job done.

Attributes

Body: 4
 Quickness: 6
 Strength: 4
 Charisma: 4
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: 6
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 6

Skills

Bike: 2
 Etiquette (Street): 3
 Firearms: 3
 Magical Theory: 3
 Sorcery: 6
 Stealth (Urban): 3

Initiative: 6 + 1D6

Dice Pools

Combat: 9
 Magic: 6

Contacts

Choose (2) Contacts

Gear

Armor Clothing (4/2)
 Dodge Scoot
 Hermetic Library on Disk
 Sorcery (1)
 Pocket Computer w/50 Mp of Storage
 Ruger Super Warhawk

Spells

Choose one orientation from the following:

Fighter

Fireball: 2
 Manabolt: 3
 Powerball: 4
 Ram: 3
 Sleep: 3

Deceiver

Chaos: 4
 Confusion: 5
 Invisibility: 4
 Mask: 2

Healer

Control Thoughts: 2
 Heal: 6
 Increase Reflexes (+3): 3
 Treat: 4

Starting Cash: 11,000 ¥



GHOST HUNTER

"Let's dispense with the usual posturing. We both know you would have handled this problem by conventional means if you could have. People only talk to me once they've eliminated mundane solutions to their problems, so there's no need for either of us to pretend that some other avenue is an option.

"Fortunately for you, I enjoy a challenge. And my abilities let me deal with the unusual as easily as you deal with the everyday. Let's hear your problem. Then I'll tell you just how much of a challenge I think it will be—and how much it will cost you."

Commentary

The ghost hunter is a physical adept who specializes in dealing with things of the astral: spirits, spells and paranormal critters. He may hunt down a rogue spirit or other creature that's causing trouble, or work to protect his client from some magical threat. In any case, no one should underestimate his ability to deal with problems traditionally handled by hermetics and shamans.

Attributes

Body: 4
 Quickness: 5
 Strength: 3
 Charisma: 5
 Intelligence: 4
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: 6
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 4

Skills

Firearms: 2
 Magic Theory: 3
 Sorcery (Astral Combat only): 5
 Stealth: 2
 Unarmed Combat: 5

Initiative: 4 + 2D6

Dice Pools

Combat: 7
 Magic: 5 (Astral Combat only)

Contacts

Choose (2) Contacts

Gear

Beretta 101T (w/2 clips normal ammo, 1 clip silver ammo)
 Lined Coat (4/2)
 Micro Recorder
 Portable Phone w/Earplug unit
 Tres Chic Clothing
 Wooden Stakes (2)

Adept Abilities

Astral Perception
 Increased Reflexes (1) (+1D6 Initiative)
 Improved Physical Senses (Low-Light and Thermographic Vision)
 Killing Hands (5M Physical Damage, unarmed)
 Pain Resistance (3)

Starting Cash: 14,137 ¥



TABLE OF SPELLS

NOTE: A single asterisk following a spell name indicates that the spell's description can be found in the **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, rulebook. A double asterisk indicates that the spell's description can be found in the **Grimoire, Second Edition**.

COMBAT SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Death Touch**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]S$	M	I
Fire Bolt**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Fire Cloud**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Fire Dart**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	I
Fire Missile**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Fireball**	$[(F \div 2) + 3]D$	P	I
Hellblast*	$[(F \div 2) + 6]D$	P	I
Mana Bolt*	$(F \div 2)S$	M	I
Mana Cloud**	$(F \div 2)S$	M	I
Mana Dart*	$(F \div 2)L$	M	I
Mana Missile*	$(F \div 2)M$	M	I
Manaball*	$(F \div 2)S$	P	I
Manablast**	$(F \div 2)D$	M	I
Power Bolt*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Power Dart*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]L$	P	I
Power Missile*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	I
Powerball*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Powerblast**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Ram*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Ram Touch**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]M$	P	I
Redirect	$(F \div 2)$ (Damage - 1)	P	I
Rot	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	I
Shattershield	$(F \div 2)S$	M	I
Slay (Race/Species)**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]S$	M	I
Sleep*	$[(F \div 2) - 1]S$	M	I
Spirit Bolt**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]S$	M	I
Sterilize**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Stun Bolt**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]D$	M	I
Stun Cloud**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]S$	M	I
Stun Missile**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]M$	M	I
Stun Touch**	$[(F \div 2) - 2]M$	M	I
Stunball**	$[(F \div 2) - 1]D$	M	I
Stunblast**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	M	I
Urban Renewal**	$(F \div 2)D$	P	I
Wrecker**	$(F \div 2)S$	P	I

DETECTION SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Animal Spy	$(F \div 2)L$	M	S
Analyze Device*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	S
Analyze Magic**	$(F \div 2)M$	M	S
Analyze Truth*	$(F \div 2)S$	M	S
Astral Sense	$(F \div 2)M$	M	S
Catalogue	$[(F \div 2) - 1]L$	P	I

TABLE OF SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Clairaudience*	(F ÷ 2)M	M	S
Clairaudience (Extended)**	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]S	M	S
Clairvoyance*	(F ÷ 2)M	M	S
Clairvoyance (Extended)**	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]S	M	S
Combat Sense*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]S	P	S
Detect Enemies*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	M	S
Detect Enemies (Extended)**	(F ÷ 2)S	M	S
Detect Individual*	(F ÷ 2)L	M	S
Detect Life*	(F ÷ 2)L	M	S
Detect (Life Form)*	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]L	M	S
Detect Magic**	(F ÷ 2)L	M	S
Detect (Object)*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	S
Diagnose	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]M	M	I
Enhance Aim	(F ÷ 2)S	M	S
Foretelling	(F ÷ 2)M	M	I
Mindlink (Individual)**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	M	S
Mind Probe*	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]D	M	S
Night Vision	(F ÷ 2)L	P	S
Personal Combat Sense*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	S
Translate	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	M	S
X-Ray Vision	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]S	P	S

HEALTH SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Alleviate Nuisance Allergy	(F ÷ 2)L	P	S
Alleviate Mild Allergy	(F ÷ 2)M	P	S
Alleviate Moderate Allergy	(F ÷ 2)S	P	S
Alleviate Severe Allergy	(F ÷ 2)D	P	S
Antidote L Toxin*	(F ÷ 2)L	P	P
Antidote M Toxin*	(F ÷ 2)M	P	P
Antidote S Toxin*	(F ÷ 2)S	P	P
Antidote D Toxin*	(F ÷ 2)D	P	P
Awaken	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]L	M	I
Blindness	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	M	S
Cause Nuisance Allergy	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	M	S
Cause Mild Allergy	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	M	S
Cause Moderate Allergy	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]S	M	S
Cause Severe Allergy	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	M	S
Cripple Limb	(F ÷ 2)S	M	S
Cure L Disease*	(F ÷ 2)L	P	P
Cure M Disease*	(F ÷ 2)M	P	P
Cure S Disease*	(F ÷ 2)S	P	P
Cure D Disease*	(F ÷ 2)D	P	P
Decrease -1 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	P	S
Decrease -2 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	S
Decrease -3 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]S	P	S
Decrease -4 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	P	S
Decrease -1 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]L	P	S
Decrease -2 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]M	P	S
Decrease -3 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]S	P	S
Decrease -4 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]D	P	S

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Decrease Reflexes*			
-1 Initiative Die	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]S	M	S
-2 Initiative Dice	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	M	S
-3 Initiative Dice	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]D	M	S
Detox L Toxin*	[(F ÷ 2) - 2]L	P	P
Detox M Toxin*	[(F ÷ 2) - 2]M	P	P
Detox S Toxin*	[(F ÷ 2) - 2]S	P	P
Detox D Toxin*	[(F ÷ 2) - 2]D	P	P
Fast	(F ÷ 2)L	M	P (10 turns)
Heal*	(F ÷ 2)(Wound Level)	M	P
Healthy Glow**	(F ÷ 2)L	P	P
Increase +1 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	M	S
Increase +2 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	M	S
Increase +3 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]S	M	S
Increase +4 Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	M	S
Increase +1 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]L	P	S
Increase +2 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]M	P	S
Increase +3 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]S	P	S
Increase +4 Cybered Attribute*	[(F ÷ 2) + 3]D	P	S
Increase Reflexes*			
+1 Initiative Die	(F ÷ 2)M	M	S
+2 Initiative Dice	(F ÷ 2)S	M	S
+3 Initiative Dice	(F ÷ 2)D	M	S
Intoxication	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	M	S
Nutrition	(F ÷ 2)L	M	P (15 turns)
Oxygenate**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	P	S
Paralyze	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]D	M	S
Preserve**	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	S
Prophylaxis L Pathogen**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]L	P	S
Prophylaxis M Pathogen**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	P	S
Prophylaxis S Pathogen**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]S	P	S
Prophylaxis D Pathogen**	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]D	P	S
Resist Pain (Light)**	(F ÷ 2)M	M	P
Resist Pain (Moderate)**	(F ÷ 2)S	M	P
Resist Pain (Serious)**	(F ÷ 2)D	M	P
Stabilize**	(F ÷ 2)S	P	P
Treat*	(F ÷ 2)(Wound Level)	M	P

ILLUSION SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Agonizing Pain	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	M	S
Chaff	[(F ÷ 2) - 1]S	P	S
Chaos*	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	P	S
Chaotic World*	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]S	P	S
Confusion*	(F ÷ 2)S	M	S
Crowd Scene	[(F ÷ 2) + 2]M	P	S
Disregard	(F ÷ 2)M	M	S
Dream	(F ÷ 2)L	M	S
Flare	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	I
Entertainment*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	M	S
Improved Invisibility*	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	P	S
Invisibility*	(F ÷ 2)M	M	S
Mask*	(F ÷ 2)L	M	S
Overstimulation**	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]M	M	S
Physical Mask**	[(F ÷ 2) + 1]L	P	S

TABLE OF SPELLS



Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Silence	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Spectacle**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	M	S
Stimulation*	$[(F + 2) + 1]L$	M	S
Stink*	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	M	S
Trid Entertainment**	$[(F + 2) + 2]L$	P	S
Trid Spectacle**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Vehicle Mask**	$(F + 2)L$	P	S

MANIPULATION SPELLS

Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Acid**	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Acid Bomb**	$[(F + 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Acid Stream**	$[(F + 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Alter Temperature	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Animate**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Armor*	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Astral Static**	$[(F + 2) + 1]D$	M	S
Barrier*	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Blind**	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Blade Barrier**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Blast Barrier**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Bug Barrier	$[(F + 2) + 2]D$	M	S
Bullet Barrier**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Calm Animal	$[(F + 2) + 2]L$	M	S
Catfall	$[(F + 2) + 2]L$	P	S
Clean Air	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Clean Water	$(F + 2)S$	P	P (10 turns)
Clout**	$(F + 2)M$	P	I
Compel Truth	$[(F + 2) + 2]L$	M	S
Control Actions*	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	M	S
Control Animal**	$[(F + 2) + 2]D$	M	S
Control Emotion*	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	M	S
Control Fire	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Control Thoughts*	$[(F + 2) + 2]D$	M	S
(Critter) Form**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Deflect	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	S
Extinguish Fire	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
False Memory	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	M	P (20 turns)
Fashion**	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	P
Fire Strike**	$[(F + 2) + 3]D$	P	I
Firewall	$[(F + 2) + 2]D$	P	S
Fix	$[(F + 2) + 1]M$	P	P (10 turns)
Flame Aura	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Flame Bomb*	$[(F + 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Flame Burst**	$[(F + 2) + 1]D$	P	I
Flamethrower*	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Fling	$(F + 2)M$	P	I
Freeze Water	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Gecko Crawl	$[(F + 2) + 1]M$	P	S
Glue	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Heat Shield	$[(F + 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Hibernate*	$(F + 2)S$	P	S
Ice Sheet*	$[(F + 2) + 1]S$	P	I
Ignite*	$[(F + 2) + 2]D$	P	P
Influence**	$[(F + 2) + 2]S$	M	P



Name	Drain	Type	Duration
Levitate Item*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]L$	P	S
Levitate Person*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	S
Light*	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Light Ray	$[(F \div 2) + 1]D$	M	I
Lock**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Magic Fingers*	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Makeover**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	P	P
Mana Barrier*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	M	S
Mental Shield	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	M	S
Mist	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Mob Mind**	$[(F \div 2) + 3]S$	M	S
Mob Mood**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	M	S
Net	$[(F \div 2) + 2]D$	P	S
Poltergeist*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	S
Possession	$[(F \div 2) + 3]S$	M	S
Sap Strength	$(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Shadow*	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	P	S
Shape Earth	$[(F \div 2) + 2]D$	P	S
Shape Water	$[(F \div 2) + 2]D$	P	S
Seal**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Shapechange**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Smoke Cloud	$[(F \div 2) + 3]D$	P	S
Spark*	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	S
Spell Barrier**	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	M	S
Spirit Barrier	$[(F \div 2) + 2]M$	M	S
Temper	$[(F \div 2) + 1]M$	P	S
Terrorize	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	M	S
Thunderclap**	$(F \div 2)S$	P	I
Transform**	$[(F \div 2) + 2]S$	P	S
Use (Skill)**	$[(F \div 2) + 3]L$	P	S
Wind	$[(F \div 2) + 1]S$	P	I

TOTEM TABLE

NOTE: This table provides a listing for all published **Shadowrun** totems. For totem Characteristics and more complete information about each totem's Disadvantages, refer to the source listed with each entry.

Agwe (Loa)

Manifestation: When mounted, the shaman must splash himself or immerse himself in water. Agwe remains only as long as shaman is wet, and may spontaneously mount followers in danger in or on the sea.

Malt Tete: +2 dice for illusion spells; +2 dice for banishing water spirits

Gifts: Increases shaman's Body and Charisma, Swimming Skill and all Social skills.

Source: p. 122, **Awakenings**

Azaca (Loa)

Manifestation: To force the loa to follow his carefully laid plans and strategies, the shaman must make a successful Willpower Test.

Malt Tete: +2 dice for health spells; +2 dice for banishing Spirits of the Land

Gifts: Increases shaman's Quickness and Body, Stealth Skill and all skills related to plant life, woodcraft or agriculture.

Source: p. 122, **Awakenings**

Bear

Favored Environment: Forest

Advantages: +2 dice for all health spells; +2 dice for conjuring forest spirits

Disadvantages: If injured, a Bear shaman must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number 3. On 2 or fewer successes, the shaman goes berserk. For 3 turns, reduced by number of successes rolled, the shaman attacks the closest living target, using his most powerful physical or magical weapon. Effect ends after 3 turns or if the shaman kills or incapacitates an enemy.

Source: p. 120, **Shadowrun, Second Edition**

Boar

Favored Environment: Sacred sites, thick forests of Tír na nÓg

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells, +1 service from any spirit summoned for combat purposes

Disadvantages: -2 dice when resisting illusion spells. When territory is invaded, shaman attacks without warning and refuses to let up, even when outnumbered.

Source: p. 148, **Tír na nÓg**

Bull

Favored Environment: Countryside of Tír na nÓg

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells; +1 for combat and detection spells

Disadvantages: Shaman must have Charisma Rating of 4 or greater. Must avenge insults and cannot support causes he knows or believes are unjust.

Source: p. 148, **Tír na nÓg**

Cat

Favored Environment: Urban

Advantages: +2 dice for illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring city spirits

Disadvantages: Only when not wounded, Cat shamans must make Willpower (6) Tests when casting combat spells. If the test fails, the shaman casts the least damaging of her combat spells. Also, +1 target modifier whenever the shaman is wounded, dirty or unkempt.

Source: p. 120, **Shadowrun, Second Edition**

Coyote

Favored Environment: Anywhere on land

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: None

Source: p. 120, **Shadowrun, Second Edition**

Creator

Favored Environment: Small cities or woods

Advantages: +2 dice or enchantments; +1 die for conjuring hearth and city spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die when casting combat spells. When confronted with an unusual or unique item, the shaman must make a Willpower (4) Test. If the test fails, he immediately moves into astral space to examine the object for a number of turns equal to 3 minus the number of successes rolled.

Source: p. 149, **Germany Sourcebook**

Damballah Wedo (Loa)

Manifestation: When mounted, the shaman acts like a snake, and must make a successful Willpower Test for his speech to be understood.

Malt Tete: +2 dice for detection spells; +2 dice for banishing Spirits of the Air

Gifts: Increases shaman's Intelligence and all Knowledge skills.

Source: p. 122, **Awakenings**

Dog**Favored Environment:** Urban**Advantages:** +2 dice for detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring field and hearth spirits**Disadvantages:** Any time the shaman changes plans, he must spend a Complex Action and make a successful Willpower (4) Test.**Source:** p. 120, *Shadowrun, Second Edition***Dragonslayer****Favored Environment:** Any dry land**Advantages:** +3 dice for combat spells; +1 dice for conjuring hearth spirits**Disadvantages:** -2 dice when resisting combat spells; -1 die when resisting perception-related or illusion spells.**Source:** p. 149, *Germany Sourcebook***Eagle****Favored Environment:** Mountains**Advantages:** +2 dice for detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring wind spirits**Disadvantages:** Double all Essence losses caused by cyberware.**Source:** p. 120, *Shadowrun, Second Edition***Erzulle (Loa)****Manifestation:** The shaman becomes sensual and charming, possessing great passion and charisma. The shaman wears fine clothes, perfume and jewelry when mounted.**Mait Tete:** +2 dice for detection and illusion spells**Gifts:** Increases shaman's Charisma and Etiquette, Negotiation and Psychology skills.**Source:** p. 122, *Awakenings***Firebringer****Favored Environment:** Urban**Advantages:** +2 dice for detection and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of Man**Disadvantages:** -1 die for illusion spells.**Source:** p. 109, *Awakenings***Gargoyle****Favored Environment:** Urban**Advantages:** +1 die for detection and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring city spirits**Disadvantages:** -1 die for conjuring Spirits of the Waters. Shamans must live in a skyscraper or castle-like structure, which usually requires a High or Luxury lifestyle.**Source:** p. 105, *Awakenings***Gator****Favored Environment:** Swamps, rivers, sewers**Advantages:** +2 dice for combat and detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring spirits of the swamp, lake, or river (if wilderness totem is chosen) or city spirits (if urban totem is chosen)**Disadvantages:** -1 die for illusion spells. Breaking off a fight, chase or other direct action requires a successful Willpower (6) Test.**Source:** p. 121, *Shadowrun, Second Edition***Gecko****Favored Environment:** Anywhere**Advantages:** +2 dice for manipulation or illusion spells; +1 die for resisting the effects of poison**Disadvantages:** -1 die for combat spells**Source:** p. 78, *Paradise Lost***Ghede (Loa)****Manifestation:** The shaman displays a sly cleverness and wicked sense of humor. While mounted, the shaman must make a successful Willpower Test to resist an offer of food or drink.**Mait Tete:** +2 dice for casting health and manipulation spells**Gifts:** Increases shaman's Intelligence and Biotech and Negotiation skills. The shaman is immune to the effects of pain, gaining a point of Pain Resistance equal to the manifestation's Force (as the physical adept power; see p. 126, **SRII**) and the effects of intoxication, though poisons or pathogens may still affect him.

The shaman suffers a penalty to all Etiquette Test target numbers equal to the loa's Force unless he makes a successful Willpower Test. Reduce the penalty by 1 for each success achieved in the Willpower Test.

Source: p. 123, *Awakenings***Goose (Nene)****Favored Environment:** Volcanic mountains**Advantages:** +1 die for combat spells; +3 dice for conjuring mountain spirits**Disadvantages:** +2 target modifier for all tests made when not on the Hawai'ian Islands.**Source:** p. 78, *Paradise Lost***Goose****Favored Environment:** Open fields, parks**Advantages:** +2 dice for detection spells; +1 die for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring wind spirits (wilderness totem); +2 dice for conjuring**Disadvantages:** +1 penalty on all Surprise Tests.**Source:** p. 104, *Corporate Security Handbook***Great Mother****Favored Environment:** Everywhere**Advantages:** +2 dice for all health spells; +2 dice for conjuring all field and forest spirits and Spirits of the Waters**Disadvantages:** -2 dice for all tests made in the presence of corruption.**Source:** p. 149, *Germany Sourcebook***Griffin****Favored Environment:** Mountains**Advantages:** +2 dice for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Sky**Disadvantages:** Any time the shaman is insulted or defended, he must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number of 4 to avoid becoming enraged. If the shaman rolls 2 or fewer successes, the test fails and the shaman flies into

a berserk rage. For 3 turns, the shaman attacks the offender using his most powerful physical or magical weapon. The rage ends after 3 turns or as soon as the target is killed or incapacitated. In combat, the shaman will declare an attack against 1 opponent (the most powerful target he faces) and battle that opponent until the target is killed or incapacitated. If someone steps into the battle to help the shaman, the shaman must make the Willpower Test above to avoid becoming enraged at the insult.

Source: p. 106, **Awakenings**

Horned God

Favored Environment: Any dry ground

Advantages: +2 dice for all combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring all Spirits of the Land

Disadvantages: If in the vicinity of a fight, the shaman must make a successful Willpower (6) Test to resist the urge to join in. Any time he meets an attractive member of the opposite sex, the shaman must make a Willpower Test against a target number equal to 10 minus the individual's Charisma. If the test fails, the shaman constantly tries to impress the individual.

Source: p. 150, **Germany Sourcebook**

Horse

Favored Environment: Farmland, light woodland, rural areas near forests

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells; use of the critter power Enhanced Movement (3 times per day)

Disadvantages: -1 die to resist combat or illusion spells

Source: p. 148, **Tir na nÓg**

Iguana

Favored Environment: Desert, forest or mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells; +2 dice for conjuring desert spirits

Disadvantages: +2 target modifier when in close quarters. When imprisoned or trapped in a confined place with no direct view of the sky, the shaman must make a Willpower (6) Test. On 2 or fewer successes, he enters a berserk panic for 3 turns, minus 1 turn for every success rolled.

Source: p. 174, **Aztlan**

Jaguar

Favored Environment: Jungle

Advantages: +2 dice for conjuring jungle spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for health spells

Source: p. 174, **Aztlan**

Legba (Loa)

Manifestation: Reduce the shaman's Movement to 1 meter per Combat Phase.

Malt Tete: +2 dice for detection and manipulation spells

Gifts: Increases shaman's Charisma and Social and Knowledge skills.

Source: p. 123, **Awakenings**

Leviathan

Favored Environment: On or near the sea

Advantages: +1 die for health and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for casting and detecting illusion spells. Another character must convince the shaman to act when needed by achieving the highest net successes in an opposed test. The character makes a Charisma (or Negotiation or Etiquette (Magical)) Test against the shaman's unmodified Intelligence. The shaman makes an unmodified Intelligence Test against the Charisma of the character trying to convince him to act. If the character achieves the highest net successes, the shaman acts, but if the situation changes the character must re-convince the shaman to take a new action.

If the shaman has the highest net successes, he will not agree to act. Add 1 to the target number for any further attempts to convince the shaman to take action. If the shaman agrees to act only on the second or subsequent attempt to convince him, modify all the shaman's Initiative rolls by -2.

Source: p. 106, **Awakenings**

Lion

Favored Environment: Prairie

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring prairie spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for health spells

Source: p. 121, **Shadowrun, Second Edition**

Loco and Ayizan (Loa)

Manifestation: Their mounting of the shaman is so subtle that it is difficult to see until the shaman speaks or acts.

Malt Tete: +2 for detection spells (Loco), +2 for health spells (Ayizan); +2 dice for conjuring other loa (both)

Gifts: Increases shaman's Magical Theory Skill (Loco), Biotech Skill (Ayizan), Psychology, Sociology and Etiquette skills (both). Reduce target number by 2 for all Willpower Tests shaman makes to act independently.

Source: p. 123, **Awakenings**

Moon

Favored Environment: Wild places, far from civilization, or hidden corners in cities

Advantages: +2 dice for manipulation and illusion spells; +1 die for detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring water spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for combat spells. Successful Willpower (4) Test required for direct confrontation.

Source: p. 28, **Grimoire, Second Edition**

Moon Maiden

Favored Environment: Everywhere

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: None

Source: p. 150, **Germany Sourcebook**

Oak

Favored Environment: Deep forests, sacred groves, and towns built of oak

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells; +2 dice to conjure forest spirits and Spirits of Man in structures constructed wholly or partially of oak

Disadvantages: Shaman must possess Strength and Body attributes of 4 or higher.

Source: p. 28, *Grimoire, Second Edition*

Ogoun (Loa)

Manifestation: The shaman carries a sword and generally acts like a soldier.

Malt Tete: +2 dice for combat and health spells

Gifts: Increases Strength, Reaction and Combat skills. The shaman gains (magical) Impact armor equal to the loa's Force.

Source: p. 123, *Awakenings*

Owl

Favored Environment: Any urban or wilderness location

Advantages: +2 dice for any sorcery or conjuring by night

Disadvantages: +2 to all target numbers when in direct sunlight; +2 to all target numbers for magic during daylight hours.

Source: p. 121, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Pegasus

Favored Environment: Rural area under open sky

Advantages: +1 die to detection and health spells; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Sky

Disadvantages: See source text.

Source: p. 106, *Awakenings*

Phoenix

Favored Environment: Desert and fields.

Advantages: +1 die for health and illusion spells, can conjure spirits of the Great Fiery Firmament (see source text).

Disadvantages: Charisma of 4 or greater at character creation.

Source: p. 107, *Awakenings*

Plumed Serpent

Favored Environment: Anywhere within Aztlan

Advantages: +2 dice for any information-gathering spell

Disadvantages: -2 dice for any magical activity outside Aztlan's territorial borders

Source: p. 175, *Aztlan*

Prairie Dog

Favored Environment: Any environment except water

Advantages: +2 dice for detection spells; +1 die for illusion spells; Also, Fire-Bringer shamans devote themselves to the betterment of others even at the expense of their own welfare. +1 die for Charisma Tests; +2 dice for conjuring Spirits of the Land

Disadvantages: -2 dice for combat spells.

Source: p. 109, *Awakenings*

Puma

Favored Environment: Any wilderness location except deserts

Advantages: +2 dice for illusion spells

Disadvantages: +2 target modifier for magic tests when in direct sunlight or crowds.

Source: p. 175, *Aztlan*

Raccoon

Favored Environment: Anywhere but the desert

Advantages: +2 dice for manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring city spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for combat spells

Source: p. 121, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Rat

Favored Environment: Urban

Advantages: +2 dice for detection and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring all Spirits of Man

Disadvantages: -1 die for combat spells.

Source: p. 121, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Raven

Favored Environment: Anywhere under the open sky

Advantages: +2 dice for manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring wind spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for combat spells. When not under open sky, +1 to all target numbers.

Source: p. 122, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Sea

Favored Environment: On or near bodies of saltwater

Advantages: +2 dice for health and transformation manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring saltwater spirits and ship spirits (hearth spirits)

Disadvantages: If insulted, shaman must make a Willpower (4) Test to avoid flying into a rage. If enraged, the shaman may yell, insult, threaten or even attack offender. Effect lasts 4 Combat Turns, reduced by 1 turn for every 2 successes achieved in a Willpower Test.

Source: p. 28, *Grimoire, Second Edition*

Serpent

Favored Environment: Mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for health and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring mountain spirits

Disadvantages: If engaged in combat or other ongoing activity, the shaman must make a Willpower (6) Test to quit and do something else. Shaman must sleep an average of 70 hours per week.

Source: p. 149, *Tír na nÓg*

Shark

Favored Environment: On or by the sea

Advantages: +2 dice for combat and detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea spirits

Disadvantages: If wounded in combat or after killing a target, shaman must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number 4. On 2 or fewer successes, shaman goes berderk. For 3 turns, reduced by number of successes, the shaman attacks the closest living target, using his most powerful physical or magical weapon.

Source: p. 122, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Snake

Favored Environment: Anywhere except mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for health, illusion, and detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring any one Spirit of the Land (shaman's choice, wilderness totem only); +2 dice for conjuring any one Spirit of Man (shaman's choice, urban totem only)

Disadvantages: -1 die for combat spells.

Source: p. 122, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Spider

Favored Environment: Quiet, dark places where few seldom look

Advantages: +2 dice for illusion spells; +1 die for conjuring spells

Disadvantages: +2 target modifier for magic tests made in open areas. +1 target modifier when shaman does not have time to consider a situation (gamemaster discretion).

Source: p. 144, *Bug City*

Stag

Favored Environment: Anywhere in rural Tir na nÓg. Prefers thick forests, but travels widely

Advantages: +2 dice for health spells; +1 die for illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring forest spirits; -1 to all target numbers for tests involving communication with and reactions from sentient animals

Disadvantages: -1 die for Spell Resistance Tests made against manipulation spells.

Source: p. 149, *Tir na nÓg*

Sun

Favored Environment: Anywhere, but commonly in open places such as hills, fields and farming villages

Advantages: +2 dice for combat, health and detection spells; +2 dice for conjuring any spirit in direct sunlight

Disadvantages: +2 target modifier when conjuring any spirit at night. Shaman must possess a Charisma Attribute of 4 or higher.

Source: p. 29, *Grimoire, Second Edition*

Turtle

Favored Environment: On or near the sea

Advantages: +2 dice for illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea spirits

Disadvantages: -2 dice for combat spells

Source: p. 78, *Paradise Lost*

Whale

Favored Environment: On or near the sea

Advantages: +2 dice for combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring sea spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die for illusion spells.

Source: p. 78, *Paradise Lost*

Wild Huntsman

Favored Environment: Woods, mountains, heath

Advantages: +2 dice for perception and illusion spells; +2 dice for conjuring storm spirits

Disadvantages: When faced with a setback, the shaman must make a Willpower (4) Test. If the test fails, the shaman goes berserk for a number of turns equal to 3 minus the number of successes rolled. The gamemaster controls the character, who may engage in senseless babbling, attacks on friends or imaginary foes, or sudden jaunts into astral space.

Source: p. 150, *Germany Sourcebook*

Wildcat

Favored Environment: Anywhere in the British Wild Lands except Cornwall

Advantages: +2 dice for combat and health spells; +2 dice for conjuring any nature spirit during hours of darkness

Disadvantages: -1 die for Spell Resistance Tests made against illusion spells.

Source: p. 29, *Grimoire, Second Edition*

Wolf

Favored Environment: Forest, prairie, or mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for detection and combat spells; +2 dice for conjuring forest or prairie spirits (shaman's choice)

Disadvantages: If injured, the shaman must make a Willpower Test against an injury-modified Target Number 3. On 2 or fewer successes, the shaman goes berserk. For 3 turns, reduced by number of successes rolled, the shaman attacks the closest living target, using his most powerful physical or magical weapon. Effect ends after 3 turns or if the shaman kills or incapacitates an enemy.

Source: p. 122, *Shadowrun, Second Edition*

Wyrn

Favored Environment: Mountains

Advantages: +2 dice for health and manipulation spells; +2 dice for conjuring mountain spirits

Disadvantages: If engaged in combat or any ongoing activity, the shaman must make a successful Willpower (6) Test to quit.

Source: p. 29, *Grimoire, Second Edition*

PHYSICAL ADEPT POWER TABLE

Power	Cost	Source
Astral Perception	2	SRII , p. 125
Attribute Boost	.5/level	Grimoire II , p. 34
Blind Fighting	.5	Awakenings , p. 115
Body Control	.5/level	Grimoire II , p. 34
Combat Sense	Variable	SRII , p. 125
Counterstrike	.5/level	Awakenings , p. 115
Delay Damage	1	Awakenings , p. 115
Distance Strike	2	Awakenings , p. 116
Empathic Sense	.5	Awakenings , p. 116
Enhanced Centering	2	Grimoire II , p. 34
Enhanced Coordination	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 116
Enhanced Perception	Variable	Corporate Security , p. 104
Flexibility	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 116
Freefall	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 116
Improved Ability	Variable	SRII , p. 125
Improved Physical Attributes	Variable	SRII , p. 125
Improved Physical Senses	.25 each	SRII , p. 125, Awakenings , p. 116
Increased Reaction	Variable	SRII , p. 126
Increased Reflexes	Variable	SRII , p. 126
Iron Will	.5/level	Awakenings , p. 117
Killing Hands	Variable	SRII , p. 126
Magic Resistance	1/level	Awakenings , p. 117
Magic Sense	.5	Awakenings , p. 117
Missile Mastery	1	Awakenings , p. 117
Missile Parry	1	Grimoire II , p. 34
Missile Parry (Extended)	1.5	Corporate Security , p. 105
Mystic Armor	1/level	Grimoire II , p. 24
Nerve Strike	1	Awakenings , p. 117
Pain Resistance	.5/level	SRII , p. 126
Quick Draw	.5	Awakenings , p. 117
Quick Strike	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 118
Rapid Healing	.5/level	Awakenings , p. 118
Rooting	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 118
Sixth Sense	.5	Awakenings , p. 118
Smashing Blow	1	Awakenings , p. 118
Spell Shroud	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 119
Suspended State	1	Grimoire II , p. 34
Temperature Tolerance	.25/level	Awakenings , p. 119
Traceless Walk	.5	Awakenings , p. 119

MAGICAL EQUIPMENT TABLE



FOCI

	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Specific Spell Focus	4/48 hrs	Rating x 45,000¥	2
Spell Type Focus	5/48 hrs	Rating x 75,000¥	2
Spirit Focus	4/48 hrs	Rating x 60,000¥	2
Power Focus	6/72 hrs	Rating x 105,000¥	2
Spell Lock	2/48 hrs	45,000¥	2
Weapon Foci	8/72 hrs	[(Reach +1) x 100,000¥] + Rating x 90,000¥	3

MAGICAL SUPPLIES

	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Elemental Conjunction Materials	(Force)/24 hrs	Force x 1,000¥	1
Medicine Lodge Materials	(Rating)/24 hrs	Rating x 500¥	1
Honfour Materials	(Rating)/24 hrs	Rating x 500¥	1
Fetish Focus	3/26 hrs	Rating x 3,000¥	1
Ally Conjuring Material	(Force)/36 hrs	1,000 per unit	1
Ward Casting Materials	(Force)/36 hrs	1,000 per unit	1
Watcher Casting Materials	(Force)/36 hrs	1,000 per unit	1

Expendable Fetishes

Combat	2/24 hrs	20¥	1
Detection	2/24 hrs	5¥	1
Healing	2/24 hrs	50¥	1
Illusion	2/24 hrs	10¥	1
Manipulation	2/24 hrs	30¥	1

Hermetic Library (any magic skill)

Computer Media (disk)	(Rating)/7 days	(Rating x Rating) x 1,000¥	2
Chip	(Rating)/7 days	(Rating x Rating) x 1,200¥	2
Hardcopy	(Rating)/14 days	(Rating x Rating) x 2,000¥	3



Reusable Fetishes

Combat	3/24 hrs	200¥	1
Detection	3/24 hrs	50¥	1
Healing	3/24 hrs	500¥	1
Illusion	3/24 hrs	100¥	1
Manipulation	3/24 hrs	300¥	1

Ritual Sorcery Materials

Detection	3/24 hrs	100¥ x spell Force	1
Healing	3/24 hrs	500¥ x spell Force	1
Illusion	3/24 hrs	100¥ x spell Force	1
Manipulation	3/24 hrs	1,000¥ x spell Force	1

Enchanting Material Costs (in nuyen)

Material	Raw Form	Refined Form	Radical Form
Herbals	50	100	200
Crystals	100	200	400
Semi-Precious Gems	200	400	800
Precious Gems	500	1,000	2,000
Iron	50	100	200
Copper	100	200	400
Silver	300	600	1,200
Gold	10,000	20,000	40,000
Mercury	600	1,200	2,400
Tin	30	60	120
Lead	30	60	120

Orichalcum: 88,000 per unit

Spell Formulas

Drain Level	Price
L	50¥ x Force
S	500¥ x Force
M	100¥ x Force
D	1,000¥ x Force

A

Adepts
 adopting geas, 54–55
 centering skills of, 55–56
 initiation, 55–56
 masking, 56
 metamagic and, 55–56
 ordeals and, 55
 powers of, 48, 50, 54
 rules, 110–19
 training of, 50–51
 types of, 48, 56–57
 use of foci, 56
 Way of, 51–54

Agwe, 61, 65, 122
 Alarm wards, 101
 Alchemy, 95
 Animal power tradition, 54
Archetypes
 ghost hunter, 145
 houngan, 142
 street sorcerer, 144
 street warrior, 143

Artificing, 95
 Artist adepts, 52
 Asceticism ordeal, 113
 Aspected power, 104
 Assensing, 22, 40–41, 45
 cyberware, 97
 detection of, 97

Astral
 adepts, 110
 awareness, 48
 concentration, 96
 containment device, 36
 form spirits, 31
 patrol cops, 77
 perception, 40–41
 plane, 8, 9
 projection, 24
 quest, 114, 125
 specialization, 96
 stealth, 97
 zombie, 65

Astral space, 9, 17
 energy of, 8
 seeing into, 20
 summoning spirits from, 10

Athlete adepts, 51, 52
 Athletic skill, 114–15
 Attuned wards, 100–101
 Aura, 40–41
 masking, 56
 reading skill, 96–97

Aylzan, 63, 123
 Azaca, 61, 122
 Aztechnology, 78–79

B

Background count
 rules, 103–4
 temporary, 104

Banishing, 94, 124
 Banshee, 89
 Baron Samedi. *See* Ghede
Barrier
 rating, 118
 spells, 75, 139

Basilisk, 35
 Beat cops, 75–77
 Betamphetamines, 34
 Biochemical zombies, 129
 Bioware, 97
 Bocor, 66, 69, 130

Bought loa, 65, 124
 Bound elemental, 33
 Bridges, 9, 34

C

Carrefour. *See* Legba
Centering
 focus, 103
 physical adepts and, 114
 physical magicians and, 119
 skill, 55–56, 100, 103

Chant, 55
 City spirits, 32, 74
 Clairvoyance, 22
 Cleansing, 100
Combat mages
 of Lone Star, 70–74
 spellcasting concentration, 96

Combat sense, 28, 75
 Combat spells, 28–29, 133–34
 Concealment wards, 101
Concentrations, 20
 athletic skill, 114–15
 conjuring skill, 94–95
 enchanting skill, 95
 magical theory skill, 94
 sorcery skill, 96

Condition geas, 112
Conjuring
 skill, 94–95, 126–27
 test, 124

Controlling
 concentration, 94–95
 specialization, 94–95

Control manipulation spells, 137–38
Cops
 astral patrol, 77
 protection for, 75
 spirits and, 75–77

Corporate magicians, 77–81
 Corps cadavre, 68, 130
 Cultivator of Life. *See* Azaca
 Cults, 10
 Cybermancy, 36–37
 Cybermantic rituals, 36–37
 Cyberware, assensing, 97

D

Damballah, 61–62, 122
 Dark Abyss. *See* Ghede
 Deed ordeal, 113
 Desensitization, 21
 Detection spells, 134–35
 Dispelling, 100
 Divine Sun. *See* Legba
 DocWagon, 33, 34
 Domains, 102
 geas, 112
 of nature spirits, 32
 overlap, 32

Drain code, 127
 Drugs, magicians and, 34
 Druids, 16–17
 Dzoo-noo-qua, 89–90

E

Electromagnetic energy, 22–23
 Elemental effects, 132–33
 Elemental spirits, 32–33
 bound, 33
 escape from, 33
 mages treatment of, 15

Enchanters, 56

Enchanting
 skill, 95
 test, 100, 127–28

Energy pattern, 22–23
 Erzulie, 61, 62, 122–23
 Escape artist special skill, 114–15
 Etiquette skill, 96
 Exorcism, 24

F

Familiar ordeal, 113
 Fasting geas, 112
 Fat airborne bacteria (FAB), 36, 44
 Fetishes, 66, 128
 Fiber-optic networks, 36
 Fingerprint, 22
 Fire-Bringer totem, 109
 Fire elemental, 32
 Firefly spirits, 87
 Foci, 30–31
 addiction to, 30, 103
 adepts and, 56
 astral form spirits and, 31
 definition of, 10
 houngans and, 128–29
 loa, 128
 physical adepts and, 114
 physical magicians and, 119
 rules, 103
 spirit, 128–29
 wards and, 101

Focus blocking, 100
 Forensic magic, 96
 Foveae, 91
 Free spirits, 65, 95
 Fuchi, magical security of, 80–81

G

Gargoyle totem, 105–6
 Geas, 54–55
 as ordeal, 113
 removal of, 114
 rules, 112–13

Genetic manipulation, 42
 Ge-Rouge. *See* Erzulie
 Gesture geas, 112
 Ghede, 62–63, 123
 Ghosts, 82–83
 Gifts from loa, 122–24
 God of the Crossroads. *See* Legba
 God of Fire. *See* Ogoun
 Govi, 65, 127–28
 Great Good Sky Father. *See* Damballah
 Griffin totem, 106
 Guinee, 65, 66, 125, 129

H

Healing spells, 33–35
Health
 spells, 135–36
 spirit, 32

Hellhounds, 35
 dual nature of, 42
 magical powers of, 40–47
 magical tactics against, 79–80

Hermetic tradition, 10
 elemental spirits of, 32–33
 view of magic, 14

Hive-based insect spirit, 86, 87
 Honfours, 65, 66, 126
 Houngans, 60
 abilities of, 126–28
 archetypes, 142
 conjuring, 126–27

dismounting, 124–25
 honfours, 126
 loa, 63–65, 68
 metamagic and, 126
 mounted, 124
 rules, 126–28
 sorcery and, 126
 spirit journey, 66
 spirit quest, 65
 unwilling possession and, 131

Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV), 87–89

I

Idols, 17
 Illusion, 17–18
 Incantation geas, 112
 Initiation, 14
 of adepts, 55–56
 of physical adepts, 113–14

Inner Magic, 48
 Insect shamans, 85–87
 Insect spirits, 85–87
 categories of, 86
 forms, 86

Invisible Way, 52
 Iron Warrior. *See* Ogoun

J-K

Jaguar Guards, 81
 Junk occultism, 15
 Karma, 125, 126
 Kata, 55
 Keeper of the Soil. *See* Azaca
 Kiai, 56
 Kuji-kiri, 56

L

Ladybug spirits, 87
 Land Beneath the Sea. *See* Guinee
 Legba, 62, 65, 123
 Leopard Guards, 81
 Leviathan totem, 106
 Light effect, 132–33
 Living restraints, 36
 Living wall, 44

Loa
 achete, 65, 124
 calling, 63–65, 124–25
 contacting new, 125–26
 damage to, 124
 feeding of, 125
 foci, 128
 gifts, 123–24
 major, 61–63
 minor, 65
 mounts, 60
 possession by, 131
 roleplaying, 130–31
 rules, 120–26
 travail, 65
 wisdom of, 131
 zombie, 68, 130

Loco, 63, 123
 Lone Star
 astral patrol cops of, 77
 combat mages of, 70–74
 magical backup, 77
 physical adepts of, 74–75
 regular cops of, 75–77

Lord of Resurrection. *See* Ghede
 Lord of Thunder. *See* Ogoun

M

Mages, 9
ways of, 12–15

Magic, 9–10
attribute, 103
and healing, 33–35
loss of, 99
points, 115
pool, 96
religion and, 23–25, 105
tradition. *See* Tradition
views of, 21–25

Magical creatures, 42

Magical energy. *See* Mana

Magical groups
rules for, 113

Magical items. *See* Foci

Magical security
at Aztechnology, 78–79
at Fuchi, 80–81
at Renraku, 78, 80–81
at Saeder-Krupp, 79–80

Magical skills, 93
loss of, 99
mundanes and, 94–96
rules for, 93–97
skill defaults, 93

Magical theory skill, 94

Magical threats, 83–91

Magic attribute points, 119

Magic attribute rating
spell signature alteration and, 98–99
stim patches and, 99

Magician
burn out of, 25
corporate, 77–81
damage to, 26, 33
drug use and, 34
foci addiction, 30, 103
healing of, 34–35
limits of, 25
medical treatment of, 34–35
physical, 119
risks, 46
spell signature, 97–99
tradition of. *See* Tradition

Mait tete, 65, 122–23

Mana lines, 103

Manifestation of loa, 122–23

Manifest spirits, 31, 101

Mantid spirits, 87

Masking
adepts and, 56, 114
spells, 29
ward, 101

Master of the Crossroads. *See* Legba

Meditation, 56

Meditation ordeal, 113

Metamagic
houngan and, 126
physical adepts and, 114
rules, 99–100
use of, 55–56

Metaplanes, 14

Miracles, 23–25

Mistress of Love. *See* Erzulle

Mystic adepts, 53

N

Native American Nations (NAN)
adept discovery in, 50
totems of, 54
use of physical adepts, 52

Nature spirits, 14, 31–32

domains of, 32, 102
escape from, 32, 76
rules, 102

O

Oath ordeal, 113

Ogoun, 61, 63, 65, 123

Opener of the Way. *See* Legba

Ordeals, 55, 113–14

Otonin ritual, 81–82

Out-of-body experiences, 40, 42

P

Paladins, 82

Parallel universe, 8

Paranormal animal totems, 105–7

Paranormal guard animals, 35–36, 79–80

Parapsychology, 94

Pegasus totem, 106–7

Petro rite, 60, 67–69, 122–23
bocors in, 66
rules, 129–30
zombies in, 67–68

Phoenix totem, 107

Physical adepts, 48
astral combat specialization, 96
foci, 114
geas, 112–13
initiation of, 113–14
magical groups, 113
metamagic and, 114
powers, 115–19
skills, 114–15
spells against, 74–75
spirits against, 74–75
use of, 51–52

Physical magicians, 56–57, 119

Plasmas, 35

Power
centering of, 14
sites, 103–4

Prairie Dog totem, 108–9

Protector of the Cosmic Void. *See* Ghede

Psionics, 22–23, 104–5

Psi power, 23

Psychics, 22–23

Psychometry, 96–97

Q-R

Queen spirits, 87

Rada rite, 60

Reflective shielding, 99–100

Religion-based magic, 23–25, 105

Renraku, magical security of, 78, 80–81

Ritual, 96
cybermantic, 36–37
magic, 8, 9

River spirit, 14, 32

Ruler of the Sea. *See* Agwe

Runes, 15

S

Sacred circle, 16–17

Sacrifice geas, 112

Saeder-Krupp, magical security of, 79–80

Serviteur, 64
rules, 126
unwilling possession and, 131

Shamanic physical adepts, 54, 110, 112

Shamanic tradition, 9–10
nature spirits of, 31–32

Shamans

domains and, 32

Insect, 85–87
and nature spirits, 32
spirit treatment by, 15
totems, 16, 17
toxic, 83–85
ways of, 12–15

Shapeshifters, 90**Shielding, 99–100****Skill**

defaults, 93
magical, 93–97
web, 93, 94

Solitary insect spirit, 86, 87

Sorcery, 66–67
skill, 95–96, 98, 126
test, 100

Specializations, 94–96

Spellcasting, 96

Spells, 26, 28
category, 96
combat, 133–34
countering, 30
defense, 96
design, 94
detection, 134–35
enhancing, 15
health, 135–36
illusion, 136–37
mana, 28–30
manipulation, 137–41
physical, 28
physical adepts and, 74–75
rules, 133–41

Spell signature

alteration of, 98–99
identification of, 98
observation of, 97–98
rules, 97–99

Spell-throwing, 23**Spirit foci, 128–29****Spirits, 10, 31**

astral form, 31
combat, 24, 101–2
of death, 33
elemental, 32–33
flights of, 24
insect, 85–87
manifest, 31, 75, 101
nature. *See* Nature spirits
physical adepts and, 74–75
psychics view of, 23
rules, 101–2
shamans treatment of, 15
toxic, 83–85
types of, 31, 94–95

Spirit warriors, 54

Spirit Way, 53, 55

Stealth skill, 97

Stim patches, 99

Street magic, 19–21

Street spirit, 32

Strobe units, 35

Summoning, 94

T

Talisman geas, 112

Talismongering, 95

Temples, 66

Thesis, 113

Threats
banshee, 89
dzoo-noo-qua, 89–90

fovae, 91
insect spirits/shamans, 85–87
shapeshifters, 90
toxic spirits/shamans, 83–85
vampires, 87–89
wendigos, 89
werewolves, 90

Throwing skill, 117**Time geas, 112–13**

Totems, 10, 16, 17, 54
creation of, 107–9
insect, 85–86
paranormal animal, 105–7
toxic, 85

Toxic shamans, 83–85**Toxic spirits, 83–85****Tradition, 9, 12–14**

concentration, 94
psionics, 104–5
rules, 104–5
self-created, 105
specialization, 94
unorthodox, 21–25
Voudoun. *See* Voudoun

Training, 20–21, 50–51**Tribal mystics, 54****True zombie, 67****Twisted Way, 54****U****Unarmed combat skill, 117****Unicorn totem, 107****Unwilling possession, 131****V****Vampires, 87–89****Vision quest, 114****Voodoo doll, 66****Voudoun, 4, 58–60**

bocor, 66, 130
foci, 128–29
glossary, 69
Guinee, 66, 129
honfour, 66
houngan abilities, 126–28
loa, 60–65, 120–26
Petro rite. *See* Petro rite
rules, 120–31
serviteurs, 126
sorcery, 66–67
temples of, 66

W**Ward, 43****and foci, 101****rules for, 100–101****Warrior adepts, 51–52****Watcher spirits, 41, 46, 127****Water elemental, 14, 32****Way, 51****of the Animal Powers, 54****of the Artist, 52****of the Athlete, 52****of the Warrior, 51–52****Wendigos, 89****Werewolf, 90****Witches, 17****Work loa, 65****govi for, 127–28****Z****Zombie, 67, 69, 129–30****creation of, 130****powder, 129–30**

AWAKENINGS™

NEW MAGIC IN 2057

"Used to be, magic was pretty simple. Well, OK, not simple exactly ... but you knew where people stood with it. A magician was either the guy in the robes with the formulas or the guy summoning spirits in the wild with the bearskin and the rattle.

"Now the guy next door to me says he's a houn-gan practicing some mojo called voodoo. The kid down the block slings his juju based on an old flat-vid superhero show. Seems like the longer the Sixth World goes on, the more there is to learn about how magic works. And believe me, you'd better learn it—'cause in this biz, what you don't know can kill you."

—Not Horatio, troll magician, Street Lectures Online

Awakenings: New Magic in 2057 is a sourcebook for *Shadowrun, Second Edition*. It revises and expands on existing rules for magic in *Shadowrun, Second Edition* and *The Grimoire, Second Edition*, offers new and expanded rules for adepts, and includes rules for the magical system of voodoo. It also provides players and gamemasters with a wide range of options for roleplaying magical characters and making magic an integral part of life in the *Shadowrun* universe.



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