



THE BOOK OF HOD

CJ CARELLA'S
Witchcraft

SEPHIROTH BOOK

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Reader discretion is advised.

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Author's Note

As has been mentioned throughout both this book and other *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* books, this is a work of fiction. Even though the world described is based on the real world, certain fantastic elements have been added to it. Since it is still based on the real world, however, certain real world elements comprise the game's background, too. The inclusion of these elements should in no way be taken as insult, as that is not the author's intention.

Specifically, it should go without saying that there really was a massacre at Wounded Knee and that its inclusion in the *Ghost Dancer* background is not meant to offend the descendants of those victims. Shamanism is a real world

religion and nothing in this book is meant to disrespect or belittle it. The portrayal of the various sects of the Society of Assassins is fictional and should in no way be taken as a portrayal of modern Islam. The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama are real people, despite being included as part of the background of the Order of Shambala. Though their connection to an otherworldly Association is fictional, the injustices that they have suffered are entirely real. The Dalai Lama really has been living in exile since 1960 and the Panchen Lama really is the youngest victim of human rights violations. Their inclusion in this book is not meant to make light of their current situation.

— Thom Marrior



Table of Contents

Chapter One: Drifting	4	Chapter Four: Associations	58
Chapter Summary	7	Ghost Dancers	60
Conventions	8	Society of Assassins	68
Bibliography	9	Shambala Order	74
		Wizards of Oz	82
Chapter Two: Rules	10	Apoanu Apyadaiða	84
New Character Type	12	Chapter Five: Metaphysics	88
New Associations	13	Combat in the Dream Realms	90
Shamanistic Solitaire Groups	19	New Invocations	91
New Qualities and Drawbacks	21	New Seer Powers	94
New Skills	23	Baraka Sabil	96
New Metaphysical Skills	23	New Item	96
Lucid Dreaming	23	Shamanism	97
Chapter Three: Sephiroth	26	Aðhijna	105
Periphery	29	Chapter Six: Denizens	110
First World	33	Nature Spirits	112
Wasteland	36	Tainted Spirits	115
Shambala	39	Ethereals	117
Garden of Earthly Delights	42	Eidolon Oyóðik	122
Domain of Morpheus	45	Mara	122
Akasha	49	Morpheus	124
Plane of Ideas	51	Nahuañi	125
Red King's Dreaming	51		
Coma Kingdoms	52	Glossary	130
Covenants in the Dream Realms	55	Index	134

Chapter One: Drifting



It was another warm, sunny day in the Duchy of Glee. The duke, wearing a freshly pressed gray suit with a shiny silver rose in the lapel, looked very dapper indeed. Ever so slightly, he tipped his top hat to the two guards, Thick and Dim, who stood vigilant in their red surcoats and wide-brimmed metal hats at the castle gates. As the duke walked by, the pair snapped to attention, dropping their pikes in the process. They began stumbling around to regain their weapons—and their dignity—and the duke felt almost certain one of them would slip off the drawbridge and fall into the moat's murky water below. It would probably be Thick, he mused; he was even dimmer than Dim.

The duke knew they weren't very good guards, but the Duchy of Glee had been at peace for as long as he could remember. Being a guard was more ceremonial now than anything, so he never worried over their ineptness. Besides, their antics amused him.

As the duke walked over the drawbridge leading into the village, he glanced at a bright purple heron flying overhead. The bird lazily glided to her nest at the top of Mr. Randycoat's candle shop. Although the fox-tailed businessman always tried to steal the heron's eggs by climbing his roof, he could never quite make it all the way to the top, and more often than not, fell and hurt himself—and his pride.

The duke was so enthralled with watching the bird that he failed to notice Mayor Treblenostiril, a pot-bellied orange dragon, standing in front of him.

"Oh, excuse, ah, me your Grace, itsa mah fault, really."

"Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Mayor. The fault is entirely mine," the duke said, laughingly. The two shook hands and continued on their way.

Today was the Annual Pumpkin Festival, and there was so much to be done, the duke mused, as he made his way to speak to Sheriff Hogberry about today's festivities. He knew the overly anxious man would need his help getting through the day. He could see the sheriff down the road already and the man was running his fingers through his thinning blue hair and pulling on his cotton-candy-looking moustaches.

"Oh, my goodness! Oh, my goodness!" he heard the sheriff shout. "This is all wrong! The Flandile Pole goes over there and the Hoozlelot Quartet is supposed to be over here next to the Licorice Tree. Oh what a mess!" The duke smiled.

He was about to rescue the poor man when Pineapple Ham wandered up the road. The duke liked everyone in the village, but something about the yellow goblin disturbed him. It was the way Ham looked at him, and the things that the goblin said.

"Nice day for a festival, don't ya think?" said Pineapple Ham.

"Why, yes, it is Mr. Ham," replied the duke.

"Hey, Dukey, have ya ever noticed how it always seems to be a nice day? Why iz dat, do ya think? I mean, it doesn't seem very likely that every day would be nice day. It just don't make sense. How could every single, solitary day possibly always be a nice one?"

The duke looked at him nervously. "I'm sure that I don't know what you mean, Mr. Ham."

"I'm sure you don't, Jimmy," the goblin mocked.

At the mention of his name, the duke stopped. He was really Jim Ferris, but he never thought of himself as such. He was the Duke of Glee—he had been so since the automobile accident that killed his wife and child had put him in a coma seven years ago. The duke never thought about that anymore, because then, he would have to think about his atrophied body lying in the Intensive Care Unit in the Waking World. That was a dark thought and dark thoughts didn't belong in the Duchy of Glee.

He was angry, and he walked quickly away from the annoying creature.

The nerve of him! Why did he insist on spoiling a perfectly nice day in the Duchy of Glee?

Introduction

When discussing the Realm of Dreams, many people believe that it is somehow “not real.” To them, only the Waking World, the Material World, is real.

Way too many people believe this.

And it is false.

The Dream Realms influence every aspect of the Waking World. In fact, some say that the Dream Realms were the blueprint for the Material World.

Maybe.

Maybe not.

But the dreams and visions seen in the Otherworld of Hod have definitely determined the course of mankind's history.

Leonardo DaVinci was a man with a dream. Adolf Hitler was a man with a dream. Martin Luther King also had a dream. As did Albert Einstein. And in the world of *Armageddon*, the Dark Apostle started out as a young orphan with some powerful dreams indeed.

The *Book of Hod* is a sourcebook that explores the Otherworld of Dreams. Both *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* take place in a world where magic and supernatural powers are real. Players may create Cast Members gifted with metaphysical abilities or they may play characters who are no longer human or never were—Ghosts, Vampyres, Feral, Immortals, Lesser Gods, Angels, and Demons. Many of these character types are not constrained by Earth's boundaries.

The Ten Otherworlds fill both the *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* cosmology, and each Otherworld is named for one of the Sephiroths from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Malkuth is the Lowest Sephiroth and it represents the World of Humanity. Kether, the Creator's home, is the Highest. The Sephiroths between Kether and Malkuth display unique properties. Chokmah is a primal universe, where the ancient Sephyr are thought to dwell. Binah, home to the Heavenly Host and the Elementals, is a universe of raw energy. Little is known of Chesed, the Fiends' original home plane. Tiphereth is the Otherworlds' mysterious nexus. Geburah, world of the dead, is home to the Infernal Legion of Hell. The Pagan Gods live in Netzach, and the Faeries make their home in Yesod.

Hod is the Realm of Dreams.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One: Drifting contains this introductory text.

Chapter Two: Rules describes a new Character Type and three new Associations: the Native American Ghost Dancer Covenant, the Society of Assassins, and the Enlightened Masters of the Order of Shambala. It also details two new Solitaire Groups: the Wizards of Oz and the Apoanu Apyabaiba. New Qualities, Drawbacks, and skills are discussed.

Chapter Three: Sephiroth contains an overview of Hod, including descriptions of the best-known Dream Realms. The Periphery, the First World, the Garden of Earthly Delights, the Plane of Ideas, the Realm of Akasha, and much more are covered. The chapter also discusses some of the more obscure and unusual Dream Realms like the Red King's Dreaming, which may be the center of the universe or nothing at all.

Finally, information is provided about the Coma Kingdoms, the Mad Gods, and the Sammael Gate, which the Mad Gods use to infiltrate humanity's dreams.

Chapter Four: Associations provides more detail about the new Associations, including histories for each organization. The chapter discusses the Two Prophets' role and their Vision for the Ghost Dancers, details the complex story of the Society of Assassins and the two Sects that developed from them, and it illustrates the Order of Shambala's problems. It also delves further into the two Solitaire groups' background.

Chapter Five: Metaphysics details combat in the Dreamscape and presents new Invocations and Seer Powers, as well as the Baraka Sabil powers of the Society of Assassins. It also details Shamanism and the Abhinja Powers of the Enlightened.

Chapter Six: Denizens reveals sample denizens found in the Dream Realms, including new nature spirits, Tainted Spirits, and Ethereals. It also examines the Dream Ethereals, the Oneirokitai, who guide humanity through their dreams; the Eidolon, who populate each dreamer's Panorama; the Mara, or Nightmare Ethereals; and more powerful entities like Morpheus and the Archangel Dumah.



Conventions

Text Conventions

This book has different graphic features that identify the type of information presented. This text is standard text, and it is used for general explanations.

This is sidebar text. It contains additional, but tangential information, or material supplementing the standard text.

This information provides ready-to-use examples of Supporting Cast Members that can be used as allies or Adversaries.

Dice Notations

This book uses certain dice notations throughout.

D10, D8, D6 and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die, and a four-sided die, respectively. Multipliers are expressed after the dice notation. For example, D10 x 4 means roll a ten-sided die and multiply that total result by four. This generates a number between 4 and 40.

A number in parentheses after, or in the middle of, the notation is the average roll. This number is provided for those that want to avoid dice rolling and just get the result. So the notation D6 x 4(12) means that players who want to skip rolling just use the value 12.

Some notations cannot provide a set number because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength cannot be expressed as a set number because the Strength value varies depending on who is acting.

Gender

Every roleplaying game struggles with the decision about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the “he or she” structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to “split the difference,” this book uses male designations for even chapters, and female designations for odd chapters.

Measurements

This book primarily uses U.S. measurements (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.). Metric system equivalents appear in parentheses. In the interests of ease of use, the conversions are rounded relatively arbitrarily. For example, miles are multiplied by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of 1.609), meters are equal to yards (instead of 1.094 yards), pounds are halved to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on. If a Chronicler feels that more precision is necessary, she should take the U.S. measurements provided and apply more exact formulas.

About the Author

Thom Marrion is an artist and writer currently living in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He dreams in color, and has also managed to become lucid during dreaming. He was a contributing writer for *GURPS Villains* and *GURPS Monsters*. He also wrote the *A Winter's Tale* adventure for the *WitchCraft Chronicler's Screen* and the *Party Gone Out of Bounds* adventure for *RPGAction.com*. The *Metaphysical Game Samples* featured on the *WitchCraft* game site are also his work. This is his first full book. He has since gone on to co-write the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* roleplaying game supplements *Monster Smackdown* and *Welcome to Sunnydale*, and solely author the second Sephiroth supplement *Book of Geburah*.

Thom would like to dedicate this book to his ex-wife Heidi, because it was something she really wanted—just like Marvin Gaye would have done for his ex-wife (if he had been a game writer, instead of a musician).

Bibliography

The books listed were not necessarily used for specific information appearing in the Book of Hod, but they were definitely inspirational.

Any book that wishes to describe the Realm of Dreams has to acknowledge Windsor McKay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* comics, as well as Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series (which includes an homage to Little Nemo).

Christopher Moore's *Coyote Blue* inspired the Ghost Dancers, the First World, and bits about the Coyote. Charles De Lint's works proved inspirational, as well—they reinforced the crying need for a Native American Covenant in the *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* settings.

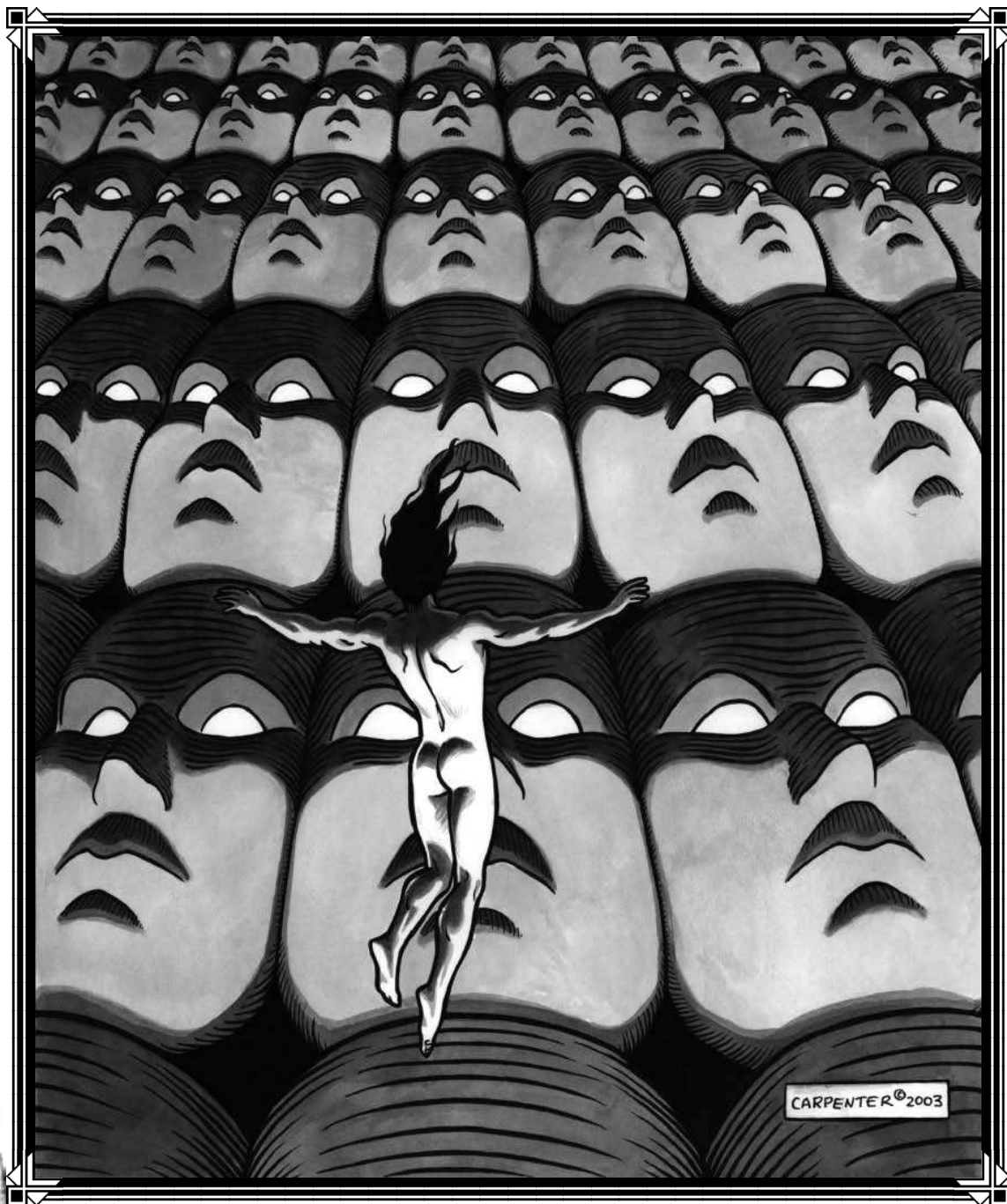
The Society of Assassins has been a conspiracy theory favorite for years. The sect's real history was the starting point for the Covenant, but the group's tone owes a lot more to the *Matrix*, *Le Femme Nikita*, and *The Professional* (the latter two being the French films, not the TV series or Anime that share the same name).

Kim Stanley's *Escape from Katmandu* provided ideas behind the Order of Shambala. Specific details about the Order's history, such as the current Panchen Lama's fate, were gathered from the Government of Tibet in Exile's website at www.tibet.com.

Other sources include the *Alice in Wonderland* books, *The Wizard of Oz*, Greek mythology, Hebrew folklore, Raymond Moody's astral projection work, and various tidbits of knowledge gathered via living through what the Chinese appropriately call "interesting times."



Chapter Two: Rules



The Assassin Geneva silently crept her way into the senator's office. The politician had been too long a pawn of the Adversary, a tool of the Combine. For this reason, the Society of Assassins decided that the world would be a much better place without him in it.

Geneva had dispatched the guards outside his door with no problem, and now, using her Hideaway Invocation, she moved invisibly through his office. The senator did not look like much of a threat; he was just another old, balding politician from some Midwestern state she never paid any attention to—but that was often the way of these things. The Adversary worked through some of the blandest Mundanes you could ever meet. That certainly did not make the senator any less dangerous—nor did it forgive him the evil he had allowed to happen.

The senator was working through a pile of paperwork and whistling a popular country tune as Geneva slipped behind him and slowly placed the knife against his throat. She was just about to end the man's life with one swift cut when the world grew suddenly quiet. The senator stopped whistling, he stopped moving, the piece of paper he was tossing into the outbox remained suspended in midair.

Geneva sighed. "What did I miss this time?"

"Look behind you," replied a male, Middle Eastern-accented voice.

Geneva slowly turned her head to find a knife suspended mere inches from the back of her head. She followed its apparent trajectory and saw a black-clad figure braced against the ceiling behind her. Alamut or Red Lotus Sect, she thought, or one of the Conspiracy's other pawns.

The man with the accent walked through the office wall. "Don't allow yourself to become discouraged, Refik. You are still just starting out. At least you made it into his office this time." He smiled and waved his hand, dissolving the senator's office and revealing the otherworldly courtyard in which she had been training.

Geneva could now see the madrasa's other students bustling through the open hallways and courtyards around her, heading for their various training sessions. When their training was finished, she knew they would all be ready for the work that awaited them.



Introduction

Chapter Two provides information on incorporating the Sephiroth of Hod into a *WitchCraft* or *Armageddon* campaign. It should be made freely available to all players. They will not spoil the wonder of Hod by perusing the information here.

This chapter introduces the Greater Gifted Character Type. Three new Associations, the Ghost Dancers, the Society of Assassins, and the Order of Shambala, and two new Solitaire Covenants, the Wizards of Oz and Apoanu Apyabaiba, are discussed. As in the *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* corebooks, the Associations are covered in a summary format so players do not learn more than necessary. Much more detail about the Associations can be garnered in **Chapter Four: Associations**. New Qualities, Drawbacks, and skills are also presented. Finally, a fairly extensive write-up of lucid dreaming is included, as might be expected in a book about the Sephiroth of Dreams.

New Character Type

The following should be added to the list of Character Types available for generating *WitchCraft* characters.

Greater Gifted

"Things have not been this lively since well, since I was a mere mortal and that was a long while ago. I get the feeling that my entire existence has been nothing but a training run to deal with this situation."

Greater Gifted are humans who have cultivated their occult powers to superhuman levels. They represent some of the greatest sorcerers and psychics of the world, movers and shakers of human affairs. Many of these humans are very long-lived or even immortal.

Greater Gifted characters receive 20 points for Attributes, 15 points in Qualities (and up to 15 points in Drawbacks), 35 points for skills, and 50 points for Metaphysics. These characters may be Gifted, True Immortals, or Enlightened Humans, as long as they purchase the appropriate Qualities.

New Associations

The Ghost Dancers

"The memory of that day is still with me. I close my eyes and can still see the butchered men and women and children scattered in heaps along the gulch. They were not the only casualties that day. A beautiful Dream died in the bloody mud along with all those innocent people. The Dream lies dead and buried in the snow, the sacred tree has fallen, and the Vision of the Ghost Dance will be forgotten."

—Tashunka-Ska "White Horse," speaking of the massacre at Wounded Knee

"The Dream will never die. The White Man tried to cut down the tree but the roots remained. We have grown in numbers and strength, and we have kept the Vision in our hearts. We will have our Paradise on Earth."

—Capa-Tanka "Big Beaver,"
Lakota Ghost Dancer

Description: Perhaps the largest Shamanistic Covenant in today's world, the Ghost Dancers have united various North American tribes into a cohesive whole. Forced to operate in secret for fear of government persecution since the 19th century, the Ghost Dancers have not forgotten Wounded Knee's lesson.

The Prophets Wodziwob and Wovoka's Vision unite the Ghost Dancers' differing Nations. According to the Two Prophets' teachings, if the Nations return to the Old Ways and learn to live in harmony with one another, a new Paradise on Earth will arise and a Golden Age will dawn for the Native Peoples. The buffalo will return, the dead will be reunited with the living, and the Whites will be forced east of the Mississippi, leaving the West for the Native Peoples.

Common Ghost Dancer members include Shamans, Medicine Men, and Braves. The Shamans use their natural psychic ability, knowledge of rituals, and Metaphysics to help their tribe. The Medicine Men have powerful Spirit Patrons who grant them special abilities. The Braves are usually Mundane warriors

who protect the tribe. The Association also includes a sizeable Feral community of the Coyote's Children, who enjoy playing tricks on friends and enemies alike. All Ghost Dancers are Native Americans.

Attributes: Ghost Dancer Shamans tend to live close to nature. As life on the reservation can be hard, Ghost Dancers all have average or above average physical Attributes. Shamans also need good mental Attributes. The Association's Coyote Ferals value cleverness, so their mental Attributes should be above average.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Life on the Rez does not lead to wealth, so most Ghost Dancers have Below Average Wealth or lower. As Native Americans, the Ghost Dancers must also take the Minority Drawback. Many Ghost Dancers have Adversaries that range from small anti-environmental companies to powerful Combine cells.

Belief in the Vision unites the Ghost Dancers and some members are so fanatical about realizing the Dream that they have either the Obsession or Zealot Drawback. Concern for their people drives the Shamans, so they may have the Honorable (-1) Drawback. Warrior types have Qualities like Hard to Kill or Situational Awareness, while older Shamans and Medicine Men might suffer Physical Drawbacks. Those Shamans whose metaphysical lineage stretches back thousands of years have Extra Essence and some may even possess the Old Soul Quality. Coyote Ferals may have the Clown Drawback.

Skills: All Ghost Dancer members must have the Rituals (Ghost Dancers) Skill; it is a prerequisite for a Shaman's Metaphysics. Many members also have the Occult Knowledge Skill, specializing in nature spirits. Other skills include Dance (Traditional Native American), Myth and Legend (Native American), Storytelling, and Unconventional Medicine (Herblore).

As part of keeping the Old Ways, many Ghost Dancers have learned their Nation's native language. Ghost Dancer children grow up speaking their ancestors' tongue, but members who join the Association as adults must learn to speak their ancestral language.

In order to keep to the Old Ways and live in harmony with the land, most Ghost Dancers know a





number of wilderness survival skills. Warrior types also know how to use traditional weapons and they have the appropriate Hand Weapon skills, such as Axe, Knife, Spear, and Bow, in addition to other combat skills.

Metaphysics: Most Ghost Dancers are either Gifted or Lesser Gifted Shamans, or Medicine Men who receive their powers through Spirit Patrons. Shamans may incorporate any combination of Metaphysics, but most have several Invocations and one or more Seer Powers (see p. 97-105).

Some Ghost Dancers, either inborn Coyote Ferals or humans with the Skin-Changer Quality (see p. 102), can walk in the shape of the Coyote. All Ghost Dancer Coyote Ferals, unlike some Coyote Ferals, have control over their shape changes and behavior during those changes.

Special Abilities: Shamanistic Covenants have a close bond with nature and the Ghost Dancers are no different. Ghost Dancers receive a +2 bonus to all metaphysical tasks dealing with Nature. This includes the Communion Invocation and all Elemental Magic, as well as powers dealing with nature spirits. In addition, nature spirits react favorably to the Ghost Dancers. When using mundane skills like Smooth Talk, Questioning, or Storytelling on nature spirits, Ghost Dancers receive a +2 bonus.

Common Professions: The Ghost Dancers are one of the few Covenants where a person's career and metaphysical calling are one and the same: a Shaman gets paid to be a Shaman. Of course, being a Shaman on the Rez is not a financially lucrative job. Fortunately, the Ghost Dancers are not materialistic.

Other Ghost Dancers use their knowledge to supplement more mundane occupations. Many Shamans use their healing knowledge to work as doctors, nurses, or paramedics. Some Ghost Dancers use their historical knowledge to work as historians, cultural anthropologists, or writers. Quite a few Ghost Dancers have Artistic Talent and try to preserve the Old Ways through art and music. Finally, some Ghost Dancers fight for the Native Peoples' rights in the courtroom as lawyers or as activists, seeking to preserve the traditional lands.

Roleplaying the Ghost Dancers: You believe the Creator appeared to the Prophets Wodziwob and Wovoka and promised them a Paradise on Earth if the Native Peoples returned to the Old Ways and

lived a harmonious life. Some Ghost Dancers believe this "harmonious life" requires the People to live in peace with the Whites; others believe it applies only to living peacefully with the other Tribal Nations. Whichever interpretation you believe, you live your life by the Vision's tenets.

The Vision guides your life. Like your ancestors, you live in harmony with the land, taking only what you need and preserving the environment around you for future generations. You never act maliciously towards your Native American Brethren. Ancient animosities are forgotten; a Sioux considers a Kiowa or a Pawnee his Brother. You follow the Old Ways. You practice your ancestors' religion, and you learn to speak your forefathers' language. You are not a Luddite, but technology does not rule your life. Although you may own a pick-up truck to get around in, you do not own a 36" big-screen television, for it removes you from the natural world. Technological gadgets and alcohol are the White Man's distractions. You avoid them; giving into them causes you to lose sight of the important things in life.

No matter how bad things get, you cling to the Vision's hope. Nothing will prevent your people from attaining the Vision's goal. The Combine tried to wipe the Ghost Dancers from the face of the Earth and they failed. As long as the Vision is kept alive and strong in your heart, nothing can stop you or the Native Peoples.

The Society of Assassins

"We are Shadows of Vengeance that enter the hidden places. We are Allah's instruments of Justice. Some people believe they are too powerful to be punished. They believe they will never be held accountable for what they do. They go against Allah's wishes because they no longer have faith. They do whatever they desire because they do not fear reprisal. They have no guilt because they believe their actions have no consequences. They are wrong."

— Khalid al-Sulaiman, speaking to a class of Refiks after their Initiation

Description: Assassination is murder to bring about political change. The word assassination came into existence to describe the actions of the Hashashin, the Society of Assassins. For hundreds of

years, this secret society has killed powerful leaders and key figures in service to Allah's Will, as revealed by the Imam, the Society of Assassins' true leader. Of course, this is complicated by the fact that there are currently two Imams and two sects.

The Ruya'ha Sect continues doing what the Assassins have done for hundreds of years: murdering to make the world a better place. This sect faithfully follows their Imam's will and it has no doubt its actions are in accord with Allah's Will. The Ruya'ha Sect has allied with the Templars, while the Alamut Sect has allied with the Combine. Both sects are in constant conflict, but apart from their allies, no one else knows of the Society's existence, let alone that it has two opposing factions.

Membership is not limited to those of Arabic descent. The Society infiltrates many different organizations, so it prefers its agents not rely on disguises or illusions to do so. The Society has a number of American and French agents, as well as agents from other countries. Foreigners must learn Arabic and follow Allah's Will.

Attributes: Assassins need to be in good physical condition, so all physical Attributes are average or higher. Dexterity is valued above Strength or Constitution, so it is usually the highest of the three abilities. Mental Attributes are at least average for Intelligence and Willpower and above average for Perception.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Zealot is the most common Drawback for members of this Association. The Society is famous for their agents' willingness to die for the cause. Because of this single-mindedness, quite a few Assassins suffer from the Humorless Drawback. Those who devote their lives to social change through applied murder most likely have an Adversary or two, as well. Surprisingly, the Cruel Drawback is not any more common among the Society's members than in any other Association; the Assassins try to remain detached and professional during their kills.

Many Assassins lead double lives, working closely with possible targets as they await orders to strike. These agents have Multiple Identities, and those identities hide a Secret. Many Assassins have Qualities like Fast Reaction Time, Hard to Kill, and Situational





Awareness to prolong their danger-filled lives. Additionally, the importance of Good Luck can never be overestimated; luck is the only reason some of the Society's Fedavis live today.

Skills: All Assassins must learn Language (Arabic) and Humanities (Theology – the Imam's Teachings), which is similar but not identical to Islam. Actually, the Ruya'ha Sect's theology is a lot closer to Templar Philosophy than it is to Traditional Islam.

Assassins' skills reflect their training in murder and espionage. All Assassins have the Martial Arts (Ra'd Quwwat) Skill (see p. 23). In addition, many Assassins have some or all of the following skills: Acrobatics, Acting, Bureaucracy, Climbing, Demolitions, Disguise, Dodge, Electronic Surveillance, Escapism, Guns (mostly Sniper Rifles, but other types of guns as well), Hand Weapon (Knife), Hand Weapon (any other), Lock Picking, Stealth, Surveillance, and Traps. Which skills an Assassin knows depends on the type of assignments he receives.

Metaphysics: Many Assassins are Mundanes, and their only contact with the supernatural world is their Initiation in the Garden of Earthly Delights in Hod. Still, some are Gifted or Lesser Gifted. Assassins with the Gift usually learn both Magic and Baraka Sabil (see p. 96). The Assassins favor the Hideaway, Lesser Illusion, and Greater Illusion Invocations. The Society includes some Seers, but they are few and far between.

Special Abilities: Because they train intensively in the ways of the Hashashin, Assassins add +1 to their Dexterity and Perception Attributes; quickness and awareness help them get in and out of secure places without being seen.

Common Professions: There are two main types of Assassins: the infiltrator and the professional killer. The infiltrator uses a combination of the Disguise Skill and Greater Illusion Invocation to move undetected through the halls of power. The nice old lady from Manchester who brings the Prime Minister his tea every morning might actually be a man from Benghazi who has spent the last few years awaiting the order to kill. Meanwhile, he serves tea and gathers secrets for his masters.

The professional killer does not maintain any particular identity for very long. He plans his missions' every last detail and he roams from city to city to complete assignments. Many outside organizations pay the Society's hit men to assassinate people. The

hit must always meet the Imam's approval, of course, and sometimes outside sources pay for jobs the Imam had already ordered the hit man to do, anyway.

Roleplaying the Assassins: You kill people, but that is a very simplistic way of looking at it. Actually, you eliminate Imam-approved key figures for the greater good. As the Imam knows the Creator's Will, he knows what changes need to be made to better society. He knows who stands in the way of human progress and who stunts humankind's spiritual growth. In short, the Imam knows who needs to die.

You can still remember your initiation when you were merely a Dias. After a long period of Ritual Purification, you were brought to a Gateway made of white light. When you walked through the Gateway, you found yourself in a lush, exotic garden, where the One True Imam greeted you. He told you to enjoy all the delights surrounding you: sweet fruits you had never before tasted, exotic drinks to quench your thirst, and every vice and pleasure you could ever imagine.

The Peris, beautiful young maidens, fulfilled your every need and desire. They brought you to searing heights of ecstasy and everything about the place overwhelmed your senses. It was truly Heaven. It was Bliss. And then the Imam told you it was nothing. He said the pleasure you had just experienced could not compare to the joy that awaited you in Kether—if you only obeyed his commands.

At that moment you knew that you would do anything the Imam asked. You would die for him. You would kill for him. You just had to return to the Bliss you experienced in the Garden of Earthly Delights.

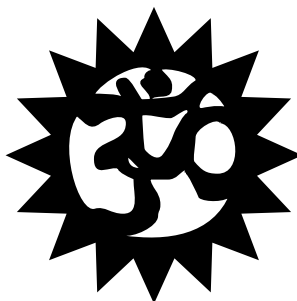
The Order of Shambala

"Know this: all that you perceive is Illusion. Existence, as you understand it, does not exist. The Self, as you understand it, does not exist. Nothing has any inherent existence. The true nature of reality is Emptiness. Once you realize this, you are no longer limited by the Ego. Knowing the Emptiness frees you from fear. It frees you from pain. It frees you from loneliness. To realize that one is nothing is to realize that one is in everything."

— The Lama Drolma

"Wow."

— Adept Tempa, on her first entry to Shambala



Description: Countless conspiracy theories and fringe ideas exist about Tibetan Masters with secret knowledge who rule the world via secret underground tunnels. Those theories are mostly wrong. First of all, the Masters do not rule the world. Then again, they did influence world events in the past. They never discuss this period in their history, however. They do not control a series of underground tunnels; the tunnels are a metaphor for the dream access they have in the Periphery. Finally, calling them Tibetan Masters is something of a misnomer. They are the Order of Shambala and they do not even live in Tibet. They do not even live on Earth. The Order resides in the Realm of Shambala, which is located in the Otherworld of Hod.

Tibet does have Gateways to Shambala though.

Most members of the Order hail from Tibet, but the Order has Monks from all over the world.

Enlightenment is not limited to Tibetans, nor is membership in the Order. Even though the group is sometimes referred to as the Monks of Shambala, the Order's membership is not exclusively male either. There are female members of the Order who live in a Nunnery in Shambala's otherworldly complex.

Some of the Order's members are no longer strictly human. They are Bodhisattvas, souls who have delayed entry into Nirvana in order to help others reach Enlightenment, also known as Kerubim in the West. Unlike their brethren who serve the Heavenly Host (see *Armageddon*, p. 175), sometimes the Bodhisattvas end their celestial existence and reincarnate as humans to better serve mankind. The Order believes that all three of the High Incarnates are reincarnated Bodhisattvas.

Attributes: The Monks of Shambala usually have average physical attributes, though many members have an above average Constitution. The Monks emphasize mental Attributes over physical ones, with Willpower being the most important. Many members of the Order have Willpower at the highest level humanly possible.

Qualities and Drawbacks: The Order does not have any Mundane members; the most inexperienced Adept is at least a Lesser Gifted. The Monks do not think Mundanes are spiritually evolved enough to learn the lessons taught in Shambala. As reincar-



nation plays an important part of the Order's beliefs, many members have the Old Soul Quality. The highest-ranking members are beyond Gifted; they are Enlightened (see p. 21), which allows them to learn the Abhinja Metaphysical powers.

The Order practices a strict pacifist code and many members possess the Honorable Drawback at the second or third level. The Monks believe in moderation in all things, so members rarely have Drawbacks like Covetous or Obsession.

Skills: Although the Order of Shambala includes members from all over the world, Tibetan is the common language spoken in the Otherworld. All members of the Order possess the Language (Tibetan) Skill, even if this is not their native language.

As part of their training, all members of the Order learn Occult Knowledge, Philosophy (Tibetan Buddhist), and Trance. Since the Order is based in the Sephiroth of Hod, all members learn the Lucid Dreaming Skill.

The Gateways between Shambala and Earth (Malkuth) are all located in the Himalayas, so learning the Survival (Mountains) Skill is something of a necessity.

Metaphysics: Most Gifted members possess some combination of Tao-Chi and Second Sight. Those are both seen as valid ways of working toward Enlightenment. The Order has little use for Magic and Necromancy, so it does not teach those Arts to its members.

The Order does not include any Inspired, as their worldviews do not mesh. Disciples of the Flesh, by definition, do not have the proper attitude to be Monks of Shambala. Members never have Spirit Patrons, which hinders movement toward Enlightenment.

High-ranking members have the Enlightened Quality. This allows them to learn the Abhinja powers, putting them on a more equal footing with the Seraphim and the Pagan Pantheons (see *Armageddon*, p. 187). Abhinja also allows the Enlightened members to become Tulkus—lamas who have control over how and when they reincarnate.

Special Abilities: The Monks of Shambala are masters of meditation, and as such, they gain a free level in the Trance Skill.

Common Professions: Most of the Monks of Shambala are simply that, monks who dwell in the realm of Shambala. They do not worry about material things; they spend their days working toward reaching Nirvana. Since the Chinese Invasion of Tibet, some members have worked with exiled Tibetans, acting as relief workers for refugees or political activists for the Free Tibet movement.

By reincarnating in different lands, a sizable faction of the Order has tried to spread the Order's teachings. Reincarnating in different places has been a lot more difficult for the Tulkus to control, however. Some of the reincarnated Tulkus realize their true identity at an early age and become metaphysical prodigies. Others reach adulthood without knowing the truth of their existence and may spend years in almost any career before discovering their true nature.

Roleplaying the Order of Shambala: You are on a spiritual path that will eventually lead to True Enlightenment. You live in the Otherworld of Hod and you have seen things that others can only imagine. Yours is a life of contemplation, following the teachings of those who have attained Nirvana but, out of compassion for the human race, have chosen to return to Earth.

While it seems like this would be an idyllic existence, you have, unfortunately, also faced terrible persecution. The Combine has destroyed almost all of the Gateways connecting Shambala to the Earth and they have tried to eradicate the High Incarnates, your Order's leaders. The fact that you live in the Otherworld also makes you a target for the Mad Gods, for it is easier for their minions to enter the Dream Realms than it is for them to enter Earth. Shambala has suffered because of this before. As the Reckoning approaches, you believe that Shambala may be in terrible danger once more.

You try your best to keep to your Order's Path. You endeavor to remain detached, not getting caught up in the fears and concerns over what is ultimately nothing. But it is hard to remain calm and serene when you know the world is coming to an end.

Shamanistic Solitaire Groups

The world of *WitchCraft* is full of Shamanistic Covenants with a variety of different traditions. As they are all Solitaires, no one feature is true of all of them. Most groups are small, though some have several hundred members. Some groups cling to the Old Ways, while others have learned to work in modern society. Presented below are two such Shamanistic Covenants. One is small and modern; the other is large and more traditional.

The Wizards of Oz

"It gets a little weird when koalas and kangaroos talk to you. You take a wrong turn in the Outback and end up in some tropical jungle or on an ice-covered fjord. The Dreamtime can be dangerous, no doubt about it. Still, it has some of the most breathtaking sunsets I have ever seen."

—Kyeema Strode, Aboriginal Shaman

"I like it here. I think I'll stay."

—Derain Barega, one of the First Five

Description: The Wizards of Oz Solitaire group is a temporary alliance of five individuals, the First Five: a Rosicrucian, a Wicce, and three Aboriginal Shamans. They opened a Gateway to the First World of Hod in 1972 and control it to this day. With the coming Reckoning and increasing number of Gifted in the world, they now lead a group of 25 other Solitaires of various backgrounds, who are all interested in exploring the Dream Realms.

The Wizards' base, a small cluster of buildings called Bullamakanka Station, is located on the other side of the Gateway, in the Dream Realm. The Station looks something like a ranch or an outpost, but it is really just a way station for those wishing to travel from Malkuth to the Otherworld of Hod.

Attributes: The curious and creative Wizards of Oz research the Dream Realms, and they have above average Intelligence and Willpower.

Qualities and Drawbacks: A few of the Wizards are True Dreamers who come into their own in Hod. Many of the members have Artistic Talent, and these artistic types often find it easier to control Dreamscape environments.

Skills: Lucid Dreaming is a common skill, especially among Mundane members.

Metaphysics: Most of the Wizards of Oz are Gifted or Lesser Gifted who use Magic or the Sight.

Special Abilities: A bonus of +1 to any Task involving one specific Metaphysical Art (Magic, the Sight, or Lucid Dreaming for the Mundanes in the group).

Common Professions: Almost any profession is possible. This Association consists of people who started out as Aboriginal Shamans, Rosicrucians, Wicce, and assorted other Solitaires. The group contains a rather high number of artists and musicians.

Roleplaying the Wizards of Oz: You are curious about the Dream Realms of Hod; that is the reason you joined the Wizards of Oz. The First World's Dreamtime fascinates you. You want to experience the Garden of Earthly Delights' pleasures, see the wonders of the City of Dilmun, and discover the mysteries of the First World.

You want to live what others dream.

Apoanu Apyabaiba

"Now is the time when we must all unite as a people – Tupian and Guarani, Shaman and Jaguar. Together we can protect our home. Together we can drive the outsiders away. Together we can survive."

—Sun, one of the Divine Twins

"Down that river? No, trust me. You don't want to go down that river. The trees there are very angry, and they do not get along with outsiders as well as I do."

—Pikom Salvada, Amazonian Guide and Shaman

Description: Apoanu Apyabaiba is one of the largest Solitaire groups in the *WitchCraft* world; they are even larger and more powerful when used in the *Armageddon* setting. The twin Inheritors, Sun and Moon, united this loose coalition of Amazonian Rainforest Shamans and supernaturals.

The Covenant started in the 1990s, when Sun and Moon traveled to the First World and formed an alliance with the Balam Clan of the Jaguar Nation, increasing the number of Shamans in the Amazon with Jaguar Spirit Patrons. When the twins returned to Malkuth, they unified the various Amazonian tribal nations—or at least united their Shamans and

Medicine Men—into a confederation. This group called itself the Apoanu Apyabaiba, the United Native People. With Jaguar Ferals and Shamans united under Sun and Moon's leadership, the Covenant started to look like it might succeed in reclaiming the rainforest after decades of deforestation (with the rise of the Church of Revelations, this situation changes significantly in an *Armageddon* campaign).

Attributes: As the rainforest Shamans live in a wild and untamed environment, all of their physical Attributes are usually average or higher. Willpower is also important for a Shaman. Jaguar Ferals tend to have above average Dexterity and Perception, even when they walk on two legs, wearing the skin of humanity.

Qualities and Drawbacks: As a Covenant of indigenous Amazonian people, most of the Apoanu Apyabaiba's members have the Minority (Amazonian Native) and Resources (Hurting or lower) Drawbacks. As with the Ghost Dancers, some Apoanu Apyabaiba Shamans are part of a Metaphysical lineage stretching back for generations—extra Essence and possibly the Old Soul Quality are appropriate for such characters.

Skills: All members have at least one level of Language (Tupi), Sun and Moon's native language and the Covenant's adopted language. Shamans and most other members have a Rituals Skill appropriate to their culture—Tupian, Arawakan, Guarani, and Tucanoan being the most common. Shamans tend to have Myths and Legends, Occult Knowledge (nature spirits), and Storytelling. First Aid and Unconventional Medicine (Herblore) are also common. All members have Survival (Rainforest). Snares, Stealth, and Tracking are also common, especially for the Apoanu Apyabaiba's Feral members.

Metaphysics: Since Apoanu Apyabaiba is a Shamanistic Solitaire group, most of its members are Shamans (see p. 97). Any combination of Metaphysics is possible, but the majority of Shamans use Invocations or the Sight. Some Shamans receive their powers through Spirit Patrons, Jaguar nature spirits being the most common.

Other Apoanu Apyabaiba members consist of Supernaturals, mainly Jaguar Ferals. These Jaguar Ferals are inborn or at least reconciled. Some Shamans with the Skin-Changer Quality can also take the shape of a Jaguar. Other Supernaturals are possible, but they are clearly in the minority.

Special Abilities: Apoanu Apyabaiba is a large group, but it is still a Solitaire group. Like any other Solitaires, members of Apoanu Apyabaiba get a +1 bonus to any Task involving one specific Metaphysical Art (Magic, the Sight, Feral powers, or whatever else may be appropriate to the character).

Common Professions: The Amazonian Rainforest consists of pre-industrial tribal cultures, so having a profession is not important. Most members are Shamans or hunters—those activities take the majority of their time (and the reason they have such low Resources). Some members work with outsiders as guides or translators.

Roleplaying the Apoanu Apyabaiba: You practice the traditions handed down from previous generations, but you used to practice them alone, isolated from others like yourself. The rainforest, your home, was being destroyed and your way of life threatened. Then the Divine Twins came, bringing with them allies from the Otherworld. They united the different tribal Shamans, and now you no longer work alone.

While outside forces still threaten the rainforest, some powerful guardians now work to protect it. A Golden Age dawn, a Renaissance for Amazonian Shamanism—unless you are playing in an *Armageddon* setting, in which case your daily existence is a nonstop fight against an enemy from outside reality. Even then, the rainforest is one of the few spots on the planet that has remained free of the Leviathan's influence.



New Qualities and Drawbacks

Enlightened

20-point Supernatural Quality

Prerequisite: The Gift and Old Soul

Restriction: Cannot have a Spirit Patron

Enlightened humans are to the Gifted what the Gifted are to the Mundane. These men and women may represent the next step in human evolution: they have an instinctive understanding of the forces that humans may control. In a *WitchCraft* game, only several hundred Enlightened humans exist in the world. By the time of *Armageddon*, that number increases tenfold, as many adolescent or young adult Gifted gain Enlightenment, possessing far greater potential than any of their predecessors. No one fully understands the source of Enlightenment. The Enlightened may be the result of multiple reincarnations on Earth, a natural reaction to the increased Essence in the world, or the Creator's Will. Who can say?

The Enlightened have tremendous control over Essence—more control than normal Channelers. The Enlightened can quickly unleash Invocations that require a great deal of concentration from normal Magicians. Their control over Essence allows them to resist all manner of powers. By the same token, the Enlightened are innately independent; they cannot forge bonds with "greater" beings. Thus, they can never become Beholden, nor can they have a Spirit Patron.

The Enlightened have one major ability: they can use Essence at will, like some Supernatural creatures. They can use as much Essence as they hold within themselves—nothing limits them in this regard, not even their Essence Channeling level. This ability is most effective amongst Magicians (who can unleash devastating Invocations almost instantly) and Seers (who can increase the Strength of their power at the cost of two Essence per additional Strength level). Not coincidentally, most Enlightened display one or both of those powers. All Gifted with this power can, among other things, use Essence defensively without any limitations. The Inspired are almost never Enlightened; their abilities mimic most of the Enlightened powers. The Enlightened have a base Essence recovery rate equal to their Willpower per minute, plus any Essence Channeling levels they may have (in other words, Essence Channeling remains useful to these characters).



Limited Dreamer

1- to 2-point Mental Drawback

This character does not have a fulfilling dream life. He must make a Simple Intelligence Test at -3 to even remember his dreams. Even if he does remember them, they are rather simple. Limited Dreamers never dream in color and their dream's events closely resemble the dreamer's real life. He is more likely to dream about taking a test or standing in line at the DMV than he is to dream about riding a red dragon over a green mountain valley. Limited Dreamers cannot become lucid during a dream, and never possess the Lucid Dreaming Skill.

If a Limited Dreamer walked through a Gateway into one of the Dream Realms, he would appear as an indistinct black and white version of himself. While in the Dream Realms, all his actions suffer a -3 penalty.

The two-point version of this Drawback is more severe. This Limited Dreamer never remembers his dreams and all his actions in the Dream Realms are at a -5 penalty. Characters with this level of Limited Dreamer often have the Humorless and Talentless Drawbacks, as well.

This Supernatural Drawback is available to characters without the Gift. In fact, it is most common among the Mundane population. Also note that the Limited Dreamer Drawback cancels out the True Dreamer Quality. A Cast Member may not have both.

True Dreamer

3-point Supernatural Quality

True Dreamers have richer dreams than most. This character gets more out of his nightly rest and regains two points of Endurance per Constitution for every half hour of sleep (twice as much as normal). He also has a +3 bonus to Lucid Dreaming and all Tasks he performs in the Dream Realms, like Visualizations. Some characters who seem somewhat inadequate in the Waking World become heroes in the Realms of Hod.

Because True Dreamers have stronger souls than normal, they receive +6 to their Essence Pool. Also, the Gift is not a prerequisite for the True Dreamer Quality, so a character who can perform amazing feats while dreaming can remain perfectly mundane in the Waking World.

New Skills

Martial Arts (Ra'd Quwwat)

The Society of Assassins calls their Martial Arts style the Strength of Thunder Combat Art. It strongly resembles the Storm Fist style (see *Mystery Codex*, p. 51) from which it developed. Assassins who have Baraka Sabil Powers have also studied the Ra'd Quwwat Fighting Style.

Basic Moves: Arm Lock, Punch, and Kick

Special Moves: Can be any, though most choose from among Disarm, Counter Punch, Jab, Spin Kick, and Roll With Blow

Rituals (Shamanism)

This skill is used to perform rituals and ceremonies in Shamanistic cultures. Most Shamanistic rituals incorporate dancing and movement into the ceremony, so performing rituals requires a Dexterity and Rituals Task. Ghost Dancers have the Rituals (Ghost Dancers) Skill. Other Shamans have a Ritual Skill specific to their tribal culture, not their general culture. For instance, Apoanu Apyabaiba Shamans have Rituals (Yahuna) or Rituals (Ufaina), not Rituals (Amazonian) or Rituals (Apoanu Apyabaiba).

New Combat Move

Choke Hold: Damage: Strength. To use a Choke Hold, a character must successfully grab an opponent from behind. Then, the character wraps his arm around his opponent's windpipe, applying Strength damage per turn. The victim must pass a Resisted Difficult Strength Test against the Character's Choke Hold and Strength to break free. The neck is -5 to target. Damage from Blunt attacks (like an Assassin's arm, for example) to the neck is doubled.

New Metaphysical Skills

Abhidharma

The Enlightened use the Abhidharma Skill to perform feats of Abhijna (see p. 105). The Monks of the Order of Shambala learn Abhidharma, along with the Trance Skill and Humanities (Buddhist Theology). The name Abhidharma comes from Buddhist Theology, but it is not specifically a Buddhist Skill.

Hindu Enlightened Solitaires in India, for example, also possess this skill. The Sentinels even have records of European Saints whose abilities may have been examples of Abhijna. In the world of *WitchCraft*, the Enlightened may be found anywhere and any of the Enlightened may know this skill.

Lucid Dreaming (Special)

The Lucid Dreaming Skill allows one to control his dreams' content. It can be used to gain self-awareness while dreaming or it can be used to manipulate the Dreamscapes. It is unique in that, while it seems like a Metaphysical ability, it is actually a skill that even Mundanes can learn. Lucid Dreaming is explained in more detail below.

Lucid Dreaming

A character uses the Lucid Dreaming Skill to take active control of his dreams. A character cannot learn this skill until he has successfully had his first lucid dream. When he accomplishes this, it can become easier for the character to enter into a lucid state. Doing so requires two steps: the character must become aware that he is dreaming (this is done with Perception and Lucid Dreaming), then he must take control of his Panorama or personal Dreamscape. He uses a Willpower and Lucid Dreaming Task to make changes to his Panorama.

Only Humans can learn the Lucid Dreaming Skill. Supernaturals have other powers that they use to influence the Dreamscape.

Becoming Lucid

Most dreams are "passive." The Dreamer, locked in his own Panorama, goes along with the dream's events with no real conscious thought. The Dreamer is not really an active player in the dream, just another actor. He feels more like he is watching himself than participating in the events of the dream.

But it does not have to be this way.

It is possible to take an active, conscious part in the dream—to take control of it and determine what is going to occur in the Panorama. The Dreamer can change a nightmare to a pleasant dream, get rid of figures in the dream he does not want to see, and conjure up people or places he does want. This ability is called Lucid Dreaming and with patience anyone can learn to do it.

There are preparations the character can make beforehand to insure having a lucid dream. If he has the Trance Skill, he can use it before falling asleep. He then adds +1 per Trance Success Level to every roll made while dreaming. Hypnotism also adds to the ability to become lucid. This too provides +1 per Success Level.

The first step in becoming lucid during a dream is for the character to become aware he is dreaming in the first place. This is done with a Difficult Perception Test. There is usually some kind of trigger for the sudden suspicion the character is dreaming. A drinking glass falling too slowly or bouncing off a wood floor instead of breaking, the appearance of someone who could not possibly be there, or revisiting a place the character had dreamed about before.

Any character with Situational Awareness may add +1 to his Perception Test. A character with Artistic Talent adds +2. Any Gifted or Supernatural adds +2. If a character has more than one of the above Qualities, he only gains a +1 benefit (not the full amount) for each additional Quality. The maximum benefit is +4. There are also Drawbacks that hinder a character's attempt at Lucid Dreaming. Recurring Nightmares and Talentless each add -1 to any Task to become lucid while dreaming.

If the Test is successful then the character becomes aware of the fact that he is dreaming. If the Test fails, he goes back to being swept along with events of the Panorama and forgets about the fact that he is dreaming. Still, being aware that you are dreaming and actually doing something about it are two different things. To actually take control of the Panorama, the character must succeed at a Difficult Willpower Test, with a +1 for every Success Level in the awareness Perception Test. If the Dreamer fails, he is still aware of the fact that he is dreaming but is unable to take control of the dream. The only thing he can attempt is trying to wake up, which is accomplished through a Simple Willpower Test.

However, if the Test is successful, the character controls his own Panorama. Any changes that he wishes to make to the events taking place in the Dream are resolved through a Simple Willpower Test. This Test suffers a penalty of (six minus Willpower). So a character with a Willpower 3 makes his roll at a -3. This Test is the same regardless of the changes that the Dreamer wishes to make to his Panorama. Making an apple appear on a table would seem to be easier than making medieval Paris appear through a

bathroom door, but this is the Dream Realms. It is not the most rational of Otherworlds.

Once a character becomes lucid for the first time, he can try to learn the Lucid Dreaming Skill. Once the skill is learned, changes become easier to make on the Dreamscape. There are those who can teach Lucid Dreaming, but for the most part it is something that has to be learned by the character himself.

Visualizations

Visualizations are the specific changes that the character can make to his Panorama, a self-contained Dreamscape. The Dreamer has four points to spend on Visualizations for every point he has in the Lucid Dreaming Skill. A character may buy higher-level Visualizations up to twice his Lucid Dreaming Skill level.

All Visualizations cost one point per level.

In order to use a specific Visualization, the character must first roll a Visualization Task, using his Visualization and the appropriate Attribute (Willpower, unless otherwise specified).

Awaken

Awaken is the ultimate fail-safe for a Lucid Dreamer. If things get out of control, he can just return to the Waking World. He accomplishes this with a Simple Willpower and Awaken Task when within his own Panorama. In anyone else's Panorama, the Awaken Visualization sends the Lucid Dreamer back to his own Panorama and he must roll a separate Awaken Task to awaken from there. If the Dreamer finds himself in one of the other Dream Realms, Awaken sends him to the Periphery (see p. 29). Returning to his own Panorama then requires a second Awaken Task roll, and a final one is required to get from his personal Panorama to the Waking World.

If an entity tries to detain a character in the Dream Realms, Awaken becomes a Resisted Task against that entity's Willpower. If the character found himself at the Sammael Gate facing a Night Terror, he would need to win a Resisted Task of his Willpower and Awaken Visualization against the Night Terror's Willpower Test. If the Dreamer fails his Task, then he cannot attempt to Awaken for 10 minutes (minus Willpower minutes). On a natural roll of one, the character cannot awaken for an entire hour.

Conjuration

Lucid Dreamers who know the Conjuration Visualization can summon any object (a wine bottle, a pink flamingo, an Uzi submachine gun, etc.) into their dreams. Any damage the summoned object causes is based on the Dreamer's Willpower. All objects do $D6(3) \times \text{Willpower}$ regular damage, no matter their actual form—a slingshot, a magnum hand cannon, a giant Acme rocket launcher. Appearance means little in the Sephiroth of Hod.

Any object that may be used to counter another's wishes in the Dream Realms is only successful on a Resisted Willpower Test after it has been summoned with a Conjuration Task. For example, if a Lucid Dreamer wanted to enter a house within the walls of the Domain of Morpheus, he might decide to just conjure a key. For the key to actually work, the Conjurer would have to win a resisted Willpower Test against the house's owner.

Dream Attack

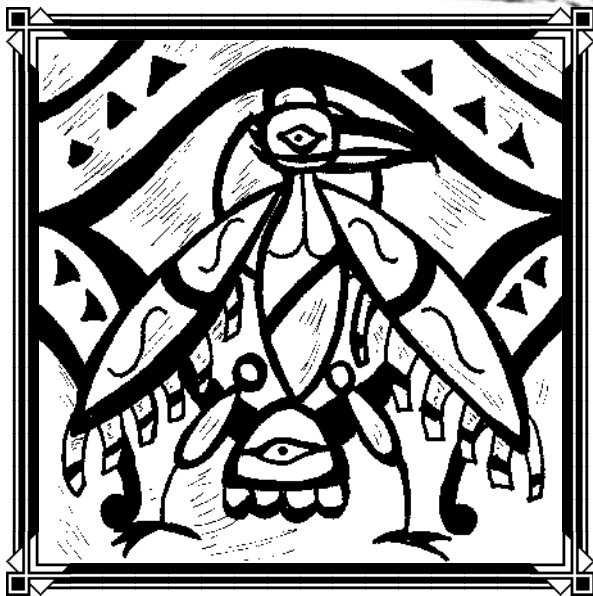
This Visualization is a more violent version of Conjuration. It allows the Dreamer to turn the surrounding environment against his enemies. This may take the form of falling rocks, sudden volcanic eruptions, attacking swarms—whatever springs from the Lucid Dreamer's subconscious. Like other forms of attack in the Dream Realms, the attack's appearance has little to do with the damage. Any Dream Attack causes $D8(4) \times \text{Willpower}$ in regular damage.

Dream Flight

This is the most common Visualization and is usually the first one a character learns upon gaining the Lucid Dreaming ability. Dream Flight allows the character to fly in the Dream Realms. The Dreamer may achieve apparent speeds of Dream Flight level times 100 mph (150 kph), though it is hard for the character to judge speed when the landscape can completely change underneath him. A Dexterity and Dream Flight Task resolves complex maneuvers.

Dream Shift

Along with Dream Flight, this is one of the most common Visualizations learned. On a successful Willpower and Dream Shift Task, the Lucid Dreamer may completely change the environment of the Panorama he occupies. If he dreams that a Mara is chasing him through a dark city alley, he can instead



suddenly change the dream to one about skipping through a field of daisies on a clear blue summer day. This effect is less powerful outside the Periphery. A character could not conjure downtown Manhattan in the middle of the First World, but he could add something simple like a spring well or even a simple building. This is how the Wizards of Oz created Bullamakanka Station in the First World.

Fermata

The Fermata Visualization allows the Dreamer to stop apparent time within his Panorama for one minute per Success Level in a Fermata Task. On a natural roll of ten, the Dreamer may stop time indefinitely and everyone within his dream ceases all movement. The Fermata Visualization works the same in somebody else's Panorama, but this effect is less pronounced outside the Periphery. In any other Dream Realm, the Fermata Effect only lasts one Turn per Success Level.

Transformation

This Lucid Dreamer can transform himself while dreaming. For instance, he can grow a pair of claws or turn into a raven. Transformation occurs after a successful Intelligence and Transformation Task. Any damage the Dreamer causes is based on Willpower. The character does $D4(2) \times \text{Willpower}$ damage. He can also create armor with a value of $D4(2) \times \text{Willpower}$.

Chapter Three: Sephiroth



The Red King dreamed.

In the First World, the Buffalo Woman was making a complex sand painting on the dusty ground. As the design grew more detailed, its abstract patterns twisting together and coming to life, clouds gathered in the skies above. The faster the painting's shapes moved, the darker the sky became. Then, lightning flashed, announcing the brewing storm's arrival. Thick drops of rain fell from the dark sky and onto the desert floor. The water pounded Buffalo Woman's sand painting, bleeding its colors into a multicolored puddle. Buffalo Woman walked away.

While the Three Sisters spun a tapestry in their lonely cave, the youngest one smiled at the older one's comment. The third sister chided her siblings and looked displeased at the shape their work was taking—all those dark threads were obscuring what had previously been a rather attractive design. Her feelings on the matter were unimportant, however. The tapestry was not being created for her pleasure. It was merely work that needed doing and the Three Sisters had been working on the tapestry since the dawn of creation.

On the Plane of Ideas, a battle raged. Massive guns illuminated the dark sky as soldiers crouched in muddy trenches, waiting to attack. Dead soldiers littered the field and every flash of muzzle fire revealed one more casualty half-buried in the mud. The flashing light also displayed a group of pale women dancing ecstatically across the blood-strewn battlefield in raven-feathered cloaks. As a silver-robed angel, Dumah the Silent, Roamer of the Dream Realms, suddenly drifted in their midst, they ceased their dance and all bowed in awe of her.

The dark-robed, white-masked Morpheus sat on his Black Throne beneath the giant sculpted face of his father, Hypnos. The God of Dreams stared at a floating globe that displayed a twisted wasteland with a dark Gateway—a disturbing tear in the landscape—at its center. Morpheus' mask did little to hide his concern.

In the city of Bubastis, a great feline Bast drank from a reflecting pool, gathering knowledge from her race's collective conscious.

Still, the Red King dreamed.



The Sephiroth of Hod

While the Sephiroth of Hod appears to exhibit some universal features, things have a habit of changing at a moment's notice. Even the most stable Realms experience drastic landscape changes in the blink of an eye. A volcano may suddenly erupt in the middle of a desert of rolling sands, or a lush green jungle might suddenly appear over the next sand dune, or someone wandering the city of Dilmun might find a Victorian bakery where a Babylonian temple once stood for thousands of years. One can never be too certain about anything in this Otherworld—everything eventually changes in Hod.

Yet, certain features have existed in Hod for several millennia.

As Hod mirrors Malkuth, events taking place on Earth can create changes in Hod. This is true on an individual level, as well. For instance, a wanderer in the Dream Lands may find her surroundings changing to reflect her subconscious. Depending on the character's Drawbacks and the Chronicler's whim, Hod may manifest anything from the character's secret desires to her innermost fears: despised enemies could attack a paranoid character from many fronts, while the vices controlling a character's life may tempt an addicted character. Anything can appear in Hod—the possibilities are limitless.

For every hour that a dreaming character spends in Hod, she must pass a Simple Willpower Test. If she fails, she faces the manifestation of her secret thoughts, usually an Eidolon, a bit player in a dreamer's dream, who acts in the roles the character's mind creates. In cases of great terror, a nightmare Ethereal called a Mara is drawn to the location instead. And sometimes, only a minor landscape change occurs, causing a character with a fear of heights to suddenly find herself on a narrow ledge, hundreds of feet above the ground.

Entering the Sephiroth of Hod

Hod is unique among Otherworlds. It is the only Otherworld that everyone visits—usually a couple of times each night. Everyone has been to Hod. No other Sephiroth can claim this, not even Geburah—although everyone dies (eventually), not everyone goes to the Otherworld of the Dead upon doing so.

Of course, most people have only limited experience in Hod. Everyone travels to Hod when they dream, but most people never get beyond the Periphery. Even there, they remain confined in their own Panorama.

The Periphery

The Dream Realms' borderlands are called the Periphery. This is where each dreamer's Panorama, or private Dreamscape of shifting forms, exists. It is very difficult for other entities to enter a particular Panorama from the Periphery and it is even harder for a dreamer to leave her own.

The Periphery appears as an infinite sea of clear water. A few hundred million large pearls float randomly within it. Approximately six billion of these pearls exist, but they are never all in the Periphery at the same time. The water is brighter near the surface, the entrance to the Waking World, and becomes darker as the depths are traversed. The pearls reflect a rainbow of colors, much like an individual's aura does. Each pearl is a Panorama—looking at one hard enough brings the dreamer's images to the pearl's surface. The pearls are huge, at least twice as tall as a standing person. Each Panorama's size depends on the strength of the individual's Essence Pool. Some Panoramas are as big as small, shiny moons.

Except that's not how it looks at all.

The Periphery appears as night sky of deep indigo, with a few hundred million stars of differing sizes and colors traveling through it. Approximately six billion stars exist, but they are never all in the Periphery at the same time. These stars are the Panoramas. In their flickering flames, a traveler can sometimes catch glimpses of ongoing dreams. Each star's color mirrors its dreamer's aura, and the stellar Panoramas pulse brightly during particularly intense dreams.

Actually, these are both wrong.

The Periphery is a smooth, silver surface underneath a light gray sky. Millions of iced-over craters mark the gray surface; approximately six million craters exist, but they are never all in the Periphery at the same time. Looking at the hard ice long enough allows one to see the dreams occurring beneath.

No, that's not it either.

The Periphery is an infinite series of randomly changing hallways with a few hundred million paint-

ings hanging on the walls. The paintings are the Panoramas and they constantly shift when looked at. If a person walks down a hallway and turns around, she finds herself in a completely different hallway. The paintings' images change frequently, especially when potential viewers are not looking

No, the Periphery is a giant granite wall with a few hundred million faces on it, like an infinite Mount Rushmore. The faces are the Panoramas, and looking into their eyes long enough reflects dream images on their surface.

Well, this much is true, at least:

The Sephiroth of Hod's borders are called the Periphery.

The Periphery contains the Panoramas of every individual on the planet.

Approximately six billion Panoramas currently exist, though only a few hundred million are in the Periphery at any given time.

The appearance of both the Periphery and the Panoramas are not fixed. Each individual sees them differently and they may even change appearance for the individual on subsequent viewings. For years, an astral traveler might visit the Periphery as the Sea of Dreams; then, suddenly, one night she finds herself looking at the Wall of Faces. The Periphery's appearance is not limited to the examples above, but those are the most common. The Periphery has also been reported to appear as an infinite field of giant sunflowers or as a sprawling city of buildings.

The Periphery is the Sephiroth of Hod's outermost layer. For some, it is the only Dream Realm they will ever visit. It has many different manifestations and it may appear differently to characters standing next to one another within the Realm. One character may perceive herself and her companions, if any, floating in the Sea of Dreams, while another person sees herself wandering through the Infinite Gallery, with the others tagging along.

While the Periphery's appearance is subjective, the following is always true about it, no matter the Periphery's form: the Periphery contains the Panoramas of all sleeping dreamers and it is possible to catch glimpses of the dreams within the Panoramas. For those with very strong Willpowers, it is even possible to enter others' dreams.



Physical Laws of the Periphery

Physical Appearance: A traveler's appearance in the Periphery is entirely dependent on that person's self image. A middle-aged man might be burdened by his career, but if he thinks of himself as a fit young man for whom anything is possible, that's how he appears in the Dream World. Likewise, the beautiful woman who thinks of herself as too fat or too ugly reflects this self-image in the Periphery. Appearance is not fixed; it depends on the dream traveler's emotional state. A character may appear as ugly or beautiful as she feels.

Dying: Predators, like the Mara, who feed off dreamers' nightmares, and the Tainted Night Terrors, who enter the Dream Realms from the Sammael Gate's Breach, hunt in the Periphery. While these creatures inflict mostly Essence damage in the Periphery, enough Essence damage can kill a person.

Healing and Injury: Healing a Character's Vital Essence or Life Points occurs normally, except for Essence Channelers, who heal at the same rate they recover Essence (Essence Channeling level per minute).

Sustenance: Like most things in the Periphery, hunger is only an issue if the character believes herself hungry. In most cases, however, eating and drinking is not necessary in the Periphery.

Supernatural Abilities: Metaphysical abilities work in the Periphery because a character uses her Willpower to affect change on herself and her environment while in the Realm. Hod's environment is especially malleable and easier to manipulate than Malkuth's reality. Since the minds within it shape the Periphery, any supernatural ability that works on Earth works in the Periphery—subject to the Periphery's laws, of course. Everything in the Dream Realm's borderland is a function of Willpower and Essence, so this changes how some powers work in the Periphery. Damage done within the Realm is Essence Damage only (with the exception of damage dealt by certain Primal Powers, as explained in *Combat in the Dream Realms*, p. 90), and all damage is based on Willpower, not Strength. For example: Autumn the Vampyre has a Strength 6 and a Willpower 3. This allows her to grow claws that inflict D4 (2) x Strength slashing damage. In the Waking World, this allows her to deal D4 (2) x 6 points of slashing damage to her victim's Life Points. In the Periphery, she inflicts only D4 (2) x 3 points of normal damage to her victim's Essence Pool.

Even Mundanes may wield formidable powers in the Periphery. Lucid Dreaming (see p. 23) is a skill that anyone can learn and it allows the Dreamer to perform fantastic feats while in a dream state. Even the most powerful Supernatural may find her life in danger when facing a Mundane Talented Dreamer in the Periphery.

The Panoramas

The Panoramas are the private dream worlds of every individual on the planet. These self-contained Dream Realms last only as long as the dream itself (about ninety minutes for the average adult, though some time dilation is possible within the Panorama, so time spent there may seem much longer).

Certain metaphysical powers allow a character to enter any dreamer's Panorama. Entering a dreamer's Panorama requires a Resisted Test between the dreamer's Willpower and the metaphysical ability in question. However, the dreamer may have defenses to prevent such invasions. For instance, any Eidolons, Oneirokitai, or Mara associated with the dreamer fight to prevent the dream's invasion. The Eidolons do this out of instinct, the Oneirokitai to protect the dreamer they are trying to instruct, and the Mara to protect their Essence host. Also, invading a Dreamscape where a Nightmare Ethereal is terrorizing a dreamer is like trying to steal meat from a ravenous wolf.

Finding a Particular Panorama

With a successful Task, a Cast Member can use any of the following powers to enter a particular dreamer's Panorama: the Night Curse Invocation, the Minddream Power, a Vampire's Nightmare ability, a Phantasm's Dream Visitation Power, the Dreamer Theophany, and the Enter Dream Primal Power. Of course, there are other ways to enter dreams.

A character in the Periphery may find a particular Panorama with a Perception Test. As Time and Space are very flexible in the Dream Realms, it does not matter where in the Periphery a character begins her search. On a successful Test, she enters the Panorama she seeks. Higher beings like Incarnates or Seraphim may find a particular Panorama with a Simple Perception Test at -2; Enlightened Humans do likewise, but their modifier is -3. Gifted Humans and Supernaturals (including Avatars, Ferals, Inheritors, Nephilim, and Vampyres) must pass a Difficult Perception Test at -4 to find a particular Panorama. If a Mundane should find herself in the Periphery, she would need to pass a Difficult Perception Test at -5.

Other factors influence the roll's modifiers. If a character loves the dreamer, whether the dreamer is a child, spouse, or lover, the character receives a +1 modifier. If a dreamer is a friend or acquaintance only, the character receives no modifier. Seeking an enemy's Panorama modifies the roll by -1, and looking for a complete stranger's Panorama modifies the roll by -2.

Characters with the True Dreamer Quality receive a +3 modifier to these rolls and to any other Tests and Tasks they perform in the Sephiroth of Hod.

Sometimes an outsider is welcome in another person's Panorama. Sight-blessed Characters with emotional ties often appear in each other's dreams. Mothers and daughters may have conversations in each other's Panorama, or separated lovers might rendezvous in dreams. Mundanes may also appear in each other's dreams. Sometimes individuals' Panoramas brush together and merge into one dream. This happens to Gifted and Mundane alike, and dream sharers often experience déjà vu when they later encounter their co-dreamer in the Waking World.

The Periphery and Other Sephiroths

The Periphery is the borderland between Malkuth and Hod. Every Earth-bound dreamer enters the Periphery via her Panorama and every Astral or Spiritual Traveler entering Hod from Malkuth must enter the Periphery first. The Periphery, like Geburah's Threshold, connects to many Sephiroths besides Hod and Malkuth.

The recently dead may enter Hod's First World or Garden of Earthly Delights directly from Geburah's Threshold. Spirits crossing from the Threshold into the Periphery may, by passing a Difficult Willpower Test and spending ten points of Energy Essence, enter the living's dreams. The spirit then finds her-

self in the Panorama of the person she most desires to see. While this transition seems instantaneous to the spirit, it may actually take several hours, depending on how much time passes before the subject falls asleep and begins to dream. This transition from the Threshold to the Periphery is a difficult and draining process for spirits, but many of the recently dead make the trip to say one last goodbye to their loved ones.

The easiest way for a character to enter the Periphery is to fall asleep and dream. As this can be accomplished from any of the Otherworlds; many occult scholars believe the Periphery exists in the space between Otherworlds. The scholars also believe this about the Threshold. In fact, most occult scholars theorize that many such borderlands exist between the Sephiroths, though not all are accessible to each other.

Higher powers, like the Seraphim and the Old Gods, can enter mortals' dreams. This may just be a function of Metaphysical abilities, like Theophanies or the Primal Powers, but it may also be a function of the Otherworlds in question. There may also be a way to enter mortals' Dreamscapes from Binah or Netzach.

The Dreamlife of Angels and Other Concerns

Whether Mundane or Gifted, when humans dream, they create Panoramas in the Periphery. When animals dream, they travel to the First World. When the Bast dream, they appear in the City of Buðastis (see p. 36).

Supernaturals who are at least partly human (Nephilim, Inheritors, and Avatars) also dream in the Periphery. Even though they are no longer strictly human, they retain enough humanity to have Panoramas as other humans do. True Immortals dream the same way that normal humans do, except for their initial change—at that time, they form a Panorama in Akasha and this is the source of their visions of Atlantis.

Ferals, being a strange mix of human and nature spirit, are a special case. If they fall asleep in their human forms, they dream in the Periphery like other humans. If they fall asleep in animal form, they travel to the First World like other animals. On occasion and for no apparent reason, this reverses. In this case, a Feral roams the First World's wilderness in human form and a nature spirit forms a Panorama in the Periphery.

The Undead (true Ghosts, Phantasms, Vampyres, and the Relentless Dead, and any other campaign variations) do not dream. The sleep of the dead is a deep, dreamless sleep. Because their conscious state is very dreamlike already, most spirits do not dream. Nature spirits, Ethereals, and Elementals do not dream because they do not need to.

The Seraphim do not dream for a similar reason. Instead of experiencing a humanlike dream world, angelic beings enter Ecstasis, which is an extended, dreamlike state. As dead humans, the Kerubim should not dream at all. As lesser angelic beings, the Kerubim can enter into a state of Ecstasis. Yet, sometimes they also dream, forming a Panorama in the Periphery just as they did when they were alive. This commonly happens to Kerubim who possess the Dreamer Theophany. The ability to dream brings the Kerubim closer to humanity, but it also separates them from the higher Seraphim.

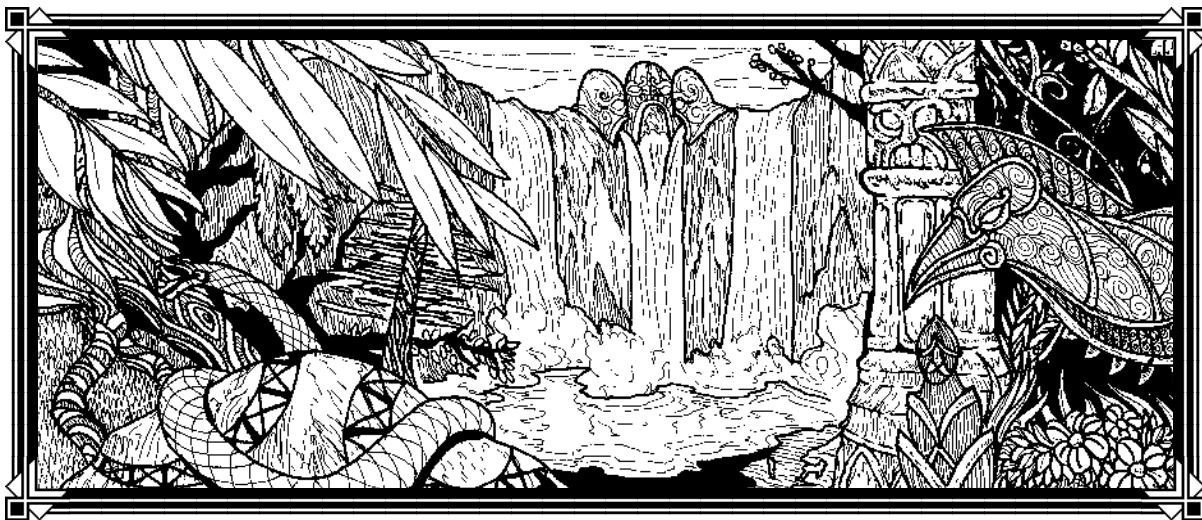
The Qliphonim do not dream. Despite the relative freedom they enjoy (compared to others who have died and gone to Lucifer's Realm), they are still in Hell, so dreaming is just one of the many comforts they are denied.

The Old Gods do not dream as such, either. As higher beings, they are closer to the Seraphim than they are to humanity. They can enter and enjoy humans' dreams, but it is dangerous for them to do so—gods have been killed in mortals' dreams.

It is unclear whether the Dragons or other residents of Faerie dream. The Sidhe would say this is an ill-phrased question because the denizens of Yesod are dreams. This does not necessarily mean anything; it is incredibly difficult to get a straight answer out of any of them.

Dragons, Faeries, and other denizens of Yesod like to remain elusive and mysterious, and to most of them, a straight, honest answer is a sad waste of language.

Those who have received the Mark of the Leviathan (see *Armageddon*, p. 327) spend their dreaming moments in the web of Taint that connects their Panorama to every other servant of the Leviathan, including the Dark Apostle himself. None of them ever leave their corrupted corner of the Periphery. In *Witchcraft*, the Mark of the Beast does not connect the Tainted—their Panoramas appear as Tainted abominations and other Panoramas naturally drift away from them. Dream Ethereals attack them (one of the reasons that the Tainted tend to experience nightmares).



The Dream Realms

Beyond the Periphery, the parts of Hod are collectively known as the Dream Realms. Although the Dream Realms differ, certain physical laws appear universal. The Dream Realms are all, to some extent, malleable to a character's Willpower. What follows is a brief overview of the Sephiroth of Hod's Dream Realms. This section covers the better-known Realms, as well as some of the more obscure places within the Dreaming. This overview is by no means complete; the number of existing Dream Realms is only limited by the imagination of the human race.

The First World

More stable than other parts of Hod, the First World is a Realm of tribal nature spirits living in primitive environs. If a Cast Member knows that a certain path leads from her village to a particular watering hole, the path always leads her there. Leaving the path is a different story, however. In the First World, a traveler can walk across a dry savannah and enter a rainforest that opens up to arctic tundra.

According to the inhabitants, nature spirits from the First World founded every original human tribal nation on Earth. Many Shamanistic Covenants believe this legend as well. The spirits guarded their particular tribe and for thousands of years, humans learned about the Guardian Spirit protecting their people. As the tribes grew into large nations and trib-

al bloodlines mixed, the people forgot their Guardian Spirits; even societies that remained tribal failed to remember and teach about them. Today, an individual may only learn of her "tribe's" Guardian Spirit through an Initiation or a Vision Quest.

Guardianship is not an automatic thing. A Cast Member must pay her Guardian Spirit the proper homage or the spirit will not watch over her. In this manner, characters may acquire nature spirits as Spirit Patrons.

A Realm of nature spirits, the First World is the primordial vision of Earth—it is the Dreamtime of which Shamans speak. It is also the Realm of Ancestor Spirits and the preferred afterlife of many Shamanistic cultures. Every region on Earth is represented in the First World; there are deserts, frozen tundra's, dense tropical jungles, and wide blue oceans. Every species of flora and fauna on Earth exists as nature spirits on the First World.

One legend claims that the universe was created in stages and that each Sephiroth was a prototype for the reality of Malkuth. Each Otherworld was created in descending order, starting with Kether, of course. After Kether came Chokmah and then Binah, spiraling downward to the Otherworld of Geburah. The Sephiroth of Dreams was the penultimate Otherworld and the First World was the blueprint for Earth. Everything in the First World appeared on Earth. It is impossible to know if this legend is true, but the legend is the reason this Realm is called the First World.

All living things have a nature spirit associated with them. Sometimes one spirit controls a number of living things, like smaller animals, insects, or simple plants. Larger animals have one nature spirit associated with them—sort of a Guardian Spirit. These spirits dwell in the First World. When an animal dreams, its consciousness comes to the First World, where it meets with the Guardian of its species. Animals do not have Panoramas like humans do. In a sense, the First World is a universal Panorama that every creature on the planet shares. Captive zoo animals come to the First World in their dreams, returning to their wild homelands in spirit, where their bodies cannot go. Dreaming whales swim through deep oceans that have never known a whaling ship. Even animals that are kept as pets return to their ancestors' wild places when their dream selves come to the First World.

A dreaming animal's appearance distinguishes it from the Realm's native spirits—dreaming animals appear physically "off." Sometimes they are fuzzy, glow slightly, or lack a shadow. A Simple Perception Test reveals dreaming animals to characters. Eidolons also exist for dreaming animals; they mostly function as objects to be hunted. Dolphins chase dream tuna, wolves run down dream deer, and cats play with dream mice. The Eidolons are always simplified versions of prey they are supposed to represent, since they are the dreaming animal's image of that prey. These Eidolons have exaggerated features that are meaningful to the animal dreaming them. For example, a dreaming crow might summon a dead mouse with two oversized eyes dominating its head.

Domesticated animals sometimes dream about the humans in their lives. Eidolons also portray these humans and they too may have exaggerated features, depending on how the dreaming animal perceives the humans. A cat might dream of a human carrying an impossible amount of food, while a dog might envision a human with limitless endurance, whose only purpose is to play canine games and perform ear scratching and belly rubbing.

Stones and rivers have associated spirits, too. These spirits seem more like Elementals than nature spirits, but they still exist in the First World. Usually, these spirits sleep deeply, even in the First World and it takes a great deal to wake them. Breaking off a tree's branch in the First World awakens and angers its Tree Spirit, but a River Spirit does not notice if someone drinks from its waters, nor does it notice anyone drowning within it.

The First World is an infinite expanse of wilderness. It is a copy of the Earth. Shamans in Australia who travel to the First World enter an Outback. Druids and Wicce in Northern Europe find a primordial forest, and Midwestern Ghost Dancers stalk a buffalo-filled grassy plain. Theoretically, a character should be able to enter the First World in New York and travel across a wild America to the First World's California, but space and distance do not work that way. Entering an Appalachian pass in the First World might bring a character farther along her journey through First World America, but it could just as easily take her to a desert, tropical rainforest, or frozen tundra. Some scholars say this happens because the Dream Realms have a fluid nature, while others claim this phenomenon occurs because undetectable Walkgates litter the First World, and they can send a traveler anywhere within the Realm.

Certain pathways are safe and always lead to specific locations. The Aboriginal Shamans call these stable pathways the Dream Roads. When an Aboriginal goes on a walkabout in the Australian Outback, she follows routes that mirror the First World's Dream Roads. To follow a Dream Road accurately requires the character to succeed at either a Difficult Myths and Legends Task (appropriate to the area in question) or a Simple Rituals (Shaman) Task.

Many of the First World's nature spirits, especially those representing larger animals, live in tribal groups called Totem Nations. Every animal has its own Totem Nation—Badger People, Buffalo People, Emu People, Crow People, etc. Sometimes the Nation is divided into smaller tribal units. For example, the Wolf Nation has a Gray Wolf Tribe and a Red Wolf Tribe. Geographical distances also divide Totem Nations, as often happens when two different cultures establish relationships with particular types of nature spirits. The Fox Spirits of Japan have very little to do with American Fox Spirits. Sometimes these differences lead to actual enmity. The Ocelotl Jaguar Spirits associated with the Nahualli Dark Covenant in Mexico are bitter enemies with the Balam Jaguar Spirits associated with the Apoanu Apyabaiba in the Amazon Rainforest.

The Totem Nations are not the First World's only denizens; small communities of Ancestor Spirits and dead humans from various Shamanistic cultures also dwell in the First World. After death, some people from Shamanistic cultures enter a First World analogous to their homeland, where they join other depart-

ed spirits from their tribe. The Ancestor Spirit communities often associate with their tribe's Guardian Spirit. An Aboriginal whose tribe was founded by the Emu could find a community of his Ancestor Spirits living with the Emu People. Not all these cultures' dead enter the First World, however. Most of their dead reincarnate, ascend to Kether, or enter the Wilderness in Geburah's Twilight World. The First World is just one of many possible afterlives.

The First World and Earth mirror each other; what happens in one influences the other. If a Totem Nation is destroyed in the First World, its Earthly equivalent becomes extinct. Likewise, once a species dies out on Earth, that species disappears from the First World, too. Other effects may transfer as well. If an Ancestor Spirit casts the Weather Lordship Invocation, doing so may also cause rain on her Earthly Homeland. Any metaphysical effect created in the First World may possibly appear in a similar location on Earth. A Task is rolled, and the previous metaphysical Task's Success Level added. For example, Towakwaptiwa is a Hopi Ancestor Spirit in the First World and she decides to use the Elemental Water Invocation to Cause Rain. Her Willpower is four, and she knows the Invocation at Level 3. She rolls an eight, which gives her a 15 total—a very good result for four Success Levels. She then rolls again and gets a six. She adds her four Success Levels to this, for a total of ten. Towakwaptiwa's Invocation is successful and somewhere in northeastern Arizona it unexpectedly begins to rain.

Some of the Pagan Gods also choose to spend their time in the First World, especially the gods of Shamanistic cultures who have the Beast Aspect. The most infamous of these is the American deity Coyote, whom the Ghost Dancers and others throughout America worship. He often interferes with the Totem Nations' affairs and anyone who enters the First World from North America runs the risk of encountering the Trickster. He is capricious and annoying, but he is also an expert at using metaphysics in the First World to affect the Earth. According to Coyote, most every feature in America's landscape is his doing and he is, for all intents and purposes, the Creator. This is a huge exaggeration, but there is some truth to it. The Ghost Dancers know which natural features Coyote created.

Other gods roam the First World. Those deities who enjoy the hunt and the wilderness can sometimes be encountered here. Icelus, an Incarnate and Morpheus' younger brother, is the most well known of such deities. He is a hunter who enjoys chasing down the First World's various spirits. Despite this, he shows the spirits proper respect and never does anything against a spirit's will. He mostly just enjoys the chase—in Hod at least. When he travels to other Sephiroths like Yesod or Netzach, he hunts without concern for his prey. In fact, he wears many animal trophies, and many of these are from his hunts in those Otherworlds.

Physical Laws in the First World

Physical Appearance: Characters who enter the First World appear the same as they do on Earth. This is true regardless of whether the First World is entered through dreaming, astral travel, or through a Gateway.

Dying: The First World is the Realm of the nature spirits and it can be a dangerous environment. Death occurs as easily in the First World as it does on Earth. Any being who dies but is not Unraveled Moves On to any of the various afterlives. There is said to be a Realm in Geburah where the nature spirits go if they die in the First World. This nature spirit Death Realm is full of the spirits of extinct animals: Dodo Spirits, Passenger Pigeon Spirits, and Saber-toothed Tiger Spirits reside there. If a traveler journeyed far enough in that Realm, she could even find Trilobite Spirits swimming in their ancient pools.

Healing and Injury: Healing a Character's Vital Essence or Life Points occurs normally, except for Essence Channelers, who heal at the same rate they recover Essence (Essence Channeling level per minute).

Sustenance: Food and drink is as necessary in the First World as it is on Earth. As everything in the First World is alive and sentient, it is very important that a character ask permission before plucking fruit from trees. Otherwise, the person incites the Tree Spirit's wrath.

Supernatural Abilities: All metaphysical powers work normally in the First World, except for those that require an intangible spirit body. All spirits appear as physical beings in this Dream Realm.

The City of Bubastis

A heavily traveled path exists in the First World that leads to a separate Realm, the City of Bubastis. This ancient-looking city is filled with marble columns and temple-topped pyramids. A massive pyramid in the city's center dominates Bubastis' landscape. A long reflecting pool stretches from the pyramid to the city's edge and a flight of marble stairs leads from the reflecting pool to the pyramid's top, where an open-faced temple, similar to those found on a Babylonian ziggurat, sits.

A traveler to the City of Bubastis notices the city's entire population is feline. This is not strictly true: the entire population are Bastis. When a human dreams, she enters her own Panorama in the Periphery. When a Bast dreams, she enters Bubastis. A definite feline motif runs throughout the city and seeing a human in the streets is a very rare occurrence. Even the High Bast retain their feline faces when walking in human form.

Where a Bast appears in the City depends on her reason for being there. While dreaming, the Bast appears in a particular room in one of the City's ancient buildings. Walking down a building's hallway, a character can peer into the doorways and see the events of a Bast's ongoing dream, its Panorama, unfolding. Thus, it is easy for a character to enter a Bast's dream—all she needs to do is find the right doorway in the right building and walk through. Of course, Bubastis' location is a secret. Unless a character is a Bast, she may never find the City.

A Bast also comes to Bubastis to learn spells from the Collective Bast Mind. The Collective Minds' symbol is the Gazing Pool, and in Hod, symbols are reality. When a Bast enters Bubastis, she sits beside the Gazing Pool and drinks from it, absorbing the Invocation knowledge that she seeks. She must then spend the rest of the night beside the Gazing Pool, reflecting on the information given her. When she awakens, she knows the Invocation and it becomes part of her repertoire.

The Goddess Bast lives in the temple atop the grand pyramid. She is a master of Magic and knows every Invocation that has ever existed. Visitors to Bast who disturb the Goddess' children or their dreams anger her and she severely punishes anyone who attempts to harm her dreaming children.

The Goddess Bast chooses a consort every few centuries. This consort, the King of Cats, has no real power but dwells with the Goddess in unaging bliss until she grows weary of him and selects a new companion. The current King of Cats, a High Bast named Kephais, has been the Goddess' consort for the past 400 years. Kephais takes his title seriously, demanding proper respect at all times. The Goddess Bast finds his behavior endearing, so she lets him enjoy his fun.

The Wasteland and the Sammael Gate

It has always been easier for a Mad God to enter the dreams of a human than to enter the material plane. Because Hod is one of the easiest Otherworlds for a Mad God to enter, cultists fallen under the influence of the Tainted experience disturbing dreams before ever seeing any physical evidence of the Mad Gods or their minions.

A desolate Wasteland exists in Hod. Its twisted, disturbing landscape exhibits no signs of life, as Taint permeates the area. In the Wasteland's epicenter, a rip has formed in Space. This is the Sammael Gate. It is a connection between one or more Taint realities (and the Mad Gods who reside there) and Hod. While the Mad Gods find it difficult to enter Hod itself, their Tainted creatures easily slip into the Wasteland.

From the Wasteland, Taint creatures can temporarily breach the Periphery and influence the dreams of their master's victims. In *Armageddon*, the Breach becomes permanent and the Wasteland's Taint seeps into the Periphery, twisting an area within it. The Dark Apostles' Panorama is at the heart of this disruption. Strands of Taint connect the Dark Apostle's Panorama to that of every member of the Church of Revelations. The millions of Tainted Panoramas form an unspeakable hive that threatens to dominate the entire Periphery. If this is accomplished, the Leviathan will once again walk the Earth.

The Wasteland

Since the Sammael Gate's creation, Taint has leaked from the Mad Gods' Realm, forming the Wasteland. This area is a lifeless, rocky desert of twisted, disturbing images. Just looking at the Wasteland's landscape requires a Fear Test at -1 to resist. The closer a character gets to the actual Breach, the Fear Test becomes

more difficult. When the Sammael Gate is within sight, the Fear Test suffers a -2 penalty, while coming within reach of the Gate requires another Fear Test at -3.

The amount of ambient Taint in the Wasteland fluctuates in a random pattern, which has nothing to do with the normal Days or Times of Power that create increases in ambient Essence. The amount of ambient Taint in the Wasteland varies from two to twenty-four points; it may shift within ten minutes or remain stable for as long as six days. Characters who set foot in the Tainted landscape suffer a -1 to all actions for every four points of ambient Taint present (rounded up).

The Wasteland is relatively small in terms of other Otherworldly Realms. Although sizes are hard to judge in Hod, the Wasteland appears to stretch no more than one hundred miles in diameter. At the most, the Wasteland equals the size of New Jersey. The Breach caused this much Taint to flow into one area, and the constant flow of Taint into Hod counteracts the Essence that could obliterate it.

The Sammael Gate

Some say the Sammael Gate was formed several thousand years ago, when the ancient civilization of Ultima Thule tried to bring the Mad God Leviathan into our reality. Whatever its origin, the Breach appears as a dark tear in the universe—a jagged-shaped, black-hole-like vacuum.

Since it formed, nothing has been able to close the Sammael Gate's small opening. Only minor minions like the Night Terrors and Tainted Spirits (Raven Mockers and Wendigo) can squeeze through the fluctuating, man-sized aperture. By the time of *Armageddon*, this tear enlarges to three times its current size, making it large enough for the Shaitan to travel through.

The Mad Gods cannot currently get through the small Sammael Gate. Still, the Breach allows them to send manipulative telepathic messages through the Periphery to their worshippers' minds. In this way, they can infiltrate their followers' Panoramas and communicate with their servants.

From the Wasteland, it is impossible to see through the Breach to the other side. Minor Tainted Creatures travel freely through the Gate, but different types of creatures never travel through it at the same time. No one knows if the Breach leads to one specific

Tainted Realm or if it is a nexus point in the Mad Gods' universe, allowing them all to exert their influence on our Reality.

Beings of Essence wanting to enter the Sammael Gate must reach it first. Getting through the Tainted Wasteland's landscape to do so is no easy task, regardless of whether a character is Mundane, Gifted, or Supernatural. To walk through the Breach, a character must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, suffering a -1 penalty for every ten points of Essence in her Essence Pool. If the character passes this Test and still wants to enter the Gate, she may proceed. Upon entering, the character takes D6(3) points of Taint blast damage per two points of the area's ambient Taint.

Assuming the character survives the passage, she finds herself in a completely disorienting Horrorscape, and must immediately pass a Fear Test (-6 penalty). If the character survives the initial shock with her mind intact, she may try to find her way back to Hod. Returning to Hod requires a Difficult Perception Test at a -1 for every two levels by which the character failed the initial Fear Test. Traveling back through the Gate does not cause any additional damage; damage is only suffered upon entering the Outerdimension. If the character decides to remain in the Tainted Realm, her Essence acts as a beacon and any nearby Tainted Beings immediately rush to destroy her.

Some scholars believe that the other side of the Sammael Gate is an Outerdimensional version of Threshold or the Periphery. Whether the Mad Gods come from one or many different universes sharing this border Realm remains unknown, but both viewpoints have their adherents. Regardless of which view is correct, the Mad Gods can access the other side of the Breach, and, while in this Realm, a character may encounter a Mad God in all its full, unfathomable horror.

Few people are foolish enough to try to cross the Outerdimensional Breach, and those who do rarely survive to tell the tale. Still, people do try. One Covenant, the Eye of Horus, a Solitaire group whose heyday was in the 1970s, used the Sammael Gate as part of their initiation. If someone could cross through the Gate and return, then they figured that person was tough enough to be a member of their group. Of course, the Eye of Horus was a short-lived group.

The Otherworlds of the Mad Gods

The Mad Gods, powerful beings from the Outerdimension who wish to overrulin our universe, constitute the biggest threat humanity has ever faced. Being creatures of Taint rather than Essence, the Mad Gods are unlike anything else encountered in the Otherworlds. Via the Sammael Gate, they have attained a small foothold in Hod and they intend to expand upon it. While it is impossible to fathom these alien beings' motivations, many people cannot help wonder why creatures of Taint would want to enter a universe of Essence in the first place.

A popular 19th-century occult theory states that the Creator made the Otherworlds of our Reality and the Tainted worlds at the same moment of Creation. In fact, if both had not been created together, the Creator could not have achieved the balance necessary to create either Reality. So, each of the Nine Otherworlds below Kether have opposites in the Tainted Reality—each Tainted Sephiroth being an Anti-Sephiroth. Life developed in both realities, but, as Entropy proved a stronger force in the Tainted Otherworlds, those universes started collapsing.

A Sere Rose Scholar (see *Power & Privilege*, p. 34) named Gustave Navarre cataloged the Tainted Otherworlds in his 1628 work, "On the Nature of the Anti Sepira," based on an earlier Phoenician text written by a Mad Cultist in Tyre. Navarre wrote his paper during Europe's Thirty Years War, the last great religious war in European history. He knew Europe to be in a time of Reckoning, so he desperately sought to discover as much as possible about the Mad Gods.

According to Navarre, an Anti-Sephiroth once corresponded to each Sephiroth. Chaigdiel was the opposite of Chokma. Satheriel was the opposite of the Sephiroth of Binah. Gamchicoth opposed Chesed. Golab was the Tainted version of Geburah. Togaririm opposed Tiphereth.

Narap Serap was the Tainted version of Netzach. Sammael opposed Hod. Gamatiel opposed Yesod and Nehemoth was the Tainted Malkuth.

There was even a Tainted version of Kether called Thamiel. At the moment of Creation, Thamiel ceased to exist. As the Nine Otherworlds formed, their Tainted reflections started on the road to collapse. Chaigdiel and Satheriel fell in on themselves before the first Seraphim gained awareness. Over the millennia, Entropy overcame Gamchicoth and Togaririm, as well. Navarre claimed that only five of the Tainted Otherworlds still existed and he believed they all would eventually fall. This impending catastrophe, he theorized, motivated the Mad Gods' desire to seize our Reality.

Rediscovered in the 1800s, Navarre's theories became popular with certain Rosicrucian, Templar, and Lodge of the Undying factions. Modern scholars believe the 17th-century text needlessly anthropomorphizes the Mad Gods, giving them motivation where none is needed. As the Mad Gods vary, these scholars believe they originate from different universes. They believe, in fact, that each Mad God rules its own universe. Navarre claimed the Mad Gods' variation merely indicated a different Anti-Sephiroth of origin, not a different universe. However, as beings of Essence have as difficult a time surviving in a Tainted universe as Tainted creatures have in surviving our own, the answer to the Mad Gods' origination may never be known. Thus, the discussion remains rather academic.

Even though Navarre's ideas are no longer popular, his terminology has survived to the present day. The Tainted Breach in the Wastelands is named the Sammael Gate after Navarre's name for the Anti-Sephiroth of Hod. The Gate's name derives from the word "sam," which means poison, and "el," which can mean angel or god. Although the name Sammael also refers to the Ruler of Hell before the Fall, back when Lucifer still pretended to be the Metatron, the Gate was not named for Lucifer; it is just an historical coincidence that Sammael refers to two different things.



The Dream Realm of Shambala

Shambala. Shangri-La. The Mountains of Kun Lun. These are the names of the Eastern Paradise where Enlightened Masters dwell. The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara Chenrezig supposedly created the Dream Realm of Shambala. He established it as a Sanctuary where monks dedicated to ascending to Nirvana (believed to exist on Kether) could contemplate humanity's collected wisdom. He first created the Kalacakra flame, which became the Dream Realm's symbolic heart. By visualizing a cave and the mountain outside the cave, Chenrezig fashioned Shambala around the flame. Step by step, the Bodhisattva formed an idealized version of his Tibetan homeland—Shambala became the Platonic Ideal of a Mountain Valley, a Realm of green grass and sunlight surrounded on all sides by impossibly tall stone cliffs.

Shambala's monastic complex is built into the side of a mountain. The sprawling building overlooks the small villages and pagodas along the valley's floor. A cool mountain river, which the monks call the River of the Blue Moon, runs the length of the valley. The only major architectural work is the monastery; all other buildings are simple and nondescript. Eidolons of villagers work the fields or tend to their shops in tiny villages beside the River of the Blue Moon, acting exactly the way villagers are expected to act. The monks call the Eidolons Tulpas, and they are simple Essence formations shaped by the minds around them to perform certain functions. Chenrezig

thought the mountain valley needed happy mountain villagers to make it perfect, so he created them. They have lived in Shambala and performed various village duties since its creation.

Tall waterfalls dominate one end of the beautiful Valley of Shambala and lotus flowers grow all along the River of the Blue Moon's banks. Bright butterflies swarm between immense trees and everything seems as vibrant as a Technicolor movie or a Chinese Monumental Landscape painting. Peace and serenity prevail in the Realm.

Like many otherworldly Realms, Shambala is a true Paradise.

Yet, it is not real.

Actually, that is the entire point. According to the Shambalan Monks, nothing is real. Everything is an illusion. What better way to illustrate this fact to a young Adept than to have her spend time in the illusory Valley. In just a short time, the Adept begins taking the Valley's realness for granted. When she accepts it as real, she also develops the delusion that it is, in fact, the only real thing; the longer she remains in Shambala, her memories of life in the Material World start to fade. Everything is stable and peaceful in the Realm because everyone in it expects it to be stable and peaceful.

Then a Lama takes an Adept aside and rips away Shambala's fabric, revealing the nothingness behind it. The Adept remembers the lesson for the rest of her life.

A series of Tibetan Gateways in the Himalayas used to connect Shambala to Malkuth. The Army of the People's Republic of China systematically destroyed many of them, however. The Order of Shambala believes that the Combine manipulated the Chinese Army into seeking them out. In any case, only three Gateways currently connect the Dream Realm of Shambala to Earth. It is also possible to get to Shambala from other parts of Hod. The Mountains of Shambala eventually join with a First World mountain range. The Garden of Earthly Delights' river Alph eventually flows into the River of the Blue Moon in Shambala, so a traveler could let the waters of Paradise carry her underground until she emerged atop the waterfall in the Valley of Shambala. This periodic Gateway does not always work, though, and it has the disadvantage of depositing a person in a waterfall that drops hundreds of feet.

The Order of Shambala dominates the Valley. Apart from the Eidolon Tulpas, who are more like background scenery than actual inhabitants, the Shambalan Monks are the only beings living within the Realm. The monastic complex contains rooms for the Order's monks and nuns, as well as the more powerful Lamas who teach others their wisdom. The Order's more powerful Enlightened live in simple cells built into the mountain itself. These cells and their connecting pathways extend throughout the mountain, the highest cell being a simple chamber that houses the Kalacakra Flame. The chamber's only other feature is a plain chair that serves as a throne for the Majushri Lama, the High Incarnate King of Shambala.

The Tunnels

It is rumored that the Secret Masters in Tibet rule the world via their underground tunnel system, which allows them to spy on any government on the planet. This is not as outlandish as it first seems, but it is also not entirely true. The Order of Shambala does not control the world, nor would the Order's members want to. The Order lives in Shambala, not Tibet. The Order uses Gateways between Shambala and Tibet to travel freely between Hod and Malkuth. Since the Chinese Invasion, however, the Shambalan Monks have spent most of their time in Hod.

Indeed, no secret group of Himalayan Enlightened Masters controls an underground tunnel system for spying on government leaders. An Enlightened Covenant in a Himalaya-like Dream Realm uses a

metaphorical tunnel system to spy on government leaders' dreams, however. The truth is always much stranger than people imagine.

A spiral staircase extends into the base of the mountain from the monastic complex. The staircase ends in a branching, labyrinthine tunnel system. Torches line the smooth white walls at regular intervals, and statues and murals of Bodhisattvas and demons fill the spaces in between them. The tunnels branch off and get smaller and darker—rough cut stone eventually replaces the white walls. Each branch dead ends at a mirror glass and the Monks must crouch and crawl through the last few feet of the tunnel to reach the mirrors.

While there appears to be an infinite number of these dead ends, there are really only about six billion of them, and only a few hundred million can be accessed at any given time. When Chenrezig created Shambala, he accidentally connected it to the Periphery, so each mirror in each tunnel represents an individual's Panorama. By gazing into the mirror, concentrating, and passing a Simple Willpower Test, a monk can view a person's ongoing dream. Winning a Resisted Willpower Task against the observed dreamer also allows the monk to enter the dream and attempt to control it. Entering another's dream and attempting to control it can, of course, be dangerous, so monks only do so when absolutely necessary. In such instances, it is usually done to gather information from the dreamer.

Finding a specific Panorama requires an Enlightened character to pass a Simple Perception Test to locate the desired dreamer. A Gifted character must pass a Difficult Perception Test, and if a Mundane tried, she would not be able to locate specific Panoramas. Even Lucid Dreamers can only summon an image of someone else's dream that they themselves created through Lucid Dreaming. Thus, it would not be another person's Panorama; it would be the Lucid Dreamer's dream of someone else's Panorama.

The monks have entered United States Presidents' dreams and a former Soviet Union Premier's dream. They have entered the dreams of the poorest peasants—with mixed results. Those who know about Shambala's tunnels say that the Soviet Union ended because the monks whispered things to Gorbachev while he was in his own Dreamscape. Some say that Tianamen Square was the Order's attempt to start a peaceful uprising in China in order to free Tibet from Chinese rule.

Observing dreams, entering them, and making suggestions to dreamers does not automatically give someone the ability to change the world. It certainly helps though.

Physical Laws in Shambala

Physical Appearance: Characters in Shambala appear as they do on Earth. Lucid Dreamers with the appropriate Visualization can alter their appearance. Any Spiritual Entities visiting Shambala have a physical form in this Dream Realm, as do astral travelers to this Realm. An astral character can also physically interact with the environment around her.

Dying: It is as possible to die in Shambala as it is anywhere else, though the fate of the deceased is going to be altered by the place of her death. Any living person in Shambala who suffers injury takes damage to her Essence Pool. If killed, she usually reincarnates or ascends to Kether (if she is ready). Some characters may return to Shambala as their afterlife; these people reappear in the Dream Realm after 1D10(5) days. Any spiritual being injured in Shambala takes damage to both its Vital and Energy Essence, and may become unraveled.

Healing and Injury: Healing a Character's Vital Essence or Life Points occurs normally, except for Essence Channelers, who heal the same rate per minute that they recover their Essence.

Sustenance: Food and drink are as necessary in Shambala as they are on Earth. The food grown in the Valley is as nourishing as that found on Earth. Anyone summoning food through metaphysical Dream Shaping finds that, while the food restores Essence points equal to one third of the summoner's Willpower, it does not curb hunger.

Spiritual Entities who feed off of Essence can survive on the ambient Essence present in Shambala. The Dream Realm acts as a Place of Power, exuding 100 points of ambient Essence at any given time.

Supernatural Abilities: All metaphysical powers work normally in the Shambala. Those powers that can shape dreams also work within the Valley of Shambala, but all such efforts are at a -4 for Mundanes (those with the Lucid Dreaming Skill) and at a -2 for Gifted and Supernaturals. Only the Enlightened may alter Shambala at no penalty. Powers requiring a spirit to have an immaterial body do not work in Shambala, as spirits have a solid physical form in this Dream Realm.





The Garden of Earthly Delights

Fears and desires manifest in the Otherworld of Hod. A character can encounter her deepest terror or most secretly guarded vice in the Dream Realms. The Garden of Earthly Delights is the Realm of those desires. It is Eden. It is Paradise. It is the archetypal garden—the lush, green utopia where no hardships or turmoil exist. Tame animals wander among the Garden's well-trimmed foliage, colorful butterflies dance beneath flowering trees, and ornate fountains gurgle throughout the statue-filled landscape. The Garden's dimensions seem endless. Most of the Realm's denizens live and play along river Alph's banks. A source of Essence, the river provides drinkers with ten Essence Points a day. Although tall green mountains can sometimes be seen off on the horizon, no one has ever reached them. The mountains seem to define a limitless border.

The Garden is home to a wide variety of denizens. The Peris, or Love Ethereals, were the Garden's first inhabitants, or so they tell those who came after them. Souls of the dead also dwell in the Garden, for the Garden contains many Gateways to the Threshold. The Peris cater to the souls' every whim. Those dead in the Garden believe they have ascended to Heaven.

While in the Garden, a character can make love to the person of her dreams every night, drink endless bottles of champagne without every experiencing a hangover, and eat whatever she wants without gaining weight. In short, she can partake of every vice imaginable and never suffer for it. The Garden is the

most perfect place imaginable and all those who visit it wish to dwell here for all eternity.

At first, anyway.

The Garden of Earthly Delights is a Paradise of sensual pleasure—not the sort of pleasure experienced when reuniting with the Creator in Kether. It is not the ultimate freedom of Nirvana. It is not even the overwhelming delight of Heaven found in Binah. The Garden of Earthly Delights is simply a garden of “earthly” delights.

People who die and come to the Garden are often delighted to find they have a perfect body and can do anything and everything they ever dreamed of. But all souls naturally long to return to Kether. Eventually, the Garden's inhabitants feel this longing.

Sometimes entities from different Otherworlds come to the Garden of Earthly Delights. Visitors from the Faerie Courts of Yesod are somewhat common. Those Netzach Deities who specialize in Fertility and deities from other Realms who enjoy the Garden's calm pastoral quality occasionally wander the Garden. The Olympian Apollo visits often and the dead from western societies usually mistake him for God. This mistaken identity amuses the Sun God immensely. Also, some living humans, like the Society of Assassins (both sects, see p. 69), use the Garden of Earthly Delights as their base of operations.

The Ruya'ha Sect's fortress, the Madrassa, sits on a hill overlooking the river Alph. The Sect trains its Refiks, or students, in the Ways of the Hashashin in the fortress, though for a fortress, it looks fairly indefensible, as no walls surround it. The Madrassa is a

sprawling complex of marble-columned pathways, stair-connected ornate gazebos, and tall buildings with wide-open windows. The intersecting pathways form open-roofed courtyards, and reflecting pools can be found everywhere. The flower-covered maze of marble and tile can only best be described as a Maxfield Parrish cross between the Taj Mahal and Cordova's Mosque. Of the Madrassas' defenses, the One True Imam says the Dream Realm's fluid nature renders a permanent wall unnecessary. If the Madrassa is ever threatened, he assures, the fortress will naturally seal itself behind a protective wall. The Assassins take his word on faith.

The Ruya'ha Sect's Fedavis (see p. 70) train the Refiks in the courtyards formed by the intersecting walkways. The training involves sending the students through Dreamscape Panoramic-like simulations of Society missions. Eidolons act as victims and adversaries in these Dreamscapes and the Fedavis stop the simulations at various points to indicate where the Refik failed to handle the situation properly. The Fedavis teaching the students are all Lucid Dreamers who have the Fermata and Dream Shift Visualizations.

The Court of the One True Imam, a massive building with tall, spiral minarets and a round roof made of gold, rises from the Madrassa's center. The building's interior is all columns and archways, and all the walls have tall, wide windows. The entire Garden of Earthly Delights can be seen from the Court's windows. The One True Imam spends his time within his Court sitting on his golden throne and doling out missions to the Fedavis.

On the opposite end of the Garden, an identical Madrassa overlooks a hill farther downstream (or more accurately, on the opposite end of the populated section of the Garden; a place that is seemingly endless cannot very well have opposite ends). This Madrassa, home of the Alamut Sect, the Ruya'ha Sect's sworn enemy, is also a sprawling complex of flower-covered marble where Fedavis train Refiks. Although both Sects inhabit the same Realm, they never interact with each other here, as neither Imam wants to defile the Garden's tranquility with war. Some say carrying out a war would be impossible, anyway; the Garden would never allow it.

Both Madrassas maintain a series of Gateways between Hod and Earth, and each Sect's Gateways are located in a large basement beneath the Madrassa's main building. In each, forty large,

framed mirrors line the basement's walls, and every mirror (Gateway) leads to a location on Earth. If a mirror Gateway is destroyed, it appears cracked in Hod. Currently, twelve of the Ruya'ha Sect's mirrors and sixteen of the Alamut Sect's are broken.

The Garden's other inhabitants live a simple existence, lying underneath a clear blue sky and indulging in every vice and desire imaginable. Except for wearing ornamental garlands, many inhabitants wander about in the nude. Love Ethereals, or Peris, attend to the Garden's dead souls (each dead soul has a number of Ethereals equal to twice its own Willpower). The Peris traditionally appear as dark-eyed virgin maidens, but they may appear however they like—or, more specifically, however the dead souls like. The Peris can be any race, any age, any sexual preference—they can be anything desired. They live only to bring the souls ecstasy, so they can feed off the Essence the happy souls release.

Many Associations know about the Garden of Earthly Delights. Scholars from the Templars, the Rosicrucians, and the Lodge of the Undying—the people who are least likely to enjoy such a place—have all explored the Garden. The scholars abandon their research for one of two reasons: to indulge in the Dream Realm's offered pleasures, or to avoid indulging in the Garden's tempting delights.

Some Wicce Covens also know about the Garden. Those who worship the Fertility aspect of the Goddess sometimes come to the Garden to commune with the Goddess or the Peris, and these worshippers sometimes spend their afterlife here, too.

Physical Laws in the Garden of Earthly Delights

Physical Appearance: Human travelers visiting the Garden of Earthly Delights appear as idealized versions of themselves. Their Attractiveness increases one level while they are in this Dream Realm. The souls living their afterlife in the Garden all have an Attractiveness level equal to their Willpower.

Dying: The only way to truly die in the Garden of Earthly Delights is to be Unraveled. Any other deaths cause the victim to vanish, only to reappear D4(2) days later.

Healing and Injury: Characters heal their Vital Essence or Life Points at a rate of one point per Willpower Level per hour, except for Essence

Channelers who heal at a rate of one Life Point per Willpower plus Essence Channeling Level per minute. Essence is also recovered at three times the normal rate.

Sustenance: Food and drink is necessary for both the souls and visitors from other Sephiroths. This is not a problem because food and drink are plentiful here, and if a character grows tired of the exotic fruit growing everywhere she looks, a Peri will gladly bring him any meal he desires.

The Love Ethereals feed off the Essence the Garden's rapturous people release. The entire Dream Realm ensures that these Ethereals never go hungry.

Supernatural Abilities: All metaphysical powers work normally in the Garden of Earthly Delights,

except for the following. All spirits have a physical presence in the Garden, so metaphysical powers requiring a spirit to be incorporeal body do not work. Offensive powers work at a -2 penalty in the Garden. This only applies to metaphysical abilities that actually attack a subject—a Soulfire Invocation suffers -2; a malicious use of Mind Read does not. All attempts to modify the malleable Garden's Dreamscape have a +2 bonus, as the Garden seems designed to respond to its dwellers' whims. This bonus does not apply to attempts to use the Dreamscape as a weapon; such attempts suffer the -2 penalty. While the training at the Madrassas simulates violent attacks, the intent is to teach, not to harm; therefore, these simulations do not suffer a -2 penalty.

The Garden of Eden

Certain occult scholars believe the Garden of Earthly Delights is the remnants of the original Garden of Eden. Leighton Farðairne, a Rosicrucian Scholar from the London Shrine, first proposed this idea in 1883. Farðairne presented his theories to the Shrine after research into some Sumerian tablets, a Templar's journal from 1745, and the notes of a professor of ancient history in Paris, who was actually a member of the Lodge of the Undying. As Farðairne was a member of the Rosicrucian's Parmenidean faction, his Shrine rejected his ideas as a matter of course. In fact, Farðairne had a number of theories that were unhindered by provable facts, so his claims about the true history of Eden were never investigated.

According to Farðairne, the story of Eden goes as follows.

At the dawn of the age of mankind, the Seraphim were curious about what made humans so special—what had placed them above the angels in the Creator's plan. The Archangels decided to perform an experiment, and they created a garden in Elysium where humans would be protected from Binah's awful energies. After some failed attempts, they finally selected two humans to be placed in the Garden. One was a male whose name meant "Earth," the other a woman whose name meant "Life."

The Host was actually starting to learn some valuable information when Lucifer, outraged at the humans' presence in Elysium, sabotaged the experiment, going out of his way to make the two humans appear as nothing more than clever beasts. The Archangels declared the experiment a failure and returned the humans to Earth. The time the humans spent in Binah strangely affected them, however, and the children resulting from their union brought forth the world's first Gifted—or so the legends say.

The Archangels did not want to destroy the Garden (in case they later wanted to perform more experiments on humans), but they also did not want the Garden defiling Elysium's perfection. As a compromise, the Archangels placed the Garden in Hod until they had need of it again. The Garden of Eden then became part of mankind's collective consciousness, a universal dream of a Paradise lost.

The Imam of the Alamut Sect agrees that the Garden of Delights is indeed Eden and Heaven (or Paradise). The Imam of the Ruyahha Sect says the real Eden exists only in Kether; the Creator took it away from the Seraphim because they were unworthy of it. For him, the Garden of Earthly Delights is only a pale shadow of the True Paradise.



The Domain of Morpheus

If a Dreamer is clever enough, talented enough, or sometimes just lucky enough, it is possible for her to find the Golden Path that leads to the City of Dilmun and the Tower of Morpheus. The Golden Path may manifest as a cobblestone road in any of the Dream Realms. The golden stoned path might form in Shambala's mountain range or in an evergreen forest in the First World. The Dream Lords Morpheus favors have a Golden Path leading right up to their seat of power.

For a character to find the Golden Path, she must pass a Difficult Perception Test. The Chronicler decides how long it takes to locate the Golden Path, but should seem random to the Cast. One character might spend years searching various Realms in Hod for the Golden Path, while the Golden Path's shining cobblestones might fortuitously show up in another's Panorama one night. Legends say that the only people to ever find the Golden Path are those whom Morpheus wants in his city.

Once a character finds the Golden Path, she may, in all likelihood, wish to follow it to see where it leads. Following the road is not as easy as it sounds, as the road wanders through the Dream World's shifting landscapes and one can easily get distracted and wander off the path. A character must constantly battle to stay attentive of her actions throughout her journey and she must pass a Simple Willpower Test to do so. A new Test must be rolled at intervals equal to the character's Willpower in minutes. The things a cov-

etous character desires tempt her from the path—the Willpower Tests suffers a negative modifier equal to her Covetous Drawback's level. For example, Leasa, an incredibly materialistic Rosicrucian who has Covetous (Greedy) 3 suffers a -3 penalty to her Willpower Test to stay on the Golden Path when she notes a crate of diamonds suddenly appearing in a field of white roses a few yards off from the main path.

If a character manages to hold to the Golden Path, she eventually wanders through a field of tall amber grass leading to the City of Dilmun, an archaic-looking, massive city the size of a large modern metropolis. A wall of black stone measuring one hundred feet in height surrounds Dilmun. The city has two entrances: the Gate of Ivory and the Gate of Horn. Both gates stand fifty feet tall and are disturbing to look at. A character immediately knows which Gate is which, even if she is unfamiliar with the gates' material in the Walking World; in the Dream Realms, dreamers sometimes just know things.

The Gate of Horn is the city's real entrance; the Gate of Ivory leads the character back to her own Panorama. A Simple Intelligence and Myth & Legend (Greek) Task with a -2 modifier reveals this fact. An Intelligence and Occult Knowledge (Dream Realms of Hod) Task also reveals the correct choice. Otherwise, a character has a fifty percent chance of guessing the right gate correctly. Lucid Dreamers or characters with metaphysical powers who try to fly or walk through them find their efforts thwarted. Gaining entrance to the City of Dilmun can only be accomplished by walking through the Gate of Horn.

Lucidity is not a prerequisite for visiting Morpheus' city; sometimes the dreamer simply has a need to be there. For instance, the Oneirokitai, Dream Ethereals, may bring the dreamer to the city to learn some lesson. Alternatively, one of the city's subjects may have a message to give the dreamer, or Morpheus may just decide to allow the dreamer to enjoy the City of Dilmun. In these cases, the Golden Path appears in the dreamer's Panorama and leads her directly to the Horn Gate. To others, the dreamer appears to be walking in a daze to her destination. The character does not consciously remember anything about her visit, including anything about the Golden Path and the Gates of Horn. The character only knows that she dreamed about a strange but familiar city.

The City of Dilmun has the feel of an old world city, with winding cobblestone streets surrounded by archaic buildings. No uniform architectural design seems at work. Some buildings appear Roman; others exhibit a medieval Tudor architecture. A Japanese Garden might lead to an Indian Temple. The most modern buildings are Victorian-looking brownstones. In some parts of the city, the towering buildings envelop the street below. When the dreamer wanders through such an area, it is as if she is trapped in an ever-sunless twilight. Other parts of the city are bright and full of sunshine, a strange, Technicolor brightness never found in the Waking World. The City of Dilmun is a city of extreme contrasts.

The Tower of Morpheus, a stone tower situated in the center of the city, is the City of Dilmun's one consistent landmark. Made of the same stone as the city walls, the Tower appears simple, like an impossibly tall, ancient Mycenaean stone fort. It stands about five hundred feet tall, though it sometimes appears taller, and clouds surround and obscure the Tower's top.

Time operates in a strange way in Dilmun. Night and day occur at Morpheus' whim and neither follows any rational sequence. Most of the time, Dilmun seems caught somewhere between sunset and twilight. The seasons and weather are also rather arbitrary; it rains or snows, as Morpheus desires. No matter the weather, a traveler in Dilmun remains unaffected by it. Things like wetness or cold are more abstract visual effects than physical concerns in the Domain of Morpheus.

Representatives from every known Otherworld stroll through Dilmun's streets. Angels and demons carry out covert plots against one another other in

these streets. The Gods of Netzach consider Dilmun the only truly safe place for them in Hod. As Morpheus is one of their own, they believe he would never let them come to harm. The denizens of Faerie also frequent the City of Morpheus, as the barriers between Hod and Yesod are thin and easily passed through. The Dead from the Twilight World may find sanctuary here if they elude the Grim Reapers long enough. Even more exotic beings like Chesed's Fiends have been spotted on the streets of Dilmun; as long as the minor demons behave themselves, they are welcome to the City of Dreams' delights, just like anyone else who passes through the Gates of Horn.

Dream Ethereals make up most of Dilmun's population. The Oneirokitai hold lectures in auditoriums and public squares, trying to pass wisdom unto the crowd of dreamers around them. Eidolons act as clerks and servants in the various shops lining the streets. They behave exactly as anyone would expect them to and they fulfill their customers' every expectation. Fiercely loyal Mara roam the streets, displaying their grotesqueries to any who cause trouble.

Dreaming humans compose a significant portion of the city's population. About six billion humans live on Earth. A third of them, two billion, are asleep at any given time. An average adult dreams for an hour and a half during her sleep cycle. This means that 380 million people are in the Sephiroth of Hod at any given time. Most of these people never leave their own Panoramas in the Periphery. Still, if only one percent of the dreaming population is within the Domain of Morpheus at any given time, Dilmun's human dreamer population is nearly four million, roughly the population of Los Angeles.

Of course, the number of dreamers in Dilmun varies. Babies spend more hours sleeping and half of that time is spent in Hod. It is not uncommon to see an Oneirokitai Ethereal imparting life-long, subconscious lessons to a crowd of floating infants. This is the reason that the City always seems a little familiar to every dreamer who enters it, for every human being has visited Dilmun at least once as an infant.

The city contains a number of humans who are not dreamers; they are Ghosts who have escaped the confines of the Twilight World or one of the other Death Realms. Almost all of these Ghosts are under three hundred years old. It is rare to meet a Ghost older than that. The Ghosts, just like all other spirits, have a physical presence in the Domain of Morpheus. The dead in Dilmun live a mundane existence—if any-

thing in the City of Dreams can be said to be mundane. Their afterlives in the Dream Realm mirror their actual lives.

Other denizens of Hod also frequent the Domain of Morpheus. Ethereals of every aspect move through the city streets, pursuing their own agenda. Nomadic nature spirit tribes come to the City of Dreams to trade. Dream Lords bring Eidolon caravans to the Tower to pay tribute to the Morpheus.

Some Supernaturals maintain a presence in Hod. After spending a great deal of time in the Dream Realms, Vampyres with the Nightmare power and Kerubim with the Dreamer Theophany sometimes learn the way to Dilmun. As previously mentioned, the Sidhe of Yesod frequent the City of Dreams, too. They enjoy Dilmun's wonders, and Dream Travelers need to be wary of making deals with the Fair Folk, for they delight in tricking others; an unfortunate dreamer might find that she has forfeited her voice in trade for one moment spent in a lost lover's embrace.

Inheritors and Avatars, the gods' progeny, who have the Dreamer Power also come to the City of Morpheus. In fact, a small Covenant of Inheritors, the Daughters of Endymion, have a base in Hod. The Daughters all have the Moon Aspect and wield the Dreamer Power. Dilmun is the only part of Hod in which many members of the Pantheons ever set foot. It is possible to see Thor and Hercules arm wrestling at an outdoor cafe or Athena browsing through a forgotten tome in one of the City of Dreams' many bookshops.

Every artistic work that has ever been imagined can be found here. The complete version of Coolridge's Xanadu is very popular in Hod's bookstores. Numerous symphonies that Mozart did not live long enough to write can be found in music shops here. What an artist visualized before setting paint to canvas is on display in Dilmun's galleries. The restaurants serve dishes that taste like food gourmets dream about when they dream of food. In the city's darker alleyways, any vice or fetish can be indulged. There are always Eidolons who willingly act exactly as the dreamer wishes. It is possible to find almost anything in the City of Dreams. The price for such delights can be almost anything: a favor, a service, a childhood memory, the capacity to love, or a character's first born child. Almost anything at all.

The Tower of Morpheus

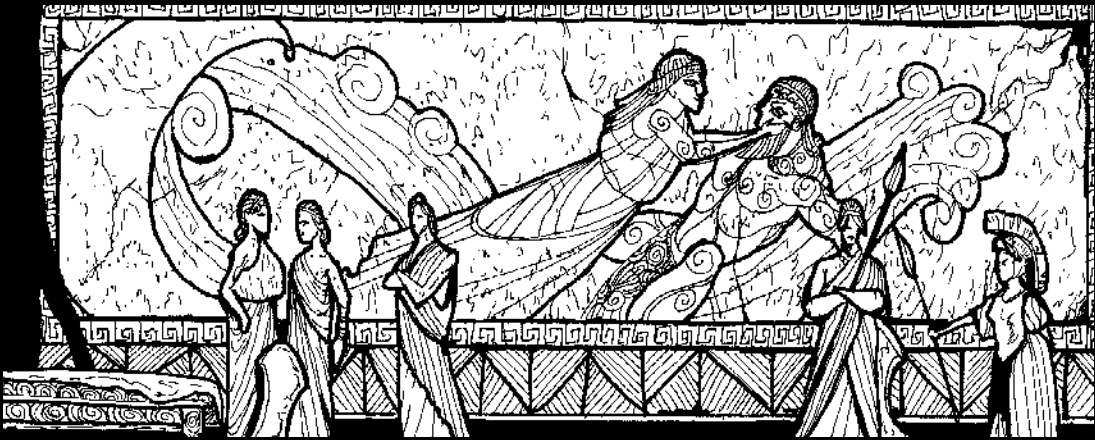
Morpheus rules the Dream Realms from his Ebony Tower, which dwarfs the surrounding city. A dark moat encircles the Tower, which can only be reached by a narrow, Mara-guarded bridge. These Mara sentries appear as whatever the sentient visitor finds most fearful and disturbing. This affects all sentient beings. When Thor visits the Tower of Morpheus, the guards all remind him of the Serpent that will one day unravel him. When Archangel Gabriel visits the Tower, something about the guards reminds him of all the mistakes he has made in leading the Host. On such visits, he begins to think that his own unworthiness prevents the Creator from contacting the Host.

Morpheus does not receive many visitors.

A contingent of Nightmare Ethereals, known as the Bogeyman and his Eight Daughters, guards the Tower's interior. More powerful than the average Mara, they have access to Invocations and other metaphysical powers. The Bogeyman appears as a twisted version of a bishop—a horse's skull miter hides his face. He wears robes made from the skin of infants who have died in their sleep. This nightmarish costume completely covers him, except for his taloned hands, which poke out of his robes' sleeves. The Bogeyman's Daughters appear as primitive women covered in gray mud and wearing a horse's skull over their heads, which also hide their faces.

The Oneirokitai are the Tower's courtiers. These bright, shining figures dressed in ornate robes glide over the dark tiled floor before Morpheus' Ebony Throne. They carry messages from Hod's farthest reaches and speak amongst themselves in whispers, their voices echoing the halls like a quiet chorus.

Phatasus, an Incarnate and Morpheus' younger brother, runs the Tower's daily operations, making sure things get done promptly and efficiently. Phatasus is a serious-looking gentleman with eyes as dark as a starless midnight sky. He is the highest official in the Domain of Morpheus, next to the Dream Lord himself. Most of the Tower's visitors are sent to him.



The Daughters of Endymion

A small Covenant of fifty female Incarnates, the Daughters of Endymion live in the City of Oilmun. Each woman is an Inheritor with the Moon Aspect and each has the Primal Powers of Dream and Magic. The Daughters claim to be descended from the Moon Goddess Selene and her mortal lover Endymion. According to mythology, the Goddess Selene saw Endymion sleeping in a cave on Mount Latmus and neglected her duties to lay with him.

Afterwards, Endymion wished to sleep forever and never age, so that he could spend eternity with his divine lover; Selene granted his wish.

According to the Daughters, this legend comes close to the truth of what actually happened. Selene fell in love with Endymion, a shepherd and Talented Dreamer. She visited him every night and bore him fifty daughters. After a while, Selene, fearing she would lose her mortal lover to old age, placed Endymion in an endless sleep, a coma. Endymion then found himself in one of the Coma Kingdoms, where he visualized himself the Ruler of the Kingdom of Elis, a pastoral Paradise resembling a Maxfield Parrish painting more so than an ancient Greek realm. Elis was Endymion's fantasy Paradise. In Elis, his daughters grew up under bright blue skies and danced through flower-covered fields. Selene visited often, spending more time in this minor Realm in Hod than she did among her Olympian Peers in Netzach.

This lasted for a few centuries, but eventually Elis, the Kingdom of Endless Summer Days, ended. Some say that Endymion eventually left his dream for his final reward in Kether. Others say that Zeus, believing there to be a difference in taking mortals for temporary lovers and dozing on them for hundreds of years, found the whole affair distasteful. When he could no longer stand the thought of Selene wasting her days with the dead mortal shepherd, the Lord of Olympus stole Endymion from Elis and cast him into a dark corner of Geburah. All that is really known, however, is that the Daughters of Endymion returned to Elis one day to find their father gone and his small Dream Realm was quickly fading to nothingness.

The Daughters of Endymion have been in the city of Oilmun ever since. They live in a walled basilica near the Tower of Morpheus. A bright garden, all that remains of their childhood home, grows within the basilica's walls. The Daughters of Endymion no longer associate with the Olympian Gods. They cannot prove Zeus killed their father, but they have their suspicions. The Covenant actually shares many beliefs with the Wicce, and many of the Daughters also have dealings with the Wicce covens on Earth. Some Daughters have even joined some of the Earthly covens, as well, and more join the by the time of Armageddon.

Physical Laws in the Domain of Morpheus

Physical Appearance: Characters who enter the Domain of Morpheus while dreaming appear much as they do in the Periphery: their physical form alters to fit their self-image. Those who enter Dilmun from a Gateway appear as they normally do. Spirits have a physical form in the Domain of Morpheus. A character with the ability to alter her form in the Panorama through dream-manipulating powers may also alter her appearance in the Domain of Morpheus.

Dying: Death is a real danger in the Domain of Morpheus. Injuries may be suffered in Dilmun, and if enough damage is taken, the character either Moves On or is Unraveled. The Domain is not an afterlife, and the dead who dwell here are refugees from other places. If a Ghost or other Undead gets killed in Dilmun without being Unraveled, she finds herself back in Geburah's Threshold. Dreamers and Astral Travelers who have their Essence Pool reduced to zero or less must pass a Difficult Willpower Test to remain in this Dream Realm. The Test suffers a -1 penalty for every point of Essence below zero.

Healing and Injury: Healing a character's Vital Essence or Life Points occurs normally, except for Essence Channelers, who heal the same rate per minute that they recover their Essence.

Sustenance: Entities who require food and drink find the sustenance of the food in this Realm is as nourishing as anything on Earth. The Realm's food is intrinsically different from Earth's food, though, as it is a part of the Sephiroth of Hod. A character who partakes of the Dream City's food and drink finds it more difficult to return to the Waking World. She must pass a Simple Willpower Test to return to Earth, and this Test incurs a cumulative -2 penalty for every meal consumed in Dilmun. Astral Travelers who fail this Test never return to their bodies; any autopsy performed on them shows a cessation of all brain activity, so they are usually proclaimed dead of natural causes. Dreamers who are unable to return to their bodies simply never wake up. Their body goes into a coma and it remains in this state until death or until some other way is found to reunite the dreamer with her sleeping body on Earth.

Supernatural Abilities: All metaphysical powers work normally in Dilmun, except for those that require an intangible spirit body; all spirits appear as physical beings in the City of Dreams. Dream manipulation works on Dilmun's environment as easily as it

works in a character's own Panorama, except for attempts that contradict Morpheus' wishes. It is possible for a Talented Dreamer to create a Zen Garden in the middle of a park in the City of Dilmun; it would be impossible for that same Dreamer to create a bridge leading to a newly fabricated entrance in the Ebony Tower. As a general rule, anything involving the Tower of Morpheus, the surrounding moat, the neighborhoods closest to the Tower, the city walls, and the Gates of Ivory and Horn are impossible for anyone but Morpheus to change.

Akasha, The Realm of Visions

The Sephiroth of Hod mirrors the Waking World. Humanity's dreams shape Hod, and memories of daily events shape those dreams. But memories are not always reliable. They can fade over time, be influenced by preconceived notions, or be altered by others' suggestions.

Akasha, the Realm of Visions, is not the Realm of individuals' contradictory and false memories. It is not even the Realm of the world's combined group consciousness. It is the Realm of the Akashic Record, the universe's memories of itself. Everything that has ever happened, or might ever happen in the future, can be viewed in the Realm of Visions. It is a constantly changing Realm of shifting imagery.

When a Seer touches something and sees images from that object's past, she is viewing images from Akasha. When one of the Inspired has a vision of the future, she is gazing into the possibilities that exist in Akasha. Any Gifted power or supernatural ability that gives the Cast Member information about the past or the future reaches into the Realm of Akasha to retrieve the information.

Most encounters with the Realm of Visions are brief: a Cast Member experiences a short visionary flash and nothing else. Someone with the appropriate dimensional traveling power (like the Traveler Theophany or Soul Projection) may visit Akasha in person. Wandering through Akasha in this manner is disorienting. Each step draws the Cast Member into a different scene from any place and any time, and reaching a specific event's vision requires the Cast Member to pass a Difficult Willpower Test.

If the Cast Member does not pass the Willpower Test, she becomes lost in the randomness of the Realm of Visions. She wanders through Akasha for D10 - (Willpower) hours. If the result is less than one,



she is lost for at least one hour. If the Cast Member fails the Willpower Task with a roll of one, double the time spent in Akasha (the time that passes for any observers in Malkuth or in any other Sephiroth besides Hod). As far as the lost Cast Member can tell, the journey lasts only a few seconds or a millennium. Afterwards, the Cast Member must make another Difficult Willpower Test, and the cycle continues until the Cast Member passes her Test, thus reaching her destination, or until she rolls a number of consecutive ones equal to her Willpower. If she does the latter, she finds herself in a self-contained little Dream World, a Coma Kingdom, and she becomes part of the surrounding fantasy.

The Three Sisters

If a Cast Member is determined and has a strong enough Willpower, she can reach the heart of Akasha and visit the lair of the Three Sisters. An Extraordinary Success (six Success Levels) on the Cast Member's Willpower Test is required to reach their lair. If the Cast Member succeeds, she finds the mists of a thousand different events parting before her to reveal a tall, jagged mountainside. A cave, home to the Three Sisters, can be seen farther up the mountain.

The Sisters dress in simple gray robes and they work diligently on weaving a rich tapestry that contains the Universe's history. Every thread in the Tapestry represents an individual's life. The youngest sister is called Verdandi (Necessity) or Clotho (Spinner), and she appears to be in her late teens or early twenties. She is very attractive and has a pleasant smile, but she is very serious about her work. The middle sister is a matronly woman called Skuld (Being) or Lachesis (Apportioner). She has the short temper of a woman who has spent too many years raising a brood of children. She is the Sister most likely to take offense at being disturbed by visitors. The oldest Sister is called Urd (Fate) or Atropos (Inevitability). She is an ancient woman with wrinkled hands who works patiently at the tapestry. Her eyes look as if they have seen the entire span of human history—they have.

They are the Three Sisters. The Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. Birth, Life, and Death. The Norns. The Moirae. The Fates. Even the most powerful Archangel or Ancient God fears them. They are not to be taken lightly.



The Plane of Ideas

Everything on Earth has some kind of correlation on Hod, even abstract ideas. When the first human societies formed, certain ideas and concepts developed prominently in their cultures: Life, Death, Love, War, the Hunt, and the Harvest. These ideas took on a religious significance and each became associated with a spirit or Ethereal.

No one knows for sure if humanity created Ethereals or if they always existed and were just shaped by mankind's ideas. Either way, it is certain that mankind's ideas significantly influence the Ethereals in modern times; certain Ethereals prove this point. The change in the Love Ethereals from primitive fertility spirits to spirits of romantic love is an example of this influence.

A character who enters the featureless, gray, misty Plane of Ideas finds herself in a formless limbo until she reaches an area under a particular Ethereal's control. Then the landscape becomes a symbolic diorama of that Ethereal's aspect, with different features depending on the particular spirit. A War Ethereal-controlled area may appear as an endless battlefield under a blood red sky, trenches stacked with the dying soldiers of a thousand different wars. A Love Ethereal-controlled area may appear as an ornate hall with an endless, writhing mass of people engaged in an eternal orgy. Vengeance Ethereals might surround themselves with gallows or endless prison cells. City Ethereals are always encountered in urban landscapes.

Every Ethereal has a presence in the Plane of Ideas, possibly because every one was created here. Even the Ethereals dwelling in different Otherworlds, like the Grim Reapers in Geburah or the Angelic Ethereals of Binah, maintain a presence in the Plane of Ideas.

The Red King's Dreaming

"He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee. "And what do you think he's dreaming about?"

Alice said, "Nobody can guess that."

"Why, about you!" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he laid off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"

"Where I am now, of course," said Alice.

"Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if I'm only a sort of thing in his dream, what are you, I would like to know?"

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

—Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*

A hillside castle in the Sephiroth of Hod overlooks a wooded valley of crimson-leaved trees, like maples in autumn. The sky is a burnt golden hue, as if the sun is setting and nightfall is only moments away—but the darkness never comes. The whole valley

seems to be caught in an endless, repeating moment outside time's normal course.

Some parts of the castle, an ornate fortress of red stone, appear Oriental, while others look more Greek or Egyptian. Instead of embracing one particular cultural background, the architecture encompasses all.

A path leads to the castle from the valley below. Two mammoth jackal statues guard the front gate. It is said that the jackals breathe fire upon those deemed unworthy to enter. This could be true or it might be a fantastic tale about this fantastical place.

In the middle of the fortress lies a large courtyard of red cobblestone. An ornate pagoda sits in the courtyard's center. An old man sleeps on a bench lined with red velvet. His face is burned red and is lined with a thousand wrinkles. He could be eighty, ninety, even a hundred years old. Who can say for sure? His snow-white beard and tangled, long white hair surround his face. He wears a gold and crimson robe.

This is the Red King.

He has always been sleeping.

He has always been dreaming.

Some, especially members of the Eastern Associations like the Storm Dragons and the Monks of Shambala, say the Red King is the Creator. These Associations say that the Red King is a manifestation of Siva, the Creator who dwells in Kether, and the universe is the Red King's dream. If the Red King ever woke up, Creation would cease to exist.

Some Western Covenants, like the Rosicrucians and the Templars, say this is an exaggeration. They claim there are nine Tzaddikim, one for each Sephiroth below Kether. The Tzaddikim influence the Sephiroth to which they are associated and it is through their lives that the Creator allows the Universe to continue. The Red King is the Tzaddik of Hod and when his dream ends, Hod ends. There is a Gray Tzaddik who wanders through the urban necropolis that is the City of the Twilight World in Geburah. A white-robed Tzaddik is one of the Kerubim of Binah. A wandering fool acts as the Tzaddik for Yesod. Some members of the Wicce Covenant ascribe to this theory, and they claim the Tzaddik of Malkuth is an old homeless woman who roams from city to city. Every Sephiroth has its own Tzaddik.

All of this is mere conjecture, of course. One thing that is certain, however, is that there is a Red King. He has always been sleeping. He has always been dreaming. And, there is no reason to believe this will ever change.

The Coma Kingdoms

When someone dreams, she creates a Panorama, a small world unto itself, which usually lasts no longer than ninety minutes. The Panoramas vanish and reform every night. But sometimes a Panorama does not vanish and its dreamer never returns to the Waking World. When this happens, the Panorama grows, taking on a life of its own. It then detaches from the Periphery, forming its own separate Dream Realm, a Coma Kingdom.

These Realms were formerly called the Dream Kingdoms and some scholars still refer to them as such. Sometimes the gods help create these Realms, as was the case with Endymion's Coma Kingdom. Sometimes mental aberrations cause them. In such a case, the Dream Kingdom overlaps the Waking World in a person's mind and she interacts with others in the real world through the filter of this Dream Kingdom. Occult historians say that this is what happened to Emperor Norton in 19th-century San Francisco. No one knows if the creation of such Dream Kingdoms is the result of mental illness or merely extremely powerful dreaming.

In modern times, this phenomenon most often occurs in people suffering actual comas. As such a dreamer remains away from the Waking World for a prolonged period of time, this allows the dreamer's Panorama to develop into its own Dream Realm. With the medical advances that keep coma victims alive for a long time, the number of Dream Kingdoms has increased. For this reason, many Gifted now call these Dream Realms Coma Kingdoms.

Whatever the reason for its creation, a Coma Kingdom forms when a Panorama gains independence from the Periphery and becomes its own separate Realm. Whereupon, the separated Panorama gains continuity and drifts away from the surrounding Panoramas, forming its own small Realm, similar to the Death Duchies in Geburah. The dreamer then becomes a Dream Lord and has absolute power over her Kingdom, consciously or subconsciously.

The Dream Kingdom of Otis Kline

Otis Kline is a Talented Dreamer born on January 1, 1900. His family lived in a dilapidated tenement building in New York City and Otis often used his imagination as refuge from his everyday living conditions. At the age of five, Otis began Lucid Dreaming. He created a surrealistic art nouveau Sanctuary, which he called Steephaven. He filled his Panorama with exotic animals, like zebras and camels, and fantastical beings, like giants and mermaids. Young

Otis' Lucid Dreaming Skill was not fully developed yet, however, and he could never truly believe that anything good could happen to him. Because of this, his dreams always took a bad turn. When Otis kissed a beautiful princess, she shattered into tiny glass shards. When he tried climbing a stairway that reached into the heavens, it collapsed. Otis did not learn to fully control his dreams until he turned 15. At that point, he was able to prevent the bad things from happening within them. But, by then, his parents had sent him to an asylum.

In the asylum, Otis Kline retreated to Steephaven more and more often, and eventually began encountering beings from his Panorama while still awake. This marked the beginning of his Dreamscape's separation from the Periphery. For the next decade, he fully immersed himself in his Dreamscape. He fell into a coma in 1934. Steephaven then became one of the Coma Kingdoms and Otis spent the rest of his existence there. Although Otis' body died on July 4, 1976, Steephaven remains—with Otis still in it.

In Steephaven, Otis Kline appears as the five-year-old boy who first dreamed this Realm. The Princess Cowberry, who claims to be King Morpheus' daughter, is his best friend. His other companions include Doctor Pastille and Impy the Clown. Otis and his friends spend their time playing exotic games, racing flying kangaroos, or mingling with pirates.

They also visit folkloric beings, like Santa Claus or Jack Frost.

The Princess Cowberry is an Eidolon who represents Otis' ideal girl. She is slightly older than him, possibly seven or eight. The Princess gained self-awareness when Otis entered the asylum. She protects Otis and does not want anything bad to happen to him. She also never wants him to leave Steephaven. Doctor Pastille, a funny-looking man in a top hat and a long coat, is actually an Oneirokitaí who had tried to help Otis through his madness. Now that

Otis is dead, Doctor Pastille is trying to get Otis to Move On. Impy the Clown is an Eidolon who gained self-awareness in 1934, when Otis slipped into a coma.

Impy wants to get rid of Otis and rule Steephaven for himself.

All three of Otis' companions are at odds with one another. A wide variety of characters from Kline's childlike imagination also live in Steephaven, but none of these Eidolons have developed self-awareness; they all act just as Otis expects the mermaid and monkeys they represent to act.

Morpheus enjoys the innocent Dream Lord and sometimes invites him and his entourage to the City of Oilmun. When Morpheus appears to Otis, he takes the form of a jolly, old, bearded man, who looks something like Santa Claus in gold and white robes, instead of a fur-trimmed red suit. Morpheus also carries a bag of sand, not toys. If the occult scholars who say that the best dreamers keep the Dream Realms flowing with Essence, then

Morpheus intends to keep Otis in Steephaven for as long as possible.



Some Dream Lords only experience a limited lucidity while in their own Kingdom. This kind of Dream Lord is like Peter Pan, in that Never-Never Land exists solely for her, and she can fly when she wants, or say whatever she likes to the Lost Boys. She does not control Captain Hook or any of the other Eidolons' actions.

The physical laws of the Coma Kingdoms are almost identical to those of the Periphery, though the Kingdom's Dream Lord can certainly wish certain changes into existence. The Dream Lord gains a +5 bonus to any Task related to manipulating her Dream Realm, while others suffer a -3 penalty to do the same. For the most part, the Kingdoms are just fantasy worlds through which the dreamer wanders completely oblivious to her environment's true nature. Eidolons cluster in the Coma Kingdoms and take on specific personas in the Realm. Sometimes this leads to an Eidolon becoming self-aware, much like when a Dybbik is formed (see p. 122). However, an Eidolon in a specific Coma Kingdom remains in that Realm. Sometimes it acts in the same manner as it did before, but during other times it may seek to usurp the Kingdom from the Dream Lord.

When the Dreamer dies in the Waking World, her soul remains in the Coma Kingdom. While she continues to exist in the Dream Kingdom of her creation, she is completely oblivious to her current state. The Dreamer often develops a Weird Delusion, or specific mental block, that keeps her from realizing that she has been living in a particular Coma Kingdom for decades or centuries without noticeable change.

It is harder for a character to Move On from a Coma Kingdom than it is from the Garden of Earthly Delights. At least in the Garden, the character knows that she has died and eventually realizes that there must be more to Heaven than what she is experiencing. The Dream Lords do not even know that they are dead.

WitchCraft Covenants in the Dream Realms

The Wicce

The Wicce Covenant has no real central authority, so what might be true for one coven is certainly not true for all. That being said, a connection between the Wicce and the Dream Realms exists. A Shamanistic Association dedicated to the Goddess Freya in Northern Europe, called the Seior, specialized in Divination and had many Eagle Spirit Patrons, which connected them to Akasha and the First World. It was rumored that the Seior's High Priestess often traveled to the Realm of Akasha to confer with the Three Sisters. By the Middle Ages, the Wicce Covenant had assimilated the Seior.

The Natural World is very important to the Wicce. Like the Shamanistic Covenants, the Wicce sometimes travel to the First World, where they seek particular types of nature spirits or ask advice from Ancestor Spirits (approaching the Ancestor Spirits has to be done carefully; while the Ancestors eagerly help members of their particular Nation, they do not like to be bothered by Outsiders). The Wicce sometimes meet with the Goddess in the First World, as well. The Earth Mother Gaia comes to the Dream Realms as often as she travels to Netzach or Malkuth, and the Huntress Diana sometimes stalks prey through the First World.

Finally, many of the Bast are also members of the Wicce Covenant, so the Wicce have connections to the City of Bubastis, the Dream Realm of the feline shape-shifters.

The Rosicrucians

The Rosicrucians have a scholarly interest in the Sephiroth of Hod. Some believe that the answers to all secrets can be found in the Realm of Akasha or in the lost tomes circulating in the City of Dilmun. The difficult part, of course, is finding something that is truly a piece of lost lore. Since observers can easily alter Hod's reality, the Brotherhood believes that information gathered in the Realm is ultimately unreliable.

The Grand Masters are rumored to meet somewhere in the Sephiroth of Hod once a year. Some claim they meet in the Garden of Earthly Delights or in Shambala; others claim they meet in their own cor-

ner of the Plane of Ideas. Still, others say that they meet in their own secret Dream Realm.

Those at the top of the Rosicrucian Hierarchy are aware of the Sammael Gate, but they have yet to find any means of closing the Breach. They have not spent much time in the Tainted Wasteland studying this phenomenon, however, for they fear becoming infected with the Taint.

The Twilight Order

Members of the Benandanti, the "Good Walkers" from the Friuli region of Italy, started the world's largest Necromantic Covenant. The group combined Italian, German, and Slavic metaphysical traditions. People who were born with the caul on their face, a sign of the Gifted, composed the Benandanti. On the Ember Days (the Solstice and Equinox Days of Power), the Benandanti would enter the Valley of Josaphet and fight back an army of evil spirits with fennel sticks. The Benandanti had the power to shapechange while in this Otherworld and they used this power to thwart the evil army's efforts.

Occult historians believe the Benandanti were Lucid Dreamers who possessed the Transformation and Flight Visualizations. Their Valley of Josaphet was actually the Wasteland, and the evil armies they fought were the Night Terrors entering Hod from the Breach. This may be true, but the Twilight Order has come a long way from their Benandanti roots. Now, the Sephiroth of Geburah most concerns the Order. If there are Benandanti who still fight on the Days of Power, they are a separate Association from the Twilight Order.

The Cabal of Psyche

Many Seers have dealings in the Otherworld of Hod. Theorists claim the information gathered through Mindtime and Mindview comes from the Realm of Akasha. They also say that Mindread, Mindtalk, and Mindrule can be used to manipulate the Periphery in order to accomplish psychic feats. This may or may not be true.

Certain powers allow a Seer to enter Hod. Mind Travel facilitates wandering through the Otherworlds, Mind Dream allows the Seer to enter and control others' dreams, and Mind Read allows the Seer to observe an individual's Panorama. Mind Talk can be used to send messages to a person, even if she is dreaming. Lucid Dreaming seems to be fairly common among the Cabal's members.

The Council of Elders holds secret meetings once a year. Many believe the Council holds these meetings in various locations in the Sephiroth of Hod; this is similar to the rumor about the Rosicrucian Grand Masters. Maybe both groups do meet in the Dream Realm or maybe the rumors are just shadows of truth about an even older group whose leadership meets in the Otherworld of Dreams.

The Sentinels

Many of the Inspired can perform the Miracle of Visions, and that those Visions may ultimately derive from the Realm of Akasha. Other than this, the Sentinels do not have much contact with the Sephiroth of Hod.

The Iscariots

The Iscariots are more concerned with Earth than the Otherworlds. However, some Iscariots suspect that Mad God Cultists enter the ranks of their enemy, the Combine. So, those Iscariots who can enter the Dream Realms begin to worry about the Breach in the Wastelands.

The House of Thanatos

The Thanatoi are much more concerned with the Death Realms of Geburah than the Dream Realms of Hod. They have very little to do with the Otherworld of Dreams.

The Pariahs

Having survived horrible traumas, the Pariahs can draw on those experiences to perform Disciplines of the Flesh. Their traumatic experiences also make them prone to Recurring Nightmares, though. Sometimes these nightmares derive from natural psychological phenomenon, and sometimes supernatural entities cause them. The Mara are attracted to the Pariahs like sharks to a bleeding fish.

The Storm Dragons

The Storm Dragons believe that, with the right training, anyone can become Gifted: Body, Mind, and Spirit can all be molded to form a perfect instrument. Lucid Dreaming can be used to confront the hidden secrets of one's own psyche. Some Storm Dragons use Dream Work as part of the process of spiritual growth.

A legend exists of an actual Dragon from Yesod leading the Storm Dragons. The Dragon is rumored to live in the Kun Lun Mountains of Shambala. The rumor is false.

The Templars

The Templars keep up with events in Hod. Some Templars develop the Lucid Dreaming Skill and travel through the Dream Realms in search of lost knowledge. Those who know about the Breach seek ways to close it. Templars like the Sephiroth of Hod because it is the one Otherworld where even a Mundane can defeat a Seraphim or a Pagan God. Any of the Creator's wayward servants might find themselves quite overmatched when facing a Templar in the Dream Realms—the Templars find that thought very satisfying.

The Brotherhood of Legba

The Loas, Patron Spirits to the Legba, often choose to meet their mounts in the Dream Realms. They do not fear harm from their worshippers because they believe their worshippers' devotion to be absolute and unwavering. Most of the dead the voodoo priests control dwell in Geburah, but sometimes the voodoo practitioner must search the First World for an Ancestor, especially when searching for older souls who died in West Africa, where the practice of voodoo first developed.

The Nomads

The Ferals are unique beings: humans whose Essence has been fused with a nature spirit's, giving them a split nature. Sometimes a dreaming Feral has her own Panorama in the Periphery, but other times she roams the First World with other nature spirits. Her dreams are the dreams of her animal form. Each Nomad family's founder is said to dwell in the First World, and when a Feral dies, it is believed that she goes to join all her family members who died before her.

The Lodge of the Undying

When a True Immortal first changes, he has a series of vague, incomplete visions about a Lost Civilization, the Kingdom of Atlantis. The Immortals believe that experiencing a complete vision of the Kingdom of Atlantis would reveal every lost secret. Those Immortal scholars who know about the Realm

of Akasha are eager to explore it; unfortunately, an Immortal cannot easily do so. Some Colleges of the Undying Lodge have sponsored dream research and have gathered Seers and Talented Dreamers to help them explore Akasha. So far, nothing has come of it. Maybe the memories of Atlantis are too deep to be easily reached.

The Mockers

Many Mockers know about the Breach and those capable of entering the Wasteland in the Sephiroth of Hod have investigated the Sammael Gate. Some Mockers even entered the Breach, looking for a way to close it from the other side; most of them never came back. The Taint overwhelmed them and they quickly became minions to the Mad Gods.

Armageddon Covenants in the Dream Realms

The Alliance

The Alliance contains many different people with various talents. Some can wander the Dream Realms, and they use this advantage in their fight against the Leviathan. The Alliance has considered possible methods for closing the Breach. One such outrageous possibility the group has considered is waking the Red King, whom they believe is Hod's Tzaddik. Of course, this would prevent anyone from ever dreaming again, but the Breach would be closed. Other Alliance members believe that Hod could only end if they killed the Red King, a drastic solution that the Alliance is not eager to try — yet.

The Pantheons

Many of the Pantheons enjoy the Dream Realms. Morpheus is a Pagan God just like them and he is usually extremely courteous to visitors from Netzach. Some deities like the Coyote prefer Hod's First World to Netzach's God Realms. Those who serve as Sprit Patrons like to meet their servants in their Panoramas; some deities also meet their Avatars in dreams, as well. However, the lesson of Telepinu (see p. 91) is not lost on the Pantheon — the deities know the dangers even a lowly Mundane can pose for them in the Dream Realms.

The Heavenly Host

Dumah is the Host's representative in Hod. She drifts through the Dream Realms, silently observing all that goes on. She is also the only Seraphim who has anything to do with Hod. Some among the Host, like the servants of Michelle, say that Gabriel sent Dumah to the Dream Realms because he did not want her in Elysium. In an *Armageddon* campaign, Michelle's servants no longer dwell in Binah, anyway.

The Kerubim do not fear Hod as their angelic brethren do. Kerubim who can manipulate the Dreamscape often do their work in the Periphery or gather in the City of Dilmun. Some Kerubim even dream in the Periphery.

The Infernal Legion

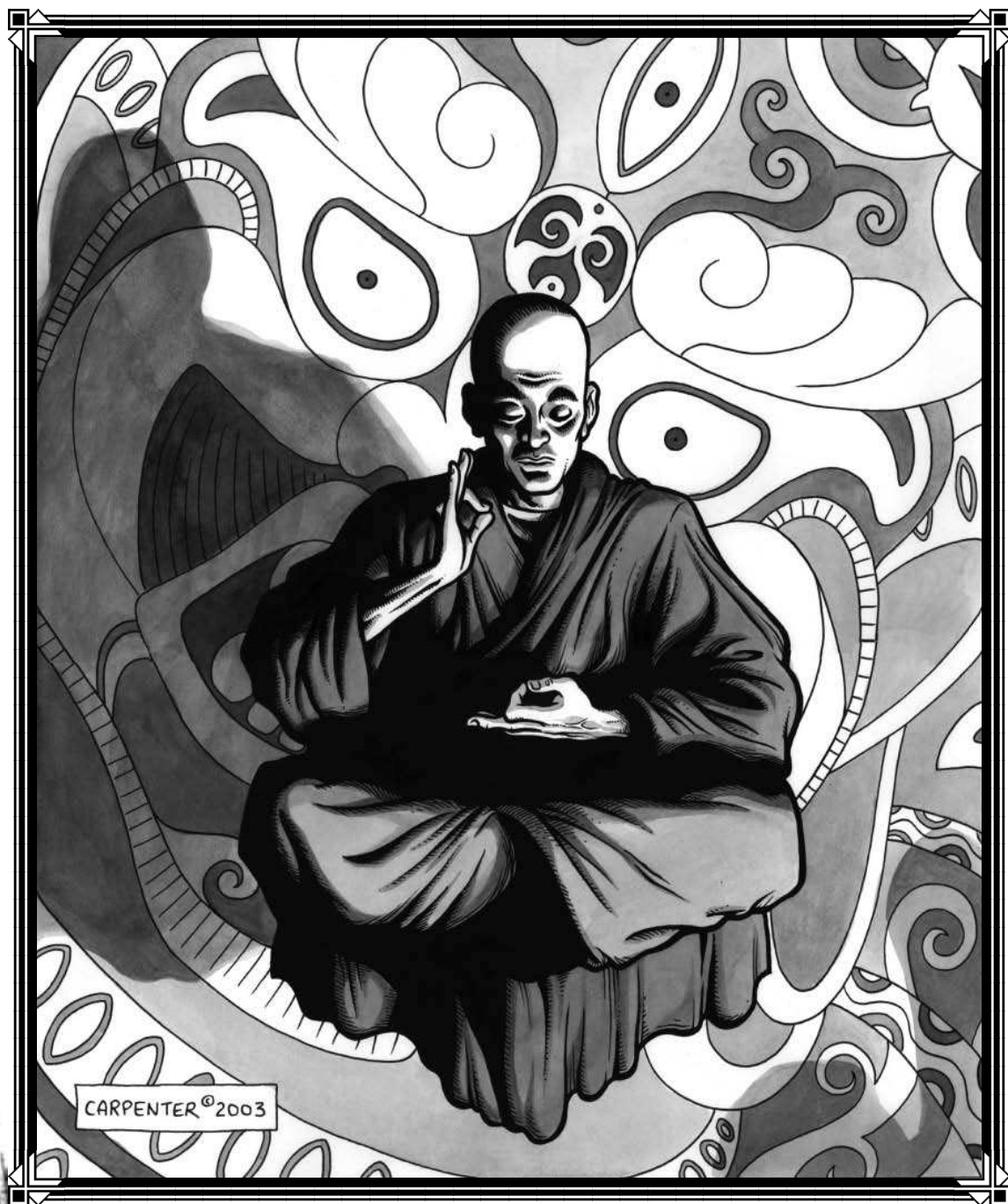
The Fallen have less of a presence in the Dream Realms than the Heavenly Host. Still, a number of beings from Abaddon frequent the City of Dilmun, using it as a neutral territory to meet with denizens of the Otherworlds. No Qliphonim has ever developed a Dreamer Malefecia, though the Infernal Legion whispers that this is not strictly true. An Abaddon rumor exists that a Greater Qliphonim named Naameh has been using this power for thousands of years as a secret weapon in the war against the Host. They say that she answers only to Lucifer himself, so only he knows this story's veracity.

The Watchers

A founder of the Watchers, the Archangel Azazel has not been seen since those first days after leaving Binah, though reported sightings circulate throughout the Watchers. Some have reported seeing Azazel talking to Dumah, shopping in Dilmun, or sitting at the Three Sisters' feet, learning their secrets. Because Hod is malleable, skeptics point out that dreamers often see what they want to see, so these sightings are more than likely illusions, nothing more.

The Bodhisattva, uplifted human souls who are neither Kerubim nor Oliphonim living in Shambala, also interest the Watchers. They feel these neutral souls should be a part of their Association, and have tried to make in-roads among them. Still, the Bodhisattva continue to serve the Order of Shambala.

Chapter Four: Associations



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Michael Looks-Twice sat at a roadside diner and pondered what he should do next to keep the Crow Spirits, his Totems, happy. As Totems went, they were very high maintenance, always demanding he play great tricks on people. He did not really need the spirits anymore, as he had powerful medicine of his own now, but the Crow Spirits gave him an extra edge to deal with the approaching Dark Times.

Still, keeping the Crow Spirits happy was like trying to keep a small child entertained. The Spirits reminded him of his cousin Kimimela. Though she got on his nerves most of the time, there was no denying that she was useful. She made the best fry bread around, after all.

From his booth, Michael watched Kimimela hurriedly prepare orders in the kitchen beyond the counter. Only 16, she had acquired the head cook's job in this culinary death-trap dump of a diner and she was very good at it. Of course, the place specialized in overly greasy food designed to keep truckers' insides well lubricated. Even so, Kim occasionally strayed from the usual menu and offered up something special like her fry bread. She was preparing a batch for him just then, and his mouth was already beginning to water.

Thinking so intently about the bread, he almost missed the fact that two men had just entered the diner.

As the restaurant was not too far from the Rez, its customers were a mix of Indians and Whites. For the most part, everyone got along. Few hardcore, redneck cowboys frequented the place looking for some Native American ass to kick. It happened occasionally, of course, but it was not the norm.

The two young men that walked in had that certain expression that Looks-Twice immediately recognized as the White Man's traditional "Gonna Raise Hell on the Rez" face. The two walked straight up to Michael and his cousin.

The first one stank of cheap beer when he spoke, "How Chief. We want-em eat food now."

The second one howled at the joke. "Dang, Butch, you sound just like a Redskin when you talk like that."

"Check it out, Earl," replied Butch to his companion, "there's a young squaw behind the counter."

Earl squinted at Kim. "She sure is a pretty one, too!"

Kimimela edged away from the counter with a look of fear in her eyes. Michael Looks-Twice just rolled his eyes. All he had wanted out of the day was some of his cousin's fry bread for lunch. He was not in the mood for Cletus the Slack Jawed Yokel and his sidekick. When Michael stood up, Butch grabbed him by the shoulders and threw him into one of the booths. Looks-Twice slid across the table and slammed against the glass window. This Butch guy was pretty strong.

Michael Looks-Twice tasted blood, and angered, he immediately began to channel Essence. The two good old boys did not realize they were about to experience a whole new world of pain and humiliation. The Crow Spirits would indeed be happy this day.

Introduction

This chapter introduces three new Associations; the Native American Ghost Dancers, the two opposing sects of the Society of Assassins, and the oppressed Enlightened Masters of the Order of Shambala. It also gives two examples of Shamanistic Solitaire Covenants: the Australian Wizards of Oz and the Apoanu Apyabaiba of the Amazonian Rainforest.

The Ghost Dancers

Shamanistic Covenants exist worldwide, practicing the Old Ways that bond the Shaman to his environment. Even the Wicce rarely achieve the harmonious link with nature that the Shamans possess. The approaching Reckoning threatens this link. The Earth cries out and Shamans throughout the world struggle to heal and restore her. Operating strictly on a local level makes healing her very difficult, however.

The Ghost Dancers are different. They cover all of North America and include members from almost every Native American Nation, from Seminoles to Apaches to Inuits to Cherokee. The Two Prophets' Vision unites them—a vision of a world where their people live in harmony with nature and the White Man no longer controls the Nations.

As the Reckoning approaches, the Ghost Dancers see this Vision threatened. Twisted spirits prey on the living, cultists foolishly summon Mad Gods, and the Combine works to ensure the Vision never comes to fruition. Yet, the Ghost Dancers vow to conquer these threats, and in doing so, they know they will achieve Paradise on Earth.

History

By their nature, Shamanistic groups tend to operate like Solitaires. They are small and insular, and the Shaman only concerns himself with his particular village or tribe. This holds true of Shamans that band together in places like the Amazon or Australia. They are still basically Solitaires who have a loose and informal confederation with other Solitaires for mutual assistance purposes.

One Shaman visionary led to the creation of the Ghost Dancers as a true Covenant: the Prophet Wodziwob (Gray Hair). His teachings bind the Covenant together. The Prophet was a Walker Lake Paiute, who was also known as Fish Lake Joe. He led a reasonably normal existence until the Pine Harvest

Festival in 1869. While attending this festival, the Paiute entered into a trance in which he had a vision of ascending to Kether and meeting the Creator. He was given a glimpse of an earthly paradise in which the dead returned to lands of the living and the White Man only settled east of the Mississippi. In this vision, the buffalo returned in great numbers, and the Native Americans returned to a harmonious existence with their environment.

The Creator promised Wodziwob that this Paradise would come to be if the People lived in peace and returned to the Old Ways. When the Vision ended, Wodziwob began preaching his new message in hopes of bringing about this revealed Paradise on Earth. His teachings spread from northern Nevada to California and then throughout the Great Basin. Wodziwob had an assistant named Tavibo who preached in Nevada and impressed his audience by controlling the weather. The original Ghost Dancer Movement was confined to Nevada and California until Tavibo's son Wovoka also experienced the Vision.

Wovoka's Vision took place on January 1, 1889, during a solar eclipse. He also ascended to Kether, where the Creator revealed to him Paradise on Earth: the living and dead Native Americans in a replenished West and the Europeans confined to the East. Wovoka spread his message throughout the American West. The Ghost Dancer Movement gained many converts from various Nations and the Association took root and flowered. Wovoka knew many Invocations—he taught Shielding and Empowerment to warrior Shamans from the Lakota and Arapahoe Nations. The Ghost Dancers used these Invocations to create Ghost Shirts, which made their warriors invulnerable to bullets, allowing them to stand against the White Man's superior firepower.

One of Ghost Dancers' converts was Tatanka Iyotaka, also known as Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull defeated Custer at Little Big Horn in 1876, but by 1890, he had surrendered himself to protect his people. Several years earlier, he toured with Buffalo Bill, making himself a sideshow attraction in hopes that he could somehow prevent the United States from taking drastic measures against his Nation and his People. This was an act of desperation and it failed. Sitting Bull regained hope when he became a Ghost Dancer in 1890.

Within a few months of Wovoka's Vision, the Ghost Dancers were on the verge of winning a most-



The Ghost Dancers and the Leviathan

The Ghost Dancer Shamans knew about the Leviathan before the Reckoning. According to their legends, the Creator caused a great flood to destroy a Primordial Evil (whom the Ghost Dancers call by its Cherokee name, Uktena). During this flood, a race of Immortals died. This was also a time when the Bright Shining People fought with Uktena's corrupted ones. The Serpent Mounds in Ohio were created to remember this time. Further, the Navajo say that Uktena's flaming body caused the meteor crater when he fell to the Earth during his final defeat.

The Ghost Dancers also have a legend particular to their Covenant. The legend says that it was not the Bright Shining Ones or the Immortals who finally defeated the Uktena Leviathan; a powerful human Shaman named Aganunitsi did. He killed Uktena by removing a jewel in its head, a crystal called the Ulunsuti. This crystal was the Leviathan's equivalent of a pituitary gland, and without it, the Mad God could not manipulate Taint.

The Ulunsuti crystal was said to have great powers. It could heal any injury or illness—only, it used Taint to do so. In fact, Aganunitsi, a precursor to the Mockers, became Tainted from contact with this item, although he managed to retain some of his humanity. The Ghost Dancers believe Aganunitsi later hid the Ulunsuti so that it could not be used for evil. Some say that he buried it somewhere in North America. Others say that he removed from it from Malkuth and hid it in a remote corner of Hod.

While no one knows for sure if the Ulunsuti even exists, some believe that, if found, it could be used to defeat the Dark Apostle and the Army of Revelations. Then again, maybe its use would allow the Mad Gods to manifest on Earth. Either option could make the search for the Ulunsuti the theme for an entire campaign.

ly non-violent revolution against the United States through the use of Shamanistic Invocations. The Ghost Dancers' success concerned the Combine and they quickly got involved, turning the tide against the Native American Covenant. The bulletproof Ghost Shirts and other Invocations ceased working. Red Tomahawk and Bullhead, Indian police and Combine pawns, murdered Sitting Bull. Afterwards, many Ghost Dancers were hunted down and slaughtered. The Ghost Dancers gathered at Wounded Knee on December 28, 1890. The Seventh Cavalry surrounded the group and on the next day ordered the surrender of all rifles. One of the Ghost Dancers, a deaf young man named Black Coyote, did not hear the command and held his rifle high. Because of this, the Seventh Cavalry massacred every man, woman, and child at Wounded Knee, killing 153 people that day and wounding many more who later died, as well. In contrast, the soldiers only lost 25 men and had 39 wounded, mostly by friendly fire.

Before 1890 ended, the Ghost Dancers had been completely wiped out.

At least, the Combine and the rest of America believed them all destroyed. They were wrong. The Ghost Dancers still existed. The tragedy at Wounded Knee just forced them underground. By working in secret, they survived into the next century. While their public revolution resoundingly failed, the Ghost Dancers still clung to their Vision. By the end of the 20th century, their numbers swelled to their original numbers and included Shamans and representatives from almost every Native American Nation in North America.

Beliefs

Fulfilling the Vision of Paradise on Earth remains the most important thing to the Ghost Dancers. The Creator promised the Two Prophets that the People could achieve this Paradise if they lived in peace and harmony and returned to the Old Ways. In this Paradise, the dead and the living would reunite, the buffalo would return to the plains, and the White Man would leave the West and settle east of the Mississippi. The People would at last be at peace.

If this happened, it would truly be Heaven on Earth.

Of course, the Promise is conditional. It can only happen if the Nations keep their side of the bargain: they must return to the Old Ways. This means no more alcohol, cable TV, or McDonalds. Completely

returning to the Old Ways is very difficult to accomplish in the modern world. The Ghost Dancers see the approaching Reckoning as a sign of their failure. Caught up in the modern world's distractions, the People find the return to the Old Ways more difficult than rebuilding the Covenant after the massacre at Wounded Knee. The People, as a whole, continue to forget their stories, traditions, and language.

But Ghost Dancers will not let the Dream die; it is too important to them. They teach their ancestors' language, they recite the old stories, and they struggle to convert the People to the Old Ways. The Ghost Dancers will do whatever it takes to claim the Paradise promised them.

And this time, they will not let the Combine destroy their Dream before it takes root.

Organization

The Ghost Dancers are a loose organization, much like the Wicce and the Legbans, who hold a similar outlook and philosophy. Most members of the Covenant live on the reservations and it is on the Rez that their influence is strongest. Still, the Ghost Dancers are not completely unknown in the city. Native American communities exist everywhere, though maintaining the Old Ways in an urban environment is almost impossible. It is also important to note that a Ghost Dancer Shaman who operates in an urban environment is not an Urban Shaman. Urban Shamans are Solitaires who improvise a lot of their magic, and they do not necessarily keep to the Old Ways. The Ghost Dancers do not approve of the Urban Shaman's outlook.

There are three different Ghost Dancer types: Braves, Medicine Men and Women, and Shamans.

The Ghost Dancers' Braves consist mostly of Mundane warriors, though some Lesser Gifted and Supernaturals fill their ranks (especially in an *Armageddon* campaign, where Avatars and Inheritors have joined the Ghost Dancers). They practice war and have mastered the spear and the bow. The Braves are faced with a paradox, however. The Creator's promised Paradise on Earth would come when the Nations lived in peace and returned to the Old Ways, but the Braves, by definition, are not peaceful. Even though they use violence only in extreme circumstances, the fact that they are warriors violates the Creator's Promise. While the Braves learn the Old Ways, like other Ghost Dancers, and use the weapons of old, the spear and the bow, sometimes

those weapons just do not cut it. So, when dealing with Tainted beings or Combine agents, the Braves use modern weapons to accomplish their goals—even though modern weapons are definitely not part of the Old Ways.

As Ghost Dancers, the Braves follow an altered version of the Vision, one that first spread among the Plains Indians in the last decades of the 19th century. In this version of the Vision, the People push the White Man off the continent and the Nations regain control of the land. To them, the Creator's mandate to live in peace only applies to living in peace with other Nations, meaning the Crow, Black Foot, Lakota, Navajo, and Apaches must forget their differences and come together as brothers.

The Medicine Men and Women are those who receive their powers through Spirit Patrons. Most of them were not born Gifted; the spirits chose them, usually during a Vision Quest, and imbued them with Metaphysical powers. The Medicine Men deal with things on a local level. Their concern is for their own community only. Medicine Men and Women rarely leave the Rez and they have little contact with the outside world.

The Shamans are the Gifted and Lesser Gifted members of the Ghost Dancers. They are powerful workers of magic and some even exhibit the same powers as the Two Prophets. Like the Medicine Men, Shamans serve their community's needs, but they also aid the world as a whole. Some Shamans even wander across the globe, looking for signs of supernatural activity or Combine interference. Shamans often work with the Braves, and those with the proper training create Ghost Shirts for the Braves to wear. Some Shamans try to follow the promise of the Prophets' Vision, living in peace and harmony with everyone, but some follow the Braves' revisionist beliefs, believing that living in peace does not extend to the White Man.

A Council of Elders leads the Ghost Dancers. These thirteen leaders include members from various Nations across North America, mainly in the United States and Canada. Until the events of *Armageddon*, the Council includes a Mexican Zapatista, as well. The Council meets in secret somewhere in the Hod's First World, where its members confer with Ancestor Spirits and the Two Prophets. The Ghost Dancers also hold a mandatory Pow Wow once a year. Located in a different North American place every year, the Pow Wow is a time of celebration and planning.

Allies and Enemies

The Ghost Dancers are more unified than most Shamanistic groups. Every Ghost Dancer believes in the Two Prophets' Vision; belief in this Vision binds them, even though two different interpretations of the Vision exist.

Just as the Ghost Dancers differ on the Vision's true meaning, they also differ in dealing with other groups. While the following statements are true about the majority of Ghost Dancers, they are by no means universal. The Braves are notoriously intolerant of outsiders and the Coyote Ferals are notoriously open-minded. One thing does remain universally true of all Ghost Dancers: they hate the Combine.

The Wicce: The Wicce and the Ghost Dancers have a great relationship for the most part. They have similar attitudes in their approach to Magic, and both hold a deep reverence for Nature. They both have ties to environmental groups and social activists, and both Covenants have similar goals. But the Wicce also have strong ties to the New Age Movement. This means that the Wicce associate with people who trivialize the Old Ways, turn the Sacred Places of Power into tourist attractions, and blithely declare themselves Shamans of their own "Indian Tribes." Some Ghost Dancers find this cultural disrespect hard to ignore and this often affects the Covenant's relationship with the Wicce. Usually, only the Braves blame the Wicce for other peoples' actions; most Ghost Dancers get along with the Wicce just fine.

The Rosicrucians: Relationships with the Rosicrucians are not nearly as bad as one would expect. The Ghost Dancers tend to view the Rosicrucians as the epitome of what is wrong with White Culture, and the Rosicrucians first treated the Ghost Dancers as Noble Savages who still had a lot to learn. This has caused the two Covenants to ignore each other more than anything else.

The Council of Elders knows a lot more about Rosicrucians' history than the average Ghost Dancer, because the Council's members have made it their business to learn all that they can about the Combine. And, they can empathize with the Rosicrucians, since the Combine also sabotaged one of their magical revolutions—not to the extent of Wounded Knee, however. Still, the Rosicrucians were trying to bring about a Paradise on Earth.



The Twilight Order and the House of Thanatos: The Ghost Dancers do not deal with the Dead Realms of Geburah. When a Shaman wants to contact one of his departed ancestors, he does so in the Periphery or the First World. As such, the Ghost Dancers have little contact with either Necromantic Covenant.

The Cabal of Psyche: Many Shamans have Seer powers in addition to Invocations. As such, a Native American with Seer Gifts may come to the attention of both the Ghost Dancers and the Cabal. The two Covenants get along well enough with each other, but the Cabal believes the Ghost Dancers diminish their powers by surrounding them with primitive superstitions. For their part, most Ghost Dancers believe the Cabal has an overly rationalistic view of the world, which in turn limits their abilities.

The Sentinels: The Sentinels are associated with missionaries and the attempted destruction of Native American culture in the minds of the Ghost Dancers. This Shamanistic Covenant tries to avoid the Inspired Monster Killers whenever possible. The Sentinels are not really aware of the Ghost Dancers' full strength; they tend to think of the Dancers as a Solitaire group allied with the Wicce.

The Iscariots and the Pariahs: The Ghost Dancers do not have many dealings with the Repentant Vampyres or the Shapeshifting Beggars. Usually, the only time they come in contact is when both groups are trying to stop the same Combine cell.

The Storm Dragons and the Order of Shambala: The Storm Dragons and the Order of Shambala work in completely different parts of the world than the Ghost Dancers, so the groups rarely have dealings with each other. Most Ghost Dancers find the Storm Dragons' philosophies preferable to the Sentinels' beliefs, but the Ghost Dancers and the Dragons rarely give each other much thought. The Order of Shambala respects the Ghost Dancers' philosophy, and that respect is reciprocated. The average Ghost Dancer, however, has only heard of the Order of Shambala through rumors.

The Legbans: The Brotherhood of Legba and the Ghost Dancers are strong allies. The Legbans' Voodoo and the Ghost Dancers' Shamanism have a lot in common, and the Legbans show proper respect to the nature spirits the Dancers revere. The majority of Ghost Dancers think of the Legbans as allies who cover geographic areas where their own influence is weak.

The Lodge of the Undying: The Immortals and the Ghost Dancers have little in common with each other, and they rarely come into contact. Some Lodge members believe that the Atlantis' survivors fled to the Americas, so hints about the culture of Athal Kananthu can be found in Native American legends. Lodge Scholars are particularly interested in the leg-

end of the Uktena and the possibility that the Ulunsuti might actually exist.

The Nomads: Most Ghost Dancers view the Nomads as fellow nature servants, something akin to the Animal Spirit Nations in the First World. As the Ghost Dancers have Coyote Ferals and Shapeshifters among them, this strengthens the bond between the two groups.

The Mockers: Most Ghost Dancers believe that the Creator empowered the Mockers to aid them in ensuring the Uktena never returns. As such, the Ghost Dancers consider them to be Holy People. Of course, most Mockers do not even know the Ghost Dancers exist.

The Templars, The Society of Assassins, and the Combine: The Combine is the most powerful enemy the Ghost Dancers have ever faced—it almost wiped out the Native American Covenant at Wounded Knee. Because of this, the Ghost Dancers have declared a secret war on the Combine. The Ghost Dancers are distrustful of any person or group they believe may be connected to the Combine.

Like most other Covenants in the world, the Ghost Dancers do not know that the Society of Assassins is composed of two opposing sects, with the Ruya'ha Sect often being blamed for the Alamut Sect's actions. Since the Alamut Sect's actions serve the Combine, the Ghost Dancers assume all Assassins are Combine pawns.

Ironically enough, the Ghost Dancers also believe that the Templars are Combine pawns. The Knights

use the same kind of political manipulations as the Combine, and the Ghost Dancers see no real difference between the two groups. The Native American Covenant has also been the victim of a disinformation campaign concerning the Templars, much like the one that caused the Rosicrucians to believe that the Cabal of Psyche is the Combine.

On occasion, the Ghost Dancers have thwarted Assassin and Templar operations. In these instances, the Ghost Dancers thought they were acting against the Combine, but, in reality, they were acting against groups fighting against the Combine. In reality, the Combine's sworn enemy actually helped them out. This is exactly the kind of irony the Conspiracy thrives on!

Ghost Dancer Stories

Ghost Dancer stories focus on their traditional beliefs. As one of the larger Shamanistic Associations in existence, the Ghost Dancers are very environmentally concerned. The Dancers also hold the promise of the Vision close, keeping the Old Ways and living in harmony with the land and other people in hopes a new utopian age will dawn.

Unfortunately, the conveniences and distractions of modern times make keeping the Old Ways rather difficult, and the Ghost Dancers struggle to walk a fine line between the modern things that lure them to stray and the modern things that are necessary for survival in an increasingly dangerous world.

The Ghost Dancers in Armageddon

The Ghost Dancers escaped the worst of the Matthew Riots in the 21st century because of their isolation. As the Gifted were being targeted in the cities, the Ghost Dancers gathered strength on the Reservations. With the increased numbers of Gifted in the early 21st century, the Ghost Dancers are more powerful than they have ever been.

Of course, it also helped matters that the Ghost Dancers are an American Covenant, and North America has been the least affected by the Cult of Revelations. Once the Last War spread closer to American shores, the Ghost Dancers joined the Alliance. Many of the Ghost Dancers feel the Cult's rise happened because they did not successfully adhere to the Vision's doctrines.

Now that all of humanity has united against a common foe, they believe a new age of peace and a utopian Paradise will follow.

They just have to make sure the human race survives to see it.

Some rumors say the Ghost Dancers are gathering for something big—possibly for a massive attack against the Dark Apostle and the Leviathan. Maybe they have finally found the Ulunsuti and have figured out a way to use it as a weapon against their enemies. Maybe it is just a rumor meant to bring hope to an overwhelmed force.

Ghost Dancer Prankster

Like every other Ghost Dancer, you believe in the Vision. However, you do not think that you will ever see this Paradise on Earth in your lifetime; there is far too much evil in the world for that to come about now. The modern ways have corrupted your People and corporations are constantly destroying the environment under the guise of progress. A world where the people practice the Old Ways and live in harmony with the land is certainly a long time coming.

Of course, you try to do your part to make that Vision become a reality. You wander across America, seeking out those who stand in the Vision's way — powerful men who rape the land for their own gain. You know these are proud men and they do not allow fear or threats alter their plans. So, instead of threats and force, you target their pride: you make them the butt of very good jokes.

Origins

The Coyote spoke to you, even when you were a child. He appeared to you in your dreams and told you stories about his pranks in the First World. When you were old enough to go on your Vision Quest, you were not that surprised to find the Trickster waiting for you. He told you that you had the talent to be a good Shaman, but he wanted you to help him play jokes in the Waking World instead. If you helped him, he promised to give you a few extra "tricks."

Allies and Enemies

Your main allies are a group of Warrior Ghost Dancer Coyote Ferals. They look at you as one of their own. You have also worked with the Wicce Healer of Nature (*WitchCraft*, p. 104) on occasion. While the Healer thinks you are too frivolous, you both target the same sorts of people. You just prefer to humiliate the despoilers in a humorous way.

Roleplaying the Character

To the world at large, you are just another poor Indian in a rusty pick-up. You seem a little cocky and a bit more charming than most, but people rarely view you as a threat. And you use this to your advantage. You laugh at the fools who underestimate you and you delight when a simple joke manages to halt an entire corporation's operations. These things make you happy and when you are smiling happily, the Coyote smiles with you.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Ghost Dancer

Concept

Wanderer

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

2

INTELLIGENCE

3

DEXTERITY

3

PERCEPTION

3

CONSTITUTION

2

WILLPOWER

3

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

26

ENDURANCE POINTS

26

SPEED

10

ESSENCE POOL

45

Qualities

Point

Appearance +1

1

Charisma +2

2

Essence Channeling 2

4

Increased Essence Pool +15

3

The Gift

5

Drawbacks

Point

Clown

-1

Minority (Native American)

-1

Reckless

-2

Resources -1

-2

Skill

Level

Brawling

2

First Aid

2

Language (English, Native)

5

Language (Navajo)

1

Lucid Dreaming

2

Myth and Legends (Ghost Dancer)

1

Rituals (Ghost Dancer)

3

Smooth Talking

2

Stealth

2

Storytelling

2

Survival (Desert)

3

Unconventional Medicine (Herbalist)

3

Visualizations

Level

Dream Flight

2

Transformation

2

Conjuration

2

Dream Shift

2

Metaphysics

Level

Spirit Patron: Coyote

Boons: Communion

2

Boons: Warding

1

Boons: Lesser Healing

2

Boons: Divination (Oneiromancy)

2

Boons: Mind Projection Art

2

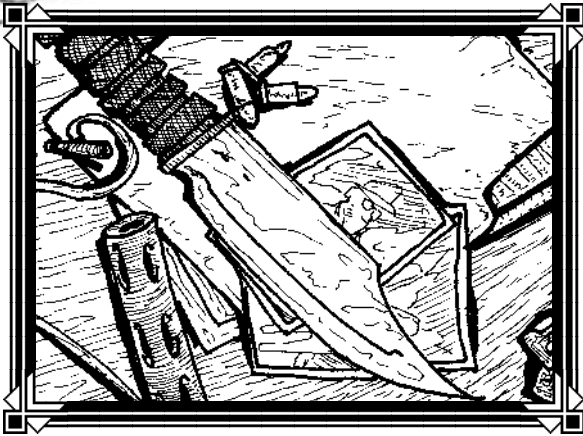
Boons: Mind Projection Strength

3

Obligations: Showoff

-2

Gifted



The Ruya'ha Sect of the Society of Assassins

The subject of countless speculation and rumors, the secret Society of Assassins is believed to control entire governments through threats and murder. Because the Society invented the concept of using assassination as a tool for political change, conspiracy theorists blame every assassination in the past thousand years on the Assassins.

They are rumored to have killed the Archduke Ferdinand, John F. Kennedy, Anwar Sadat, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Of course, the same thing can be said of the Templars and the Combine. All three groups have been accused of secretly trying to rule the world and all three are connected.

Truth be told, one would be surprised to learn that some of the bigger, life-changing assassinations had nothing to do with any secret society or their agenda. One would also be surprised to learn of the Society's actual assassinations, many of which were never even reported as assassinations, and the Society's reasons behind them. The Society continues to work in the shadows, silently striking at those whose deaths will bring the world closer in line with the Society's worldview.

History

Hasan ibn al-Sabah founded the Society of Assassins in 1090 A.D. in Persia as an offshoot of the Ismaili Sect, which was itself a branch of Shiite Islam. The Assassins, like the Ismaili, believe that there have only been seven true Imams after Mohammed, not the twelve the Shiites venerate. The Assassins also

believe that the current Imam, not the Koran, is the final authority of Islam, as Allah speaks His Will to the Imam daily.

Hasan's followers, the Nizari Sect, considered him to be the Imam. He moved them to the fortress of Alamut, a Place of Power in the mountains of Persia whose name means "Eagle's Nest." At Alamut, Hasan ibn al-Sabah forged an army of devoted followers he called the Hashashin. The Hashashin were initiated at Alamut, where they traveled through a Gateway to the Garden of Earthly Delights in Hod to experience the bliss that awaited them in Kether if they obeyed his words without question. In the Garden, beautiful nymph-like Peris, Love Ethereals, indulged the Hashashin Initiates' every desire. Afterwards, the Hashashin gladly obeyed Hasan's commands—doing anything he asked for another chance to experience Paradise.

Once an emissary from the Shah of Persia visited the fortress of Alamut. The Hashashin watched the proceedings from the surrounding mountains, their full force visible to Persia's representative. While the emissary recited the Shah's demands, Hasan ibn al-Sabah merely pointed to one of the Hashashin and had him leap to his death. Hasan told the emissary that the Shah's troops did not have that kind of loyalty and devotion. Unless they gained it, the Shah's troops had no real chance of defeating his Alamut forces.

After the emissary's experience, the Shah left the Hashashin alone and the world learned to fear the Assassins. Hashashin agents infiltrated places of power in courts from India to Paris. Some agents faithfully served the court they were part of for years until they received their orders, whereupon, they struck swiftly and unexpectedly. And, as the Assassins knew what pleasures awaited them after death, they attacked without fear.

A new Grand Master took over the order when Hasan Sabah died in 1124 A.D. The Hashashin remained just as loyal to the new Imam, seeing him as Allah's Voice and keeper of the keys to Paradise. This continued openly until the middle of the 13th century, when the Mongols conquered Persia. The new rulers declared war on the Society of Assassins in 1255, and within the year, had destroyed the main Persian branch. The Mongols did not stop until they wiped out the Assassins. The Egyptian Mamelukes discovered the last branch in Syria and destroyed them in 1272. The Mongols believed the Society of Assassins was no more.

The Mongols were overly optimistic.

Though greatly reduced in numbers and power, the Society of Assassins remained. After a long reorganization period, three branches arose from the Mongol's persecution: the Ismailis, the Alamut, and the Ruya'ha.

The Ismailis focused on the original Ismaili Sect's beliefs, but they had no agents ready to assassinate leaders at a moment's notice and they no longer had access to the secret knowledge stored at Alamut. This group still exists, and Aga Khan, whose main power source is an obscenely large account at the Bank of Damascus, leads them. The Ismailis do not have a greater percentage of Gifted in their ranks than any other group.

The second group called themselves the Alamut Sect of the Society of Assassins. Although the

Mongol's destroyed the original Eagle's Nest, the Alamut Sect built other, less public hideaways as bases of operation. In the city of Istanbul, the Alamut Sect discovered the remnants of the Compact of Constantine—in other words, the Adversary. The Jubelites. The Combine. The Alamut Sect found that they had many things in common with the Combine. Eventually losing sight of their original goals, they became just another Combine tool. The Alamut have their own Imam and they believe him to be the One True Imam. Their Imam is more concerned with carrying out assassinations for the Combine than he is with revealing Allah's Word to his followers.

The Ruya'ha Sect of the Society of Assassins, the third major group, derived their name from an Arabic word for the Sephiroth of Hod. The Imam of Ruya'ha

The Alamut Sect

The Alamut Sect of the Society of Assassins is a Dark Covenant with strong ties to the Combine. The split between the Alamut and Ruya'ha Sects occurred after the Association was forced underground to escape persecution. The Alamut Sect has exactly the same organization as the Ruya'ha Sect, and their leader is also called the One True Imam.

Those who know of the Society of Assassins' existence do not usually know that the Society embodies two opposed Sects. Because of this, the actions of the Ruya'ha and the Alamut Sects are attributed to one unified Society of Assassins. Since the Alamut Sect outnumbers the Ruya'ha Sect three to one, this means the Ruya'ha Sect is blamed for the Alamut Sect's actions, more than the opposite.

The Alamut Sect Assassins have the same range of abilities as their counterparts in the Ruya'ha Sect. Some Alamut Assassins know black magic and use Blood Magic Rituals similar to those used by the Cult of Pain. Since the Combine often uses Alamut Assassins, the Conspiracy gives them access to their advanced weaponry. This means that in a WitchCraft campaign, the Sect's members have access to the weapons listed in Armageddon. The Alamut Assassins only use the advanced weapons when on assignment for the Combine, however.

The Alamut Sect also has access to the Sephiroth of Hod. It trains its members in its own Madrasa in the Garden of Earthly Delights, with the same initiation rites: the Oais are allowed to experience all the delights of Paradise, and then told that an even better afterlife awaits them if they faithfully serve the One True Imam. The Alamut Imam never experienced a vision of glory like his Ruya'ha counterpart. However, the Alamut Imam is interested in other Realms in Hod and has been known to travel throughout the Sephiroth. The Imam knows about the Rift in the Wastelands and its presence troubles him.

In an Armageddon campaign, the Church of Revelations has infiltrated the Combine, thereby making the Combine's pawns theirs, including the Alamut Sect of the Society of Assassins, which was one of the first groups to become tainted. This is, in part, due to their close Combine ties, but it is also due to what happened to the Alamut's Imam:

he was consumed with Taint.

He became the Dark Imam.

Sect retreated into the Garden of Earthly Delights with his remaining followers. After years spent in the Otherworld, the Imam had a vision in which he was transported to the True Paradise. While there, he learned that the Garden he and his followers inhabited was only a false paradise. While he and his Sect had been wasting their time chasing ecstasy, the Alamut Sect had been corrupting their name and following a false Imam.

After the Imam's vision, his face reflected the glory of what he had seen. Thereafter, his followers came to call him the One True Imam; of course, the Alamut Sect called their Imam the One True Imam as well. The vision inspired the Ruya'ha Sect Imam to immerse his Assassins in worldly affairs once more. The group maintained its base of operations in the Garden of Earthly Delights, but its members no longer considered the Garden their final reward. The Imam activated a number of Gateways from Hod to Malkuth and the Sect's Assassins still use them to travel quickly from the Dream Realm to Earth.

The Ruya'ha Imam still dwells in Hod, organizing the activities of his followers. He once more uses infiltration and assassination as tools, though mostly against his rival, the Alamut Sect's Imam.

Goals and Beliefs

The Ruya'ha Sect of the Society of Assassins believes that their leader, the One True Imam, manifests the Metetron, the Divine Voice of God. His Will supersedes that of all the Imams who came before him. His Will supersedes the Koran itself, which they believe the Archangel Jibal (Gabriel) dictated to Mohammed, so they trust in the True Imam's words more.

The Ruya'ha Sect has renewed its historic ties with the Templars. The Templars believe the Seraphim, whom the Assassins call Djinn, strayed from God's Will, so they say the Seraphim are not to be trusted. This belief now permeates the Ruya'ha Sect as well. Both groups believe that mankind, not any cosmic agency, must determine its own fate. Only humanity itself will make the world into a Paradise on Earth.

Citing their utopian goal, The Ruya'ha justify their renewed interest in infiltrating various government seats and assassinating those who stand in the way of this goal. Unlike the historic Assassins, the agents of the Ruya'ha Sect do not commit suicide after killing their targets. The One True Imam tells them that there is too much work to be done in the world, so such actions go against his wishes.

Organization

The Society of Assassins retains the same organization it had when it was first formed. The Dais (Initiated) are the Sect's neophytes. They ritually prepare for their initiation with Hashish (hence the name Hashashin) and perform acts of contrition. After ritual purification, the Dais are brought through a Gateway into the Garden of Earthly Delights, where they engage in the usual sensual pleasures of their forefathers. Afterwards, they are brought before the One True Imam. He informs them that the pleasures they have experienced in the Garden of Earthly Delights pale in comparison to those that await them in the True Paradise, which they can only attain through continuing to work for the Ruya'ha.

After their initiation, the Dais become Refiks (Students) and they undergo years of training. Some of this training takes place at the Ruya'ha's Madrassa, located in their corner of the Garden in Hod. The malleable nature of Hod allows the Assassins to prepare for various mission-related scenarios. The Refiks train intensely in the arts of combat and espionage, and they perform various strike missions as part of their training.

When the Refiks prove ready to undertake more difficult missions, they become Fedavis (Devoted Ones). The Fedavis are the Ruya'ha Sect's best agents and the Imam entrusts them with the Sect's most important missions. As professional killers, the Fedavis may spend years in one particular role, gathering information and waiting for their chance to strike. Alternatively, they may travel the world from one assignment to the next. The Fedavis have a certain amount of autonomy, but they are still only servants to the One True Imam and they obey his every command. They live only to serve him.

The One True Imam is the true heir to the leadership role of the Sheik-al-Jebal (The Old Man of the Mountain), who was the heir of a line of Imams stretching from Ali to Mohammed himself. He dwells in the Sephiroth of Hod, the Otherworld of Splendor, and his glory is the reflection of the Glory of God Himself. He speaks with the voice of the Metetron, and all must obey his commands.

Fanaticism is extremely common among the Society of Assassins.

Allies and Enemies

The Assassins and the Templars were allies in the Middle Ages, and the Ruya'ha Sect is currently allied with them. The Templars use the Sect to carry out assassinations for them, much like the Combine uses the Alamut Sect. Both the Templars and the Combine view their respective Assassins as cannon fodder, more so than allies.

Because of their actions in India, the Ruya'ha Sect has come to the attention of the Monks of Shambala. The Order knows of the two Sects within the Society of Assassins, and it realizes that the Ruya'ha Sect believes it is making the world a better place. The Shambala Order does not approve of the how the Assassins go about their business, however; doing wrong for the right reason does not absolve the wrongness of the Assassins' actions.

The Storm Dragons know about the Assassins as a whole, but not about the order's opposed Sects. The Dragons believe that the Assassins are pawns of Red Lotus Society, and that the Red Lotus uses them to carry out assassinations on their behalf in India, the Middle East, and Europe.

The Rosicrucians have a similar attitude. They are unaware of the different Sects, and they believe the Assassins are just more Combine pawns. The Rosicrucians believe the Assassins to be a minor group, though, so the Brotherhood pays them little heed. They have bigger things to worry about.

Most of the other Covenants remain unaware of the Assassins' existence. Those who know about the

Society see them only as a minor Dark Covenant used by the Combine. For this reason, most members of the Ruya'ha Sect do not identify themselves to other Gifted as members of the Society of Assassins. Instead, they masquerade as whatever assists them in performing their assignment with the least amount of interference from other Gifted.

The Ruya'ha Sect annoys the Combine and the Conspiracy longs to destroy the group. The Cult of Pain, the Red Lotus Society, the Red Path, the Nahaualli, and countless other Dark Covenants work towards the Ruya'ha Sect's destruction—even if they do not realize it.

Assassin Stories

Assassin stories focus on espionage and political intrigue. Some Assassins are professional killers who travel the world, going to exotic places to kill interesting people. This brings them into conflict with the Combine, whose plans their assassinations are meant to hinder. It also sets them against more mundane authorities. Playing an Assassin becomes a race to see how long the character can last before meeting his final reward in the Promised True Paradise.

Other Assassins infiltrate key positions in world governments and powerful organizations. These stories revolve around the character's double life, his day-to-day bureaucratic cover identity, and his wait for his assassination orders. Can he maintain his cover identity long enough? What happens if he starts to care for the people that have become a part of his false identity?

The Society of Assassins in Armageddon

The 21st century proved disastrous for the Ruya'ha Sect. Once the Dark Apostle emerged in Europe, five different assassinations were attempted and all failed miserably. Many more members of the Sect were killed when the Dark Imam came to power and the Church of Revelations spread throughout India and the Middle East. Many of those who were not killed converted to the Church of Revelations and they joined their former rivals in the Alamut Sect. The confusion between the two Sects grew and the Alliance destroyed many Ruya'ha Sect enclaves in the belief that they were, in fact, destroying the Dark Imam's servants.

In an Armageddon campaign, the Ruya'ha Sect has been virtually wiped out. A few remaining Assassins struggle in a terrorist campaign against the Church of Revelations and the Dark Imam, while their own Imam remains out of contact in his sanctuary in Hod. Some say that the Sanctuary no longer exists and that the one True Imam has been slain. If this is true, then it is only a matter of time before the last Assassin falls, as well.

Society of Assassins Professional Killer

Your life was without meaning before you joined the Society of Assassins. You had no direction, no sense of purpose. You suspected that there was more to life—flashes of something beyond the everyday world—but it was not until you joined the Ruya'ha Sect that you learned the Truth. The Sect opened your eyes to worlds beyond Earth and the Sect molded you into an instrument of effective change. You have spent years learning skills that allow you to eliminate targets efficiently, and the Society has taught you some mystic arts that allow you to tip the scales in your favor. You are one of many weapons the One True Imam wields.

Origins

You thought that you would have an adventure before you went to college. Hitchhike across Europe, see the sights, have a little fun. You never expected that your life would change so drastically. You met a woman in the South of France who said she recognized something special about you. She started talking about living a life with a sense of purpose and working to change the world. It sounded corny at first, but something about the way she spoke, with such conviction, made you listen.

Before you knew it, you had moved out of the Youth Hostel and began living at a large estate in the country with a group of other young people. You learned the ways of the Initiated and you seemed to take to the teachings quicker than anyone else. One day this woman separated you from the others and told you that you were ready. After a period of ritual purification, she brought you to a doorway you had never noticed before. Unbelievably, it led to a lush, green paradise full of the most beautiful people you had ever seen. You engaged in every fantasy you ever imagined and you lost all sense of time. Sometime later, you found yourself in the presence of the One True Imam.

"All that you have just experienced is nothing compared to the Paradise that I have visited. Follow me, and that Paradise shall be yours," he said. Your eyes filled with tears and you realized that you would do anything for this man. You would die for him if necessary. It was the most profound experience of your life and you have kept that memory in your heart ever since.

Allies and Enemies

The Templar Agent (see *Abomination Codex*, p. 58) is an ally. He often sends assignments your way. Such is the relationship between the Templars and the Society of Assassins. You have used the Vampyre Conspiracy Theorist (see *Mystery Codex*, p. 108) as a source of information.

Your work has brought you in direct conflict with a powerful Adversary. This could be the Alamut Sect, a Government Agency that has finally begun to piece together a profile of you, or the Combine itself.

Roleplaying the Character

You are a professional. When someone needs to die, you kill him. You have no emotional attachments and no guilt or ethical concern about your actions. You are not committing a murder—you are improving the world by removing those who do evil. The world is a better place without the presence of those you have assassinated. This is what you fervently believe. Otherwise, the world makes no sense.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

The Society of Assassins

Concept

Fanatic

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

3

INTELLIGENCE

3

DEXTERITY

5

PERCEPTION

4

CONSTITUTION

3

WILLPOWER

4

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

34

ENDURANCE POINTS

35

SPEED

16

ESSENCE POOL

22

Lesser Gifted

Qualities

Point

Charisma +1

1

Fast Reaction Time

2

Hard to Kill +2, Status +1

4, 1

Resources +2, The Gift

6, 5

Situational Awareness

5

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary

-1

Obligation (Major)

-1

Reckless

-2

Zealot (Ruya'ha Sect)

-2

Skill

Level

Acrobatics, Acting, Climbing

2

Demolitions

1

Disguise

3

Escapism

2

Guns (Handgun)

3

Guns (Rifle)

2

Hand Weapon (Knife)

2

Humanities (Ruya'ha Sect Theology)

2

Language (Arabic)

3

Language (English, Native)

5

Language (French)

2

Lock Picking (Electronic)

1

Martial Arts (Ra'd Quwwat)

3

Skill

Level

Stealth

2

Streetwise

2

Surveillance

2

Combat Moves

Level

Arm Lock, Kick, Punch, Disarm

3

Choke Hold, Counter Punch

3

Spin Kick, Roll with Blow

3

Metaphysics

Level

Baraka Mastery

2

Phoenix Strike

1

Lesser Illusion Invocation

2

Greater Illusion Invocation

1

Hideaway Invocation

1

Order of Shambala

One of the more popular legends among New-Agers and conspiracy theorists is that a group of enlightened secret masters in Tibet who manipulate the world in order to fulfill their own mysterious plans. Members of the Associations in the world of *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* are in a better position to know if this legend is true or not. A group of Enlightened Masters do have a connection to Tibet, but they can hardly be said to have any control over world events. If they did, their Covenant would not be in as much trouble as it is.

History

According to legend, Avalokiteshvara Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, founded the Covenant sometime during the 4th century B.C., when he created a sacred place in the Sephiroth of Hod. Avalokiteshvara lit the immortal Kalacakra flame and he established Shambala around it. Once complete, he returned to the plane of Malkuth and gathered together twenty-three wise monks whom he took to Shambala. He connected Shambala to Earth via a group of Gateways located in Tibet.

Chenrezig gathered more Enlightened Monks and taught each of them the ways of Abhidharma, which allowed the Monks to control how they reincarnated—to a certain extent. When the Monks died, they reincarnated somewhere within the cultural area of Tibet (with some exceptions). The other Lamas then sought the reincarnated Monk. When found, they began training him where he had left off in his previous incarnation. The Order calls these reincarnated masters Tulkus.

The Lamas, all Buddhists, initially held great theological debates between Mahayana Buddhism and Ch'an Buddhism. The Mahayana faction believed that Enlightenment could only come through discipline after a long period of intense study and training. The Ch'an faction believed that it was possible for a person to instantly attain Enlightenment under certain circumstances. This led to a Great Debate held in Shambala around 792 A.D. The Mahayana faction won out, and the Ch'an faction left Shambala. The Ch'an teachings eventually developed into Zen Buddhism.

After the Ch'an faction's departure, the Monks of Shambala lived free of theological debate in their own

idyllic world. This world was not reflected on the other side of the Gateway, however. On the other side, Buddhism competed with the earlier Bön religion, a shamanistic faith that had been practiced by the earliest inhabitants of Tibet. Fifty years after the Great Debate in Shambala, a Bön King named Lang Darma began a campaign of religious persecution designed to eliminate Buddhism from Tibet. This movement motivated the Monks of Shambala to begin meddling in Mundane affairs. When Lang Darma died, his Yarlung Dynasty fell apart and the Tibetan Empire was no more. The country was taken over by the Chinese of the T'ang Dynasty, but that government also collapsed. For the next few centuries, Tibet and China had little contact and Central Asia became a "No Man's Land." Rumors abound that the Order of Shambala took a very active part in the Yarlung Dynasty's collapse in Tibet, as well as the T'ang Dynasty's collapse in China. Some say that the Order even resorted to violence. The Order itself claims only to have made certain that no such rulers rose up to take their place.

The Order of Shambala resumed its reclusive nature afterward, and the Mongols invaded under Genghis Khan and conquered Tibet. The country regained its independence within two centuries. The significance of the Mongol Invasion was not felt until the 15th century, when representatives from Shambala visited the Mongol ruler Altan Khan. He did not have the power of past Mongol rulers, like Genghis Khan or Qubilai Khan, but Altan Khan was the most powerful ruler of his time. He gave a Tulku named Sönam Gyatso the title of Dalai Lama. In return, the Order declared Altan Khan the "King of Dharma, Divine Purity."

This began the period of heavy Shambalan influence in Tibet. Three Tulkus known as the High Incarnates held power positions: the Manjushri Rimpoche ruled Shambala and spent most of his time in Hod; the Dalai Lama became both the spiritual and political leader of Tibet by the 17th century; the Panchen Lama, or Great Scholar, a purely religious figure, became the second most powerful leader in Tibet. All three Old Souls controlled their reincarnations through Abhidharma, thus continuing their work for centuries.

Potula Palace was built in Lhasa to mirror the Order of Shambala's palace in the Sephiroth of Hod. The Tibetan country developed into an earthly recreation of the Buddhist Ideal of Shambala. This isolat-

ed it from surrounding countries where Buddhism no longer dominated. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Mongols and the Manchu Chinese intervened in Tibet's affairs whenever there was a period of instability between the end of one Dalai Lama's Incarnation and the beginning of the next. This time was also a period of the Order of Shambala's first contact with Western Covenants. The Rosicrucians, the Templars, and the Combine all made contact with the Order of Shambala in the 18th century.

The Manchu Dynasty finally fell in 1911, during the Chinese Revolution, and it looked like Tibet would regain self-rule. As Sun Yat-sen and the Nationalists defeated the Manchu Government, Chinese troops were expelled. Tibet severed all ties with China and the Order of Shambala focused on creating an independent Buddhist State that would be a buffer between their sanctuary in Hod and the rest of the world.

Then power shifted in China once more and Sun Yat-sen faced Mao Zedong and the Communists. A civil war broke out in China. It seemed that whomever won the power struggle would overtake Tibet next. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who wanted to introduce some modern changes to the Order and to Tibet, began organizing an army, which brought him in conflict with the Ninth Panchen Lama and the Seventh Manjushri Lama in the 1920s. This disagreement was almost as divisive as the Mahayana/Ch'an Debate from the 8th century. The Panchen Lama left Tibet and the Manjushri Lama isolated himself in Shambala.

This would have been no more than a political squabble, except that it had the misfortune of happening during a time of Near Reckoning. The Mad God Morsater had been causing ripples on Earth since the First World War and its effects were beginning to be felt by the Order of Shambala. As Mao Zedong consolidated power in the 1930s, the three High Incarnates died. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933. A minion of Morsater came through the Sammael Gate to Shambala in 1935 and killed the Seventh Manjushri Lama. The Ninth Panchen Lama died in 1937, while still living in exile.

A Regent was appointed ruler of Tibet and a council of Tulkus began searching for the three High Incarnates' new incarnations. During this time, Mao Zedong defeated the Nationalists and installed a powerful Communist government in Beijing. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama was enthroned at the age of

five in 1940. A seven-year-old was declared the Manjushri Lama in 1943, just in time for one last powerful onslaught by Morsater in Hod. A mixed group of Gifted banished the Mad God that year, but not before Morsater had spread destruction across the Sephiroth of Hod. Shambala was not spared and the Eighth Manjushri Rimpoche was killed only thirteen days after being enthroned. The Ninth Manjushri Lama was not found until 1949, and it was not until 1951 that the Tenth Panchen Lama was enthroned.

One year after the Chinese invaded Tibet.

On May 31, 1950, Tibet and China signed a treaty granting Tibet limited autonomy, but actually put that nation firmly under Beijing's control. This did not stop various Tibetan factions from resisting Chinese rule. The Order of Shambala did not want to overtly act in the struggle because of what had happened centuries earlier with the Tibetan Yarlung Dynasty and the Chinese T'ang Dynasty. This inaction lends credibility to the theory that the Order's earlier political interventions were much more violent than the Order presently admits.

The Chinese said they were in Tibet to free the people from their "theocratic oppressors." When groups like the Khampu tribesmen declared that they did not want their Communist Liberators to free them, the Chinese acted more aggressively. They seized property and guns, and abused monks and nuns in the streets. A Chinese general commanding troops in the capital city of Lhasa wanted the Dalai Lama to appear before him, in hopes of capturing the Tibetan Leader. The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, where he was given political asylum.

After the Dalai Lama left Tibet, the Tenth Panchen Lama was appointed acting Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, a puppet post that the Chinese established for the Dalai Lama, in hopes that he would cooperate and lead the Tibetans into accepting the ideologies of the People's Republic of China. When the Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled Tibet, Mao had hopes that the Tenth Panchen Lama would be more cooperative. The Panchen Lama dashed those hopes in 1962, when he presented his 70,000 Character Petition to the Chinese Government, in which he complained about the Party's policies of mass arrests, torture, and execution, and he argued for Tibetan autonomy. The Panchen Lama followed that with a speech in 1964 declaring his outward support for the exiled Dalai Lama.

The Party imprisoned the Panchen Lama without a trial. He spent the next fourteen years incarcerated, finally being released in 1978. During those years, the Order of Shambala was surprised to find that the Communist Army was undertaking a campaign to systematically destroy every Gateway connecting Tibet to the Realm of Shambala. During the height of Tibet's power, somewhere between thirteen and forty such Gateways existed in Tibet. Some Monks even claim that there once existed over one hundred Gateways. By 1979, only three remained.

This severely limited the Manjushri Lama's power in Tibet and members of the Order were forced to spend more time on Malkuth if they wanted to influence Tibet's affairs. In 1978, a week before the Chinese released the Panchen Lama from prison, Chinese soldiers ambushed and killed the Manjushri Lama and the five other Tulkus traveling with him through Tibet.

The Order believes this murder gave the Chinese enough confidence to release the Panchen Lama.

The ability of the Army of the People's Republic to find and destroy the Gateways to Hod, as well as ambush and murder the Ninth Manjushri Lama, has led to speculation that the Combine controlled the Chinese's actions, and it was Combine Agents who actually killed the King of Shambala. Adherents use the mysterious death of the Tenth Panchen Lama in 1989 as further proof of this theory.

As the Reckoning approaches, things are not going well for the Order of Shambala. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama remains in exile and continues to work to bring freedom back to Tibet. His efforts gained him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, but the People's Republic rejected his plans for a peaceful reconciliation. The Monks discovered the Eleventh Panchen Lama in 1995, a six-year-old. The Chinese Government promptly had

The Dalai and Panchen Lamas

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the political and religious leader of the Tibetan people. He was born to a simple peasant family on July 6, 1935, and his parents named him Lhamo Ohonrub. The Tulkus found him when he was two, recognizing him as the reincarnation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, meaning that he is also the reincarnation of every Dalai Lama, including the first. The first Dalai Lama was the human incarnation of a Bodhisattva—this means that His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is the incarnation of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the creator of Shambala.

When the Monks found him, they renamed the child Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Loösang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso—Holy Lord, Gentle Glory, Compassionate, Defender of the Faith, Ocean of Wisdom. For the sake of simplicity, most Tibetans just refer to the Dalai Lama as Yeshe Norbu, the Wishfulfilling Gem.

Others commonly refer to the Dalai Lama as Kundun, the Presence.

The Dalai Lama was officially enthroned on February 22, 1940 in Lhasa. His formal education began at the age of six. When Kundun was fifteen, he was faced with his first challenge as Head of State—80,000 soldiers of the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet on November 17, 1950. Four years later, the Dalai Lama met with Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders in Beijing to negotiate for peace. Two years after that, the Dalai Lama met with India's Prime Minister to talk about the Tibetan people's plight.

In 1959, Kundun completed the Geshe Lhrampa Degree (Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy). That same year, the largest demonstration in Tibet's history occurred in Lhasa. Tibetans gathered together in an effort to regain their freedom through peaceful means. The demonstration failed utterly. The Chinese Army reacted violently and forced the Dalai Lama, along with 120,000 refugees, to flee. Since 1960, he has lived in Dharmasala, India, or "Little Lhasa," the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

Even after his flight, the Dalai Lama worked for Tibet's liberation through peaceful means, and his work continues to this day. He received the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1989. He has become one of the most famous and revered people on the planet, though he claims to be just a simple Buddhist Monk—no more, no less.

This is not strictly true. He is a High Incarnate. He has spent fourteen lifetimes on Earth as one of the Order of Shambala's leaders.

The Dalai and Panchen Lamas (continued)

He has all the Aðhinja powers that listed in this book and possesses powers far beyond those. None of this has helped his plight. Tibet remains in the thrall of the People's Republic of China. The Dalai Lama, along with hundreds of thousands of Tibetans, remains in exile.

The Panchen Lama is the second most powerful leader of the Tibetan People. He is a religious leader whose line of incarnation was started by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1667. Every Panchen Lama since has been an incarnation of this first one, who was also the human incarnation of a Bodhisattva. He was Sangyas, the Shakyamuni Buddha who is better known as Amidaōha. Amidaōha's son was Manjusri, the Bodhisattva who incarnated as the first Manjushri Lama and has ruled Shambala in a long line of incarnations ever since.

Throughout his various lifetimes, the Panchen Lama has been more concerned with Shambala than Tibet. This sometimes puts him in conflict with the man who was his teacher over three hundred years ago. The Chinese Government tried to use this conflict to their advantage, attempting to pit the Panchen Lama against the Dalai Lama. It did not work and the Tenth Panchen Lama spent many years in prison, as mentioned in the main text.

The Tenth Panchen Lama died under mysterious circumstances in 1989. After a six-year search, the Dalai Lama found the Eleventh Incarnation of the Panchen Lama. On May 14th, 1995, the Monks recognized a child named Gendhun Choekyi Nyima as the Dalai Lama's latest incarnation. Three years later, the child was taken to Beijing and never heard from again, while the Chinese Government set up a proxy as the Panchen Lama.

The child they imprisoned was a High Incarnate.

He had spent ten previous lifetimes as the second most powerful leader of Tibet.

He was a Scholar who knew every Aðhinja power that existed. He knew powers unknown to the rest of the Order of Shambala. He had metaphysical abilities that the Dalai Lama did not even possess.

None of that helped.

him arrested and have tried to have a Chinese security officer's son enthroned as the new Panchen Lama in his stead. The real Panchen Lama is currently eleven years old—the world's youngest political prisoner. His whereabouts are unknown and even the most powerful Gifted and Enlightened in the Order of Shambala cannot find him.

This leaves the Tenth Manjushri Lama. The King of Shambala is currently in his early twenties and he is faced with the task of protecting Shambala, restoring freedom to Tibet, finding and freeing the Panchen Lama, and preventing the Minions of the Mad Gods from destroying Shambala as the Reckoning approaches.

Beliefs

The Order of Shambala believes very strongly in Reincarnation; their hierarchy is based upon it. When people die, they believe their souls travel through the Otherworlds, which the Order of Shambala calls the Bardos. Each Bardo confuses and tempts the recently dead. Some of the dead go to Geburah, either carrying

on a semblance of their former existence in the Twilight World, suffering the torments of Abaddon, or wandering to one of the other Realms. Some of the dead go to the Garden of Earthly Delights, a false Paradise in Hod, and others commune with the Gods in Netzach or the Heavenly Host in Binah. These fates are not permanent, however. Each person eventually reincarnates on Earth. Many skip the Bardos completely, reincarnating on Earth without any real control over their incarnation. Karma determines a normal person's next incarnation. Only a select few cease the endless Cycle of Death and Rebirth and enter the Sephiroth of Kether, which the Monks call Nirvana.

Only the Tulku have the ability to chose their next incarnation and decide the circumstances of their rebirth. They believe that all of the Otherworlds are illusions. It is easy to realize this about Hod, because Hod's worlds are so malleable. The Order of Shambala believes that all the Otherworlds are malleable as well, though some are more resistant to change. Dreams are Illusions. Death is an Illusion. The Gods and the Demons are Illusions. Even the individual Self is an

Illusion. Only after an individual truly realizes that he does not exist as an individual, does he have any hope of attaining Enlightenment.

The ultimate goal of the Order of Shambala is for every human being to attain Enlightenment. It is a long-term goal because it takes countless incarnations for the soul to realize the true nature of reality and be able to escape the unending Cycle of Death and Rebirth. It takes years of training to become aware of this reality. Eventually, after years of discipline and training, a person may evolve spiritually enough to ascend Nirvana upon his death. Once there, he may either proceed to his ultimate destiny, the same ultimate destiny of all mankind, or he may return to the Otherworlds as a Bodhisattva.

Organization

The Initiates form the lowest level of the Order of Shambala. There are Initiate Monks and Initiate Nuns, though women are still treated somewhat as second-class citizens. The Initiates are always Gifted or Lesser Gifted, and they show signs of either Seer Powers or Tao-Chi. Initiates are usually recruited from religious institutions on Earth, and they are brought to one of the three remaining Gateways, where they are invited to join the Order in the Realm of Shambala.

Lamas are in charge of groups of Initiates. Lamas are always at least Gifted, though some have become Enlightened by the time they achieve this level of responsibility. They are put in charge of monasteries on Earth and they oversee the Realm of Shambala's daily operations. Lamas are taught to control their next incarnation. A character has to be at least a Lama to know the secret of Shambala's tunnels.

Tulkus are Lamas who have controlled their incarnation. They are always Enlightened, and they at least know the Past Life Recall Abhinja. Tulkus are in charge of locating the reincarnations of previous Lamas and helping them to remember their own past lives.

The High Incarnates are Shambala's rulers, though some operate mostly on Earth. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is currently living in exile, but the Order considers him to be the religious and political ruler of Tibet. He is currently over sixty years old. The Eleventh Panchen Lama is the second most powerful leader in Tibet, though he is purely a religious leader. He is a young boy who has been imprisoned by the Chinese Government for the past five years. Nobody knows where he is or if he still lives. The ruler of Shambala is the Manjushri Rimpoche, the Tenth Manjushri Lama. He is currently in his early twenties and he spends most of his time in the Realm of Hod, trying desperately to hold the Order of Shambala together and to restore Tibet's freedom.

Allies and Enemies

Few Covenants are aware of the Order's existence, though many still unknowingly support it. The Wicce, the Ghost Dancers, the Nomads, the Brotherhood of Legba, and countless Solitaire groups have large factions that support the Tibetan Freedom Movement, even though they do not realize that there is an otherworldly Covenant trying to restore freedom in Tibet. The Order of Shambala is usually considered no more than a rumor.

The Storm Dragons and the Red Lotus both know about the Order of Shambala. Both consider the Monks of Shambala to be pale imitations of their own

The Bodhisattvas

The Bodhisattvas are humans, who upon death, ascended to Nirvana (the Sephiroth of Kether) but postponed their final reward to help others reach Nirvana as well. In power and abilities, they are identical to the Kerubim and the Qlipponim, though there are certain important differences. The Bodhisattvas are neither tied to Elysium nor the Pit of Gehenna—they are completely neutral in the Celestial War. They can be found in their own Realm of Binah, in the Realm of Shambala in Hod, and in other Sephiroths, including Malkuth. The Bodhisattva may purchase Siddhis (their version of Theophanies or Metaphysics) and they have all the Qualities and Drawbacks the Kerubim display. Bodhisattvas can purchase a unique Siddhi for five Metaphysics character points, which is identical to the Past Life Recall Abhinja. This allows the Bodhisattva to remember details from all his previous incarnations. It also gives him the ability to choose the moment of his death and determine the form of his next reincarnation. A Bodhisattva who dies in this matter may either finally ascend to Kether or he may incarnate as an Enlightened Human.

The High Incarnates of the Order of Shambala all claim to have been Bodhisattvas.

Associations, following watered-down and misleading versions of the original Truths revealed by the Celestial Dragon. Still, the Storm Dragons consider the Order of Shambala an ally, as both share a common enemy: the Communist Government of China.

The Society of Assassins considers the Order of Shambala to be a variation of their own Covenant. They are both secret societies that dwell in mountain lairs that connect to Realms in the Sephiroth of Hod. The Society believes that the Order was a precursor to the Assassins by the events that brought about the fall of the Yarlung and T'ang Dynasties. The Society of Assassins believes that the Monks performed some assassinations of their own, but merely lost their way afterwards, becoming soft and ineffective. The Order of Shambala denies these accusations. It tries to have as little to do with the Assassins as possible, even if the Society is trying to make the world a better place.

The Rosicrucians and the Templars believe the Order of Shambala to be a small Association with some interesting powers and abilities, but nothing more. Both also believe the Combine is responsible for all the troubles the Order suffered in the 20th century. The Templars know the Communist Chinese destroyed a number of Gateways to Hod and do not believe that Mundane forces could have accomplished such a feat.

The Order of Shambala also believes that the Combine is behind their more recent troubles. They

feel that the relative ease with which they traveled between Malkuth and Hod made the Conspiracy nervous. The Order also believes they were made targets because the Combine did not agree with what the Order considered Enlightenment. There has been no positive proof of Combine involvement, however. Maybe the Combine was acting through the Army of the People's Republic, or maybe it was the influence of some Mad God. And just maybe it was a Mundane government responsible for these terrible things—not all acts of great evil require a supernatural explanation, after all.

Shambala Stories

Stories about the Order of Shambala are about Enlightenment and survival. The Adepts and Lamas live in the Otherworld of Hod, an idyllic Sanctuary, where they travel the spiritual path that leads to Ascension into Nirvana. Their Sanctuary is starting to lose its connection to Earth, since the Combine systematically destroyed every Gateway they could find. A hostile government has conquered Tibet, which the Order considers its earthly homeland. And, finally, the Otherworld of Hod is not the safest location for a Sanctuary. Forces of the Mad Gods can enter Hod more easily than Malkuth. The Mad Gods' Minions have attacked Shambala before. As the Reckoning approaches, there is every chance the Mad Gods will attack again.

The Order of Shambala in Armageddon

The 21st century has been a confusing time for the Monks of Shambala. The collapse of the Communist government in China allowed the Order to push the Tibetan people into proclaiming their country a free and independent state once more. That freedom was short-lived, though, and things have gotten increasingly worse for the Order.

The collapse of the Chinese government did not result in the release of the Panchen Lama. The High Incarnate's fate remains unknown. The Dalai Lama's fate is known—he, along with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and many Tibetan refugees, had been living for years in the North Indian city of Dharamsala. An AOR attack destroyed that city in 2014 and killed the Dalai Lama. The Lady in Jade is rumored to personally lead the raid and delivered the killing blow. Even though the AOR could not hold Dharamsala, the damage to the Order of Shambala had been done.

In the year 2017, the only High Incarnate in a position of power is the 38-year-old Manjushri Lama. The Dalai Lama is currently incarnated as a two-year-old child, whom the Order is desperately seeking. According to what the Tulkus are able to discover through their Arts, it appears the Dalai Lama's latest incarnation was born somewhere in the conquered territories of Asia. Finding the Dalai Lama and returning him to Shambala before the Church of Revelations can discover the child is now the Order's highest priority.

Shambala Lost Child

You are a Tulku, the latest incarnation of a Lama of the Order of Shambala. You have spent eight lifetimes as a member of the Order. You are also a thirteen-year-old Japanese student living in America. Sometimes things do not work out quite the way you plan, and the universe seems to have an ironic sense of humor.

Of course, you cannot anthropomorphize something that is not real. The universe is ultimately just an Illusion, so it should make no difference if you reincarnate as a Japanese school kid. But still, it does make you wonder . . .

Origins

You were a Lama of the Order of Shambala who had a plan to lessen the tensions between the People's Republic and the Tibetan Government in Exile. You would leave the Earthly Plane and reincarnate as the child of an important Communist Party politician. You would use this status to change China's policy from within. It was a long-term plan, but you were positive it would work.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to choose your next life the farther away you are from your reincarnation destination. You were trying for Beijing, but you ended up being born in Osaka. At the age of six, you moved to America when your father's company transferred him to oversee some corporate business in the United States. You led a relatively normal life for a rich kid in a foreign land, though you did seem to dream a lot about another life in the Himalayas. At the age of ten, a member of the Order of Shambala contacted you and the memories of all your past lives returned to you.

You tried to explain all this to your father, but he just got very upset. You no longer bring it up anymore unless he asks. You just try to balance your life between the time you spend with your family and the time you spend as a Lama in the Dream Realm of Shambala.

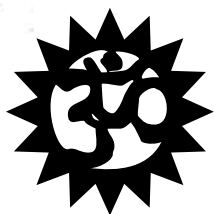
Allies and Enemies

You have some friends in school who do not seem to care that you claim to be an Enlightened Master who has lived through several lifetimes on Earth for the last 600 years. They are not the kind of people you would want backing you up in a fight against the Mad Gods, but they help you out when they can. When you travel through the Otherworlds you have your students in Shambala to assist you. They can see beyond the Illusion of existence, so they do not mind being lectured by an adolescent.

Shortly after the Order of Shambala found you, the Combine took an interest in you, as well. You know what the Combine does to members of your Covenant, so you are not anxious to fall into their hands. You have eluded them thus far. Six hundred years of combined life experience and the ability to travel through the Otherworlds has kept you one step ahead of them.

Roleplaying the Character

To the Mundane world, you are just an odd little kid who likes to make up stories about Tibet. Some people think that it is cute, and others just think you are nuts. None of this matters to you, because you know who you are. You can travel through the Otherworlds. You possess powers that would shock the Mundanes. You are one of the teachers of Shambala and you spend as much time instructing the Initiates there as you do with your family on Earth. All of that, and you still manage to maintain an "A" average in school.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Concept

The Order of Shambala

Weird One

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

2

INTELLIGENCE

3

DEXTERITY

3

PERCEPTION

5

CONSTITUTION

3

WILLPOWER

6

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

30

ENDURANCE POINTS

38

SPEED

12

ESSENCE POOL

49

Qualities

Point

Charisma +2

2

Essence Channeling 3

2

Increased Essence Pool +15

3

Old Soul

8

The Gift

5

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary (Combine)

-3

Honorable

-3

Minority (Child)

-1

Weird Delusion (You are the
reincarnation of a Tibetan Lama)

-2

Skill

Level

Climbing

2

First Aid

2

Humanities (Shambala Theology)

3

Humanities (Tibetan History)

3

Instruction

2

Language (English)

3

Language (Tibetan)

5

Language (Japanese, Native)

5

Occult Knowledge (Abhinja Powers)

3

Sport (Softball)

2

Streetwise

1

Survival (Mountains)

3

Trance

4

Skill

Level

Metaphysics

Level

Enlightened Human

Abhidharma

Bardo Ascension

Lung Gom

Past Life Recall

Mind Hands Art

Mind Hands Strength

Greater Gifted

Shamanistic Solitaire Groups

Shamans exist on every continent in the *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* world. What follows are examples of Shamanistic Solitaire—one is a small, modern group; the other a large confederation.

The Wizards of Oz

In 1972, three Aboriginal Shamans (Derain Barega, Karinya Girawheen, Adoni "Don" Townsend), a Rosicrucian from Sydney (Matthew Chambers), and a Wicce from Melbourne (Kyra Trikoupis) opened a Gateway in the back of a used bookstore on Hall Street in Bondi Beach (part of Sydney). They discovered that the Gateway led to an isolated section of the First World that resembled the Australian Outback. All five were Talented Dreamers and they started creating a base for themselves in the First World. They called this base Bullamakanka Station.

Bullamakanka Station became the focus of the group's activities and they started attracting other Gifted who were also interested in exploring the Dream Realms. When someone offhandedly referred to the group as the Wizards of Oz, the name stuck. Chambers and Trikoupis left their respective Associations and formed a new Solitaire group.

Membership and Organization

The group has grown from the original five members in 1972 to thirty by the beginning of the 21st century. Aboriginal Shamans from all over Australia make up roughly one-third of the group. The rest of the group consists mostly of Gifted members who use Invocations. The others are Mundanes with the Lucid Dreaming Skill.

The Wizards of Oz are loosely organized. The First Five are considered the group's leaders and they have the final word on how the Gateway is used. Barega has taken up permanent residence at the Station.

Allies and Enemies

The Wizards of Oz still maintain good relations with the Rosicrucians and the Wicce Covenants in Sydney and Melbourne.

A Mad God Cult in Canberra learned of the Gateway in a shared dream. They have not yet decided how to take over the Gateway and the Wizards of Oz are currently unaware of the Cult's existence.

Dream Realms Explorer

You are one of the Wizards of Oz, an explorer of the Otherworld of Hod. You have walked throughout the First World and traveled the Golden Path to the City of Dilmun itself. You have seen many wonders, but the true mysteries of Hod still elude you.

For now.

Origins

You were a Solitaire Magician in Melbourne with a talent for dreaming (your Solitaire specialization is Invocations). You wanted to learn the secrets of the universe, but the knowledge passed down from your mentor was not enough. One of the Witches recognized your potential and told you about a group in Bondi Beach that might benefit you.

You leapt at the opportunity to explore using the Wizards of Oz's Gateway and they granted you access given your skill as a dreamer. It has been an amiable relationship ever since.

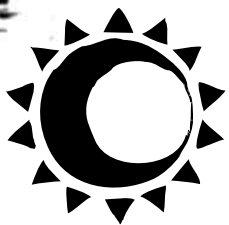
Allies and Enemies

As a Wizard of Oz, you have made contacts among Aboriginal Shamans, Rosicrucians, and Wicce. There are also a few nature spirits who find the humans of Bullamakanka Station amusing. They are always willing to help out a dream traveler in exchange for a new story or song.

Roleplaying the Character

The whole reason you became involved with the metaphysical world was to discover the Truth. You wanted to know the underlying nature of reality. You have begun to suspect that the world you know is the result of consensus reality, a shared dream of the entire human population. If this is correct, the underlying truths of this shared dream would be found in the Realm of Dreams itself. That is your theory anyway and even if you have yet to discover the big answer, you have seen some wonders in your time.

Maybe there is no Big Truth. Maybe it is just a collection of small wonders and joys that add up to an existence. The only way you will ever find out for sure is to continue your search for knowledge in the Otherworld, where ideas themselves take form.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Solitaire (The Wizards of Oz)

Concept

Seeker of Knowledge

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Gifted

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	2	INTELLIGENCE	4
DEXTERITY	3	PERCEPTION	3
CONSTITUTION	3	WILLPOWER	4

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	30
ENDURANCE POINTS	35
SPEED	12
ESSENCE POOL	31

Lesser

Qualities

Point

Essence Channeling 2	4
Increased Essence Pool +5	1
Nerves of Steel	3
Situational Awareness	2
The Gift	5

Qualities

Point

True Dreamer	2
Drawbacks	
Honorable	-1
Obsession (Discover the secrets of Hod)	-2
Reckless	-2

Skill

Level

Brawling	1
Climbing	2
Dodge	3
Language (English, Native)	5
Lucid Dreaming	2
Myth and Legend (Aboriginal)	2
Occult Knowledge (Dream Realms)	4
Research/Investigation	3
Riding (Horse)	2
Stealth	2
Survival (Outback)	2
Swimming	1
Tracking	2

Visualizations

Level

Awaken	5
Conjuration	5
Fermata	5
Dream Flight	5
Metaphysics	
Communion Invocation	2
Farsight	2
Gateway	2
Soulfire	2
Soul Projection	1

Apoanu Apyabaiba

The Apoanu Apyabaiba is a Solitaire group designed for the *Armageddon* setting, though they can also be used in *WitchCraft*. They have their origins in the modern world of *WitchCraft*, but the group is at its most powerful in the future timeline of *Armageddon*.

The Amazonian Rainforest is a powerful place of mystical significance. It is believed that there are several varieties of plants growing in the Rainforest that can enhance Gifted abilities. Several Gateways and Places of Power are also hidden in the tropical forest. The Amazon itself starts in the mountains that were once part of the Incan Empire, a Quechua Nation that led by a True Immortal—according to some members of the Lodge of the Undying. Even without any of the metaphysical trappings, the Rainforest is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. In *Armageddon*, guerrilla fighters trying to hold back the Army of Revelations reside there.

Shamans have always lived in the Amazonian Rainforest, but they never unified as a larger Covenant, like the Ghost Dancers or the Brotherhood of Legba. The Rainforest is home to many different tribes who speak many different languages. The main tribes are the Tupian, Arawakan, Guarani, and Tucanoan. Each tribe had its own Shaman, though their numbers were still small and their powers remained weak.

All that started changing in the 1960s, when a worldwide increase in Gifted powers began. Those born during this time had a greater affinity for metaphysics than the generation before them. This was just what the indigenous Rainforest people needed, because the 20th century was a time of deforestation along the Amazon and this threatened the tribes' continued existence. The native Shamans' increasing powers helped their tribes, but not very much, as they were still acting as individuals in attacking the large problem.

The major change occurred in 1982. As the Reckoning drew nearer, the birth of Supernaturals, like Inheritors and Nephilim, increased—something uncommon in the previous generation. In 1982, a Kamayure woman along the Upper Xingu gave birth to twin boys. The two children were Inheritors, one with a Solar Aspect and one with a Lunar Aspect. They were named Sun and Moon.



Sun and Moon traveled to the First World in Hod, where they formed an alliance with the Balam Clan of the Jaguar Nation. The Jaguar Spirits had helped Amazonian Shamans before, but, after their visit, the number of indigenous people with Jaguar Spirit Patrons sharply increased. In exchange, the Twins pledged to the Balam that they would help fight the Ocelotl Jaguar Clan and their Nahualli servants.

After their trip to the First World, the Twins organized the different tribes into a unified force. They called this confederation of tribes the Apoanu Apyabaiba, which is Tupi for United Native People. A Covenant of sorts was born and Tupian became the lingua franca. Suddenly, Shamans and Jaguar Ferals and nature spirits from differing backgrounds were working together to reclaim their Rainforest. In the first years of the 21st century, it looked like the Twins would achieve everything they had hoped for—until 2008.

In that year, everyone in Munich died, except for one lone survivor. Within the next few years, the Army of Revelations had taken over Central America and was spreading farther south. The Apoanu Apyabaiba were one of the few groups who held off the AoR. Now, the Apoanu Apyabaiba are not just fighting for their way of life or to save the Rainforest—they are one of the groups fighting for the human race's survival.

Membership and Organization

The Apoanu Apyabaiba is a loose coalition of South American Gifted and Supernaturals. Two twin Inheritors, Sun and Moon, lead the group. Other than Sun and Moon, the group has no real hierarchy. The Association is divided into a number of cells that use guerrilla tactics to fight those who invade the Rainforest. Communication among the cells is carried out through Magic, Seer Powers, Supernatural Abilities, and mundane methods that have worked in the Rainforest for hundreds of years.

Most Apoanu Apyabaiba members are Shamans, either Gifted using mostly Invocations and Seer Powers, or humans who have received powers from their Spirit Patrons. The second largest group consists of Ferals, Supernaturals who can shift between human and jaguar shapes. A number of nature spirits have also joined the ranks of the Apoanu Apyabaiba: Balam Jaguar Spirits and Curupira Tree Spirits who fight to protect their homeland.

The Apoanu Apyabaiba is by no means limited to Shamans and Ferals. It is a Solitaire group led by two Inheritors. It is rumored that the group's membership includes an Incarnate, Ghosts, Phantasms, Relentless Dead, a group of Vampyres who call themselves the Jaracacas, a few Kerubim (who say they are working for the Archangel of the Wilderness Orifial and his servant Zuphlas, the Angel of the Forests), and some Sidhe Warriors from Yesod. All this may be true—the Rainforest is an old place of wild magic. There may be things working with the Apoanu Apyabaiba that the larger Covenants do not even know exist.

Allies and Enemies

The Balam Clan of the Jaguar, a group of Jaguar Spirits from the First World, is the Apoanu Apyabaiba's main ally. These nature spirits dwelt in the Dreamtime for centuries, only occasionally interacting with an Otherworld-traveling Shaman or the rare True Dreamer. It has only been since the last half of the 20th century that they have paid more attention to Earth's events. Of course, the damage dealt to the Rainforest has been reflected in the First World, so becoming more involved in Earth's events has become necessary for them.

There is a smaller Solitaire group in Peru that claims to be led by the returned Inca, who some believe is a True Immortal, while others say he is an Avatar. The Incan group stays mainly in the Andes, also trying to keep the Army of Revelations at bay. Similar goals have made them allies with the Apoanu Apyabaiba.

The Apoanu Apyabaiba also deals with is the Brotherhood of Legba and other similar Covenants. Those with an African-based Faith have always shown a proper respect to the Rainforest Spirits. Similar beliefs and geography have made the Shamans and the Legbans allies.

The Church of Revelations is the main enemy of the Apoanu Apyabaiba. The Church is steadily trying to overcome all resistance in South America and considers the Rainforest Shamans to be a minor yet extremely annoying nuisance—a nuisance that the Church has been unable to take care of so far. In a *WitchCraft* game, where the Twins are teenagers just starting to unify the Amazonian Tribes, their main enemies are the Nahualli and the Combine (who have their own plans for the Rainforest). By the time of *Armageddon*, these two groups have been absorbed into the Church of Revelations.

Shaman Guerrilla Fighter

The Rainforest has always existed. Until recent times, there was no reason to think its existence would ever be in jeopardy. But outsiders seek to destroy your homeland out of greed, and Darker Covenants seek to aid them for their own evil purposes.

You are the Shaman for your people. It has always been your duty to protect them and the land. This would be almost impossible for only one person, but you are not alone. You have joined an alliance of other tribes in the Amazon. You have become part of the Apoanu Apyabaiba. The outsiders underestimate the power that you and your allies possess; this will be their fatal mistake.

Origins

You were never the best hunter or the strongest warrior. This did not matter because you were born to walk a different path. The Shaman of your people recognized your talents when you were just a child, and now you are the Shaman (your Solitaire specialization is Invocations). You thought that you were alone in your fight to protect your people from the outside world, but you have since heard the message of Sun and Moon. All the peoples of the Amazon will unite against the ones who seek to destroy the Rainforest.

Allies and Enemies

Your allies are the others scattered throughout the Amazonian Rainforest. As one of the Apoanu Apyabaiba, you can depend on help from other members if you are in trouble; Shamans, Ferals, and even nature spirits aid you in your struggle against the outsiders. Even Sun and Moon come to your aid if they are able.

In a *WitchCraft* campaign, your Adversary is a Combine group seeking to destroy your part of the Rainforest. It is unknown whether they are looking for a rare plant or a Place of Power and it does not really matter. They do not understand balance and they do not belong here. In an *Armageddon* campaign, the Army of Revelations is your enemy. You and your allies are about the only ones keeping them from completely conquering South America.

Roleplaying the Character

There is a harmony of vital forces that must be respected. Otherwise, Nature is thrown out of balance. To take more than you need is foolishness. The creatures of the Rainforest understand this. Your people understand this. The outsiders who insist on their policies of deforestation do not. You fight to protect your homeland, using the spells the old Shaman taught you, the Sight that you have always possessed, and the aid of the Jaguar Spirits and Curupira who help you in your fight against the outsiders.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Solitaire (Apoanu Apyabaiba)

Concept

Reluctant Hero

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH	2	INTELLIGENCE	2
DEXTERITY	2	PERCEPTION	3
CONSTITUTION	3	WILLPOWER	3

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	30
ENDURANCE POINTS	29
SPEED	10
ESSENCE POOL	31

Qualities

Point

Essence Channeling 3	6
Increased Essence Pool +10	2
The Gift	5
True Dreamer	2

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary	-2
Honorable	-1
Humorless	-1
Minority (Amazon Indian)	-1
Cruel	-1

Skill

Level

Brawling	1
Climbing	2
Dodge	1
Hand Weapon (Spear)	1
Language (Tupi)	1
Language (Japanese, Native)	5
Lucid Dreaming	2
Myth and Legend (Ufaina)	2
Notice	1
Ritual (Ufaina)	3
Snares, Stealth, Tracking	1
Survival (Rainforest), Trance	2
Unconventional Medicine (Herbalist)	2

Visualizations

Level

Awaken	5
Dream Attack	5
Dream Flight	5
Dream Shift	5

Metaphysics

Level

Blessing Invocation	1
Communion Invocation	2
Warding Invocation	1
Lesser Healing	2
Divination (Oneiromancy)	1
Spirit Mastery (Nature Spirits)	1
Mind View Art	3
Mind View Strength	3

Gifted

Chapter Five: Metaphysics



Nigel hated the Rainforest. He hated the oppressive humidity that soaked his clothes. He hated the musky smell that he could not quite identify. He hated all the poisonous bugs and poisonous frogs—poison this and poison that. Seventeen days. He only had seventeen days left until he could return home to London and spend all the money he had earned overseeing this construction project.

He was lost in thoughts of his faraway homeland when he heard the crew screaming out in Portuguese. Nigel put on his hard hat and stepped out of the office trailer. It was always something with this crew—never a dull moment.

When Nigel stepped out of the trailer, it took him a minute to make sense of what he was seeing. The tall trees surrounding the construction site had ripped their roots from the ground and were shambling toward his frightened crew. Long, vine-covered limbs reached down, grabbed the Brazilian workers, ripped them apart, and tossed their dead bodies about like rag dolls.

The trees moved slowly through the crew, taking time to patiently kill each worker within their reach. Some workers evaded their grasp and ran farther into the forest. Large, shifting cats, which Nigel first thought to be jaguars, quickly halted those men's flight. Some of the cats pounced on the men and tore into them with their powerful teeth; other, more human-like cats, stood up on two legs and chased their prey through the trees.

Panicked, Nigel tried to run back into the trailer. As he reached for the door, he quickly noted a small Amazonian man sitting on the trailer roof above him. The small man looked at Nigel with tired eyes that said he had not wanted things to come to this, but Nigel had left him no choice. Bark-covered tendrils wrapped around Nigel as he stared into the man's face, frantically trying to make sense of everything.

The animated tree lifted the foreman dozens of feet into the air. Agony coursed through his body as the thing snapped his arms and legs from their sockets, ripping his limbs from his body. Nigel was amazed at how long it was taking for him to die; he prayed for a quicker death.

Introduction

This chapter discusses combat in the Dream Realms and introduces new Invocations and Seer Powers. It also covers Shamanism, the different Shaman abilities, and a list of various Spirit Patrons from Shamanistic cultures around the world. Abhinja powers available to those with the Enlightened Human Quality (see p. 21) are also presented.

Dream Manipulating Powers in Hod

Various dream-manipulating powers are available to Cast Members. A Vampire's Nightmare Power, a Kerubim's Dreamer Theophany, an Incarnate's Dream Primal Power, a Gifted Seer's Mind Dream, and a Mundane's Lucid Dreaming all do basically the same thing—they allow one to affect a particular person's Panorama. When these powers come into conflict, such as when a Vampire tries using Nightmare on a Lucid Dreamer, a Resisted Task is required to change the dreamer's Dreamscape.

Combat in the Dream Realms

The Dream Realms of Hod are worlds of constantly shifting Essence. Appearances and environments change easily from one moment to the next. The Dream Realm realities have more to do with Essence and Willpower than Earth's material reality, so they seem illusory.

The Realms' different nature affects how combat works in Hod. All damage suffered in the Dream Realms is Essence damage based on Willpower, regardless of the damage's form (there are not types, such as slashing, etc.). Dreamers and Astral Travelers in Hod exist as creatures of Essence and any damage dealt them affects their Essence Pool. Supernatural Creatures in Hod suffer damage to both their Life and Essence Pools. Spirits take damage to both Vital and Energy Essence. Hod's nature makes encounters with humans and others more dangerous for Supernatural beings; for this reason, most, especially Seraphim and the Pantheons, avoid the Dream Realms.

Pantheon members who possess the Dream Killer Power do not fear Hod, as they can cause damage to opponents' Life Points as if they were engaging in normal physical combat. This ability may have something to do with the Primal's origins in Netzach. Some scholars believe that it is actually Morpheus' Will that allows the Pantheons to cause physical damage while in the Dream Realms. Any Supernatural or Primal in the Dream Realms still takes physical and Essence damage from attacks. A Primal may cause a



The Death of Telepinu

A tale told in Netzach about the fertility god Telepinu warns the Titans of the dangers of confronting humans in the Dream Realms. Telepinu was an Incarnate Child of Tesub, the Chief Deity of the Hittite Pantheon. He had a fertility god's lusts and was as quick to anger as his storm god father. A Hittite myth details Telepinu's eventual disappearance, but the Pantheon spun the myth to cover the truth of what happened, as no Pantheon wants their human worshippers to know that even the gods may be killed.

Telepinu lusted after the wife of a sculptor in the Hittite city of Hattusas. The god had his way with her and this infuriated the sculptor so much that he cursed the fertility god and desecrated Telepinu's temple. Telepinu likewise became angry with the sculptor. He entered the sculptor's Panorama, hoping to blind and cripple him for his misdeeds.

Things did not quite work out that way.

The sculptor, a Talented Dreamer, used his Artistic Talent to turn his own Panorama against the angry Telepinu. Combining his violent Visualizations with his high Willpower, the sculptor trapped Telepinu in his dream and continued to attack him until he unraveled.

This did not sit well with the other gods. Tesub struck down the sculptor and his wife with a torrent of lightning bolts. All this managed to do was send both the sculptor and his wife to Kether. It did not return Tesub's unraveled son.

The story of Telepinu is circulated among the Pantheons, as well as the Seraphim factions. That story does not prevent the occasional Supernatural from trying to boss around a lowly human in the Dream Realms. This can still result in disaster for the Supernatural.

Telepinu may have been the first greater Supernatural entity a dreaming human unraveled, but he certainly has not been the last.

Dreamer to wake up with a horrible inexplicable scar across his chest, but a Talented Dreamer's Visualizations could unravel a Primal.

New Invocations

Divination

A Seer's Mindtime power, an Inspired's Visions, and a Magician's Divination Invocation allow the Gifted to glimpse beyond the moment, seeing into the past or the future.

Glimpse the Future

This effect allows the Magician to glimpse into the future. To perform the Invocation, the character must concentrate on a particular inquiry, spend six Essence Points, and roll a Perception and Divination Task. If the Task is successful, the character receives a series of symbolic images pertaining to the question at hand. On a Very Good (four Success Levels) or better

result, the images contain specific information that is less ambiguous in nature.

These glimpses only reveal the most likely "possible" future—the future can always be changed, though not easily. Mundanes' destinies are more difficult to alter than those of the Gifted. The latter seem to have an easier time determining their fate. Even the Gifted must be careful in the choices they make when trying to change a perceived future, as the Three Sisters have a way of surprising visionaries with their own take on future events. At any rate, trying to change the future is always a difficult proposition.

Glimpse the Past

Just as Divination allows glimpses into the future, a character can use the Invocation to look into the past. The preparation is the same. The Magician concentrates on a particular inquiry, spends six Essence Points, and rolls a Perception and Divination Task. A successful Task reveals images of the most memorable past event that applies to the question. A Very Good (four Success Levels) or better result reveals more concrete information.

Divinatory Tools

Unlike other Invocations, Divination requires the Magician to pick a specialization. This costs two character points and gives the Magician a +2 when using that particular Divination technique. The Magician can use other techniques to receive a vision of the future, but doing so does not gain the specialization bonus. Performing a Divination Invocation without

using some sort of divinatory technique is much more difficult for the Caster (-2 penalty). For example, Miranda Prosper is a Wicce with Divination (Tarot) 3. If she does a Tarot Reading for someone, her effective Divination Skill is five. If she has no cards and tries to use Palmistry instead, her skill is three. If she just wants to release six Essence Points to glimpse into the future, without using any sort of ritual technique, her effective skill is one.

Divinatory Specializations

Ever since the first Shaman looked to the future to determine the best location for her tribe's hunt, Divination has played an important part of early human civilizations. Every culture possesses a Divination tradition, and in the world of WitchCraft and Armageddon, the Magician can choose from a wide variety of Divinatory Specializations.

Astrology: Astrology is the study of celestial influences affecting individuals. In the West, Astrology is based on an individual's birth month, while Eastern Astrology is year-based. Either method provides a Zodiac sign on which to base Divinations, but without specific birth information (date and time), these Divinations remain generalized. Even a Very Good (four Success Levels) result on the Perception and Divination Task only reveals vague information if the Caster only knows her subject is a Taurus or a Dragon.

Cartomancy: Cards were first invented as Divination tools—the first playing cards were developed from the Tarot Deck. A full Tarot Deck contains the Minor Arcana (the four suits of sword, wand, cup, and stars) and the Major Arcana (the non-suit cards like The Fool or the Tower). The Tarot deck is a very personal item that is attuned to one particular Magician. They only work well for the Magician who owns the deck and the person for whom she is casting the Invocation must handle them. If someone else casts the Invocation with a Magician's Deck, all the Magician's future attempts at Divination with that deck suffer a -4 penalty. The Magician must perform a cleansing ritual to restore the deck to its former ability. As the cleansing ritual requires expending Essence Points equal to one-third the mishandler's Essence Pool, most Magicians just get a new deck.

Crystal-Gazing: Crystal Balls have become a cultural stereotype of witches, but they are still powerful Divination tools. A Magician must prepare a Crystal Ball with successful Craft (Glassblowing) Tasks—a Craft (Glassblowing) and Intelligence Task for the idea, a Craft (Glassblowing) and Dexterity Task to actually create the item. If the Magician uses a Crystal Ball she created herself, she receives a permanent bonus to her Divination Task based on the Task's Success Level. If the Magician prepares the Crystal Ball for someone else, the bonus does not apply. Like Tarot Cards, the Crystal Ball must be attuned to a particular Magician and no one else may handle it after a specific Magician has used it for Divination. In an emergency situation, a Magician with Divination (Crystal-Gazing) may attempt to cast the Invocation on any reflective surface, like a mirror or even a bucket of water. Doing so results in a -2 modifier to the Invocation and Perception Task.

Haruspication: Haruspication, the art of foretelling by studying ritually slain animals' entrails, is one of the oldest Divination Specializations. Although commonly used in ancient times, modern diviners rarely use it—the exceptions being the Nomads, Legions, and some Wicce and Shamanistic Covenants. Practicing Haruspication can result in gaining unwanted attention from the local authorities, so other methods are preferred. For instance, most Ghost Dancers practice Oneiromancy instead.

Divinatory Specializations (continued)

I Ching: The Book of Changes, or I Ching, originated in ancient China. A dragon is said to have revealed the original I Ching to the first Emperor on the banks of the Yellow River 5,000 years ago. Around 1150 BCE, while imprisoned by the last Shang Emperor, Chou Hsin, Wen Wang wrote the I Ching known in modern times, developing the 64 hexagrams and the basic text.

To use the I Ching, the Magician casts six flat sticks. Each stick has a broken line on one side and an unbroken line on the other (anything that gives two results may be used for this purpose; Magicians have been known to flip coins for this part). The six sticks resulting pattern forms one of the 64 hexagrams, and the Magician meditates upon the accompanying text for that hexagram. Asian Covenants like the Society of the Harmonious Pattern use this technique, but it is becoming increasingly popular in the West. In fact, quite a few Wicce choose the Book of Changes as their Divination Specialization.

Oneiromancy: Oneiromancy is the use of dreams to gain visionary insights. In order to specialize in Oneiromancy, the Magician must first have the Lucid Dreaming Skill. A successful Perception and Lucid Dreaming Task allows the dreamer to access the Realm of Akasha from her own Panorama. This is done with the usual Perception and Divination Task. If successful, the Magician experiences a dream that represents the answer to her inquiry. Like other forms of divination, the dream is mostly symbolic and ambiguous unless a Very Good (four Success Levels) Result is achieved. Shamanistic Covenants tend to use Oneiromancy.

Rune-Casting: Rune-Casting is the Divination Specialization that developed in Northern Europe. Stones inscribed with each of the 25 Futhark Runes are the most common type, but other cultures use similar techniques. The stones are drawn from a bag and cast upon a surface. The resulting pattern determines the answer to the Magician's inquiry. For simple questions, the Magician may just draw one stone from the bag.

Tables of Ifa: Caribbean Covenants like the Brotherhood of Legba use Ifa Tables. Ifa uses sixteen cowry shells that can be combined in 256 ways. The resulting pattern gives a result called the Odu, which connects to a specific mythological text. Reading the indicated text brings insight to a specific inquiry. In this regard, Ifa Tables are somewhat similar to the I Ching.



Night Curse

Random flows of Essence shape the Sephiroth of Hod. Gifted capable of controlling Essence can exert their influence over the Dream Realms. The Magician's ability to shape others' dreams is the most common form of this control.

Nightmare

By spending three Essence Points, a Magician may shape her enemy's Panorama, inflicting severe nightmares on the dreamer. The Magician may insert specific images into the dream by succeeding at a Difficult Willpower Test; otherwise, the victim's subconscious shapes the Nightmare. The Magician rolls a Willpower and Night Curse Task. If the Task succeeds, the victim loses D4(2) Endurance Points, plus one point for every Success Level achieved.

Dreamcatchers

Dreamcatchers protect the sleeper from harmful nocturnal attacks. To create one, the Caster must know the Empowerment, Night Curse, and Warding Invocations. Dreamcatchers work as an Empowered item, with the Warding Invocation protecting the sleeper from attacking beings.

This works like any other Warding—it protects the subject from hostile spirits and from any sensory or locating metaphysical power. It also prevents Mara and Night Terrors from entering the sleeper's Panorama. Anyone on the bed below a Dreamcatcher benefits from this effect.

In addition, Dreamcatchers protect against the Night Curse Invocation. The Strength Rating of the Dreamcatcher's Warding acts as an Essence Shield, with a Protection Rating 10 plus the Warding's Strength. Any Magician casting Night Curse at the subject must roll a Focus Task (Invocation and Willpower) higher than this number. This is a unique property of the

Dreamcatcher, which sets it apart from other Wardings. The Dreamcatcher blocks only the Night Curse Invocation; an Essence Shield is required to block other Invocations.

The Ghost Dancers, the Wicce, and other Shamanistic Covenants use Dreamcatchers.

Dreamcatchers require a very high Essence Point cost to make, so most Magicians only create them for themselves and for people very important to them.

New Seer Powers

Minddream

Just as a character with Mindsight can see others' thoughts, a character with Minddream can see, feel, and interact with a target's dream state, a powerful Essence-filled construct. Through its use, a character can observe, interact, or even disrupt (sometimes lethally) their subject's dreams. Minddream uses Mindsight's range tables (see *WitchCraft*, p. 233).

Using Minddream

Seers commonly use Minddream to see others' dreams, possibly interpreting their meaning, and/or sending messages to dreamers. Viewing and interpreting a subject's dreams uses Intelligence and the Minddream Art. Sending a dream message uses Willpower and the Minddream Art. The degree of success determines how much is learned or how easily the Seer gets her message through. Normal Success Levels result in cryptic dreams, while high Success Levels allow the Seer to directly manipulate the subject's dreams.

A Seer may also use the power to alter a dreamer's Panorama and cause harm. The Seer can inflict Essence damage to the dreamer. At high power levels, the Seer can kill. Using the power for this effect

results in the same ramifications as Mindkill. During such attacks, the subject may attempt a Difficult Willpower Test to awaken and escape her tormentor. Subjects with Lucid Dreaming and the Awaken Visualization may resist Minddream attacks with that ability instead. A Minddream attack is resolved with a Resisted Task using the psychic's Willpower and Minddream Art against the victim's Willpower and Constitution. Used this way, it can be resisted just as Mindkill can. It carries the same possible Endurance and Essence loss as a consequence. Unlike Mindkill, Minddream only causes Essence damage.

Using Minddream Defensively

Minddream can be used to resist another person's Minddream abilities. Also, two characters with the ability can communicate with each other through their dreams. If they are very close friends, they may even add their Minddream Strengths together to enhance Minddream's effective range.

Mind Projection

This Seer Power is equivalent to the Soul Projection Invocation and the Death Projection Necromantic Power. Mind Projection is commonly referred to as Astral Projection—it allows the Seer to leave her physical body and travel in an incorporeal spirit form, while remaining connected to her body via a psychic

Minddream Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	One Essence Point of damage per Strength level may be inflicted on a subject.
3	The Seer can disrupt the subject's sleep, causing her to get no rest that night (see <i>WitchCraft</i> , p. 154 for the effects of loss sleep). Repeated uses of this effect on continuous nights can severely hamper a victim.
5	Damage is raised to D4(2) times the Minddream Strength Level of Essence damage.
8	The victim's heart can be stopped, just as with Mindkill. A victim who dies from Essence Point loss has no discernible cause of Death (see <i>WitchCraft</i> , p. 154).

Minddream Art Table

Success Level	Result
1	Can send a message that becomes a symbol-filled dream and is probably not specifically recognizable as a message. Can watch a subject's dreams as if viewing a movie. Interpretation is up to the Cast Member.
2	Can send dream images chosen by the medium, but still fairly symbolic. Snatches of messages can be sent. If someone knows that this ability exists, she may recognize this as a message. Used to view a subject's dreams, the Seer may interpret the dream's general gist.
3	Can enter the subject's dreams and talk directly to her, but the subject cannot reply, even though she is still "in control" of the dream. The Seer cannot influence the Dreamscape. Used to view a subject's dreams, the Seer can sense the dream's underlying cause and the reasons behind it.
4+	Can enter the subject's dreams and talk to directly to a subject. The subject can answer. Can alter the subject's Dreamscape at will. The Seer can determine exactly why the target is dreaming a particular dream, and she knows what the representations and symbols within the dream mean. The Seer can sense the subject's thoughts and feelings about the dream.

link. To the Seer, this link appears as a silver or golden cord of Essence, and only she can see it.

Using Mind Projection

To use Mind Projection, the Seer must first succeed at a Willpower and Mind Projection Art Task. This allows the Seer to separate herself from her physical body. To maintain the psychic link, the Seer must leave five Essence Points with her physical body. Mind Projection drains one Essence Point from the Seer per hour that she remains in astral form. She cannot regain Essence until she returns to her body. The effect lasts for one hour per the Task's Success Level. While in astral form, the Seer may pass through physical barriers and may travel up to speeds of 100 mph (150 kph) per Mind Projection Strength Level.

The Seer may use any of her psychic powers while in astral form, but only the sensory ones may be used on people or items on the physical plane. Powers that normally affect physical beings, like Mindhands, Mindfire, Mindheal, and Mindkill, only work on other astral or spiritual entities.

Using Mind Projection, the Seer can travel to the Otherworlds by first entering such border Realms as the Threshold of Geburah or the Periphery of Hod. In the Realms in which spirits have physical bodies, the Seer can access all her powers. For example, a Seer traveling through an office building in Manhattan could not use Mindhands to move a desk. In the First World, however, the same Seer could use Mindhands to lift the rocks and trees around her.

Using Mind Projection Defensively

While in spirit form, the Seer can use Mind Projection to form a sort of Astral Armor. The Seer must succeed at an Intelligence and Mind Projection Task to form the protective shell around her. The shell lasts for one minute per Success Level and has an Armor Value of D4(2) times the Seer's Mind Projection Strength Level. This armor protects against all Essence-based attacks, including physical attacks made by spiritual beings.

Baraka Sabil

The Society of Assassins can channel Essence into their bodies to enhance their already formidable fighting abilities. Through their skill in Baraka Mastery, the Assassins use an assortment of powers they call the Baraka Sabil, the Way of Essence.

If this sounds similar to Tao-Chi, it is because it is Tao-Chi. While the Assassins spread their influence East, dominating groups like the Thagi in India, the Storm Dragons and the Red Lotus spread their influence West, also dominating groups like the Thagi in India. Up until this time, the Assassins relied on Invocations and sharp knives to carry out their missions. The Society's Imam became fascinated with the Chi Mastery of the Asian Covenants. After a few years of careful diplomatic relations and even more careful infiltration, the Society of Assassins became the first Western Covenant to extensively train its members in the Essence-enhanced Martial Arts.

The Assassins changed some of the Tao-Chi names, making it their own. The game effects and point costs are still the same, however. The Ra'd Quwwat, the Strength of Thunder, is the group's underlying Martial Arts style. The Strength of Thunder style developed from the Storm Fist Style. The Baraka Mastery Skill activates the Martial Arts Metaphysics and the powers themselves are called the Baraka Sabil. Most of the actual powers' names have remained the same: Spirit Strike is still called Spirit Strike, for example (except in Arabic, where it is "nafs daraba"). The Assassins call Essence "baraka" instead of "chi," so Baraka is always used in place of that word. The Baraka Sabil Dragon Strike is called Phoenix Strike, and Speed of the Tiger is called Speed of the Cheetah.

The *Mystery Codex* supplement contains more information on Baraka Sabil powers, referred to therein as Tao Chi.



New Item

Ghost Shirt

Ghost Dancer Shamans who know the Invocations Consecration, Empowerment, and Shielding can create Ghost Shirts. Normally, the Shaman Empowers a symbolically decorated buckskin shirt with a Physical Shield in a ritual that lasts several days. The Strength of the Shield depends on the Shaman who creates it, but most Ghost Shirts have an Armor Value 20 or so. The amount of Essence imbued into the Ghost Shirt also depends on the Shaman, and can range from 20 to 100 Essence Points. When someone aims a gun at the wearer, the Ghost Shirt's Physical Shield activates.

Ghost Dancer Shamans once created the Ghost Shirts for the Braves as powerful armor to neutralize the White Man's superior weapons—until the Combine got involved and somehow negated the Invocations. Once that happened, the Ghost Shirts were merely decorated buckskin with an Armor Value of D4(2), leaving the Braves helpless against the White Man's firepower.

Shamanism

Shamanism is the oldest form of religious expression on Earth. The first Gifted Humans were Shamans of small tribal groups. Even before Atlantis or Lemuria or Ultima Thule, there were Shamans. The following section details common Shaman powers and lore. Shamanism occurs in all societies, and the following description applies equally to the Ghost Dancers, the Nahualli, the Apoanu Apyabaiba, and the Solitaire Shamans found throughout the World.

Becoming a Shaman

A character can become a Shaman in three ways: be born into the role, be chosen by the spirits to take on the role, or choose the role for herself. Most Shamanistic societies consider all three of these paths valid, though they often consider self-proclaimed Shamans less powerful.

Being born a Shaman is usually part of a hereditary tradition. The Gifted child, who is usually the current Shaman's child, is recognized as such and her training to become the people's next Shaman begins almost immediately. Born Shamans are potentially the most powerful of their kind, but they are also the most rare. And, of course, there is no guarantee that a Gifted Shaman will give birth to a Gifted child.

The second way of becoming a Shaman is to be chosen by the Spirits. The Ghost Dancers practice an initiation rite called the Vision Quest, and most Shamanistic cultures have a similar practice. During the Vision Quest, the character, after a period of ritual purification, tries to contact the Spirit World. The Vision Quest is not always successful, and even a successful one does not automatically guarantee receiving the Spirit Patron Quality. There are times when a Spirit does decide, for whatever reason, to become a character's Patron, however. As long as the character serves her Spirit Patron, she retains her Shamanistic Abilities.

Finally, a character may validly proclaim herself a Shaman, but she has to work hard to prove her worthiness to her people.

Regardless of how a character becomes a Shaman, only proper training assures her acceptance as one. Her training includes spending time in the Dream Realms and gaining knowledge from the current Shaman and the spirit guides. Once she has accomplished all this, then her people consider her a Shaman, and her Shaman status continues as long as

she gets results. If the people decide that a Shaman is not serving them properly, they find a new Shaman.

Shamanistic societies are practical societies—they care only that a Shaman serves her people. As long as the Shaman does her job, her people could care less whether she is a Disciple of the Flesh or Tainted. She could even be a clever Mundane with no metaphysical abilities at all. In the past, there have been Inspired Shamans, Feral Shamans, and even an Australian Aboriginal Shaman who knew the Keys of Solomon (the Templars killed him in the 1950s). These are all exceptions, however—almost all Shamans have Invocations, Seer Abilities, or to a lesser extent, Necromantic Powers.

The Vision Quest

When you go up on the hill for a Vision Quest, you expect four things:

First, you expect that you will die up on that hill, and some have.

Next, you expect that you will go crazy, and when they come to get you, you will be institutionalized. This also has happened.

The third thing that you expect is that you will disappear completely and no one will ever see or hear from you again. This also could happen.

The fourth thing that you expect is that you will come back down from the hill.

—Ghost Dancer saying

The vast majority of Shamans gain their abilities through the Vision Quest, which is considered a universal rite of passage. Most of the Native American Nations require all males to complete a Vision Quest before puberty. After the Vision Quest, the young men receive the name they are called from then on. Those not destined to become Shamans hope to receive a vision of their future, not encounter spirits. Some societies do not allow women to go on a Vision Quest until after menopause and some never let women go at all. The Ghost Dancers prefer that both boys and girls go on a Vision Quest before puberty, but sometimes a Nation's tradition takes precedence over the Covenant's policies.

Spirits sometimes contact a person before her Vision Quest. In such a case, the spirit appears in her dreams and leads her to the First World. Those whom spirits approach first almost always become Shamans.



Everyone else must approach the spirits through the Vision Quest. A character who seeks a Vision must prepare herself for it both ritually and mentally. This requires two different Tasks and typically lasts for several hours. To ensure that all the rituals are followed properly, the seeker must succeed at a Ritual and Intelligence Task. If this is the first time for the seeker, a Shaman or Medicine Man may help her. In this case, the guide rolls her own Intelligence and Rituals Task, and adds her Success Level to the seeker's result. The seeker must also be in the proper mental and spiritual state to receive a Vision. While purifying herself in a sweat lodge and praying and fasting for hours, the seeker must also pass a Willpower and Rituals Task (a guide's roll is never added to this Task).

If the seeker fails either of these two Tasks, the Vision Quest results in no real Vision. The Chronicler should roll a character's Tasks when she attempts a Vision Quest, as the character should not realistically know that the Vision Quest failed until after completing the whole ordeal. A character may go on many Vision Quests; she is not limited to one.

When the seeker completes the preparatory purification, she goes to the proper location—a hilltop or mountainside away from her village—to receive her Vision. Sometimes a specific medicine lodge is used for this purpose instead. The seeker holds a vigil for four days without sleeping or eating (she may have someone bring her a sip of water each day).

Staying awake for days costs the character one Endurance Point for every hour past the first twenty-four. Thus, if the character stays awake through the first three days, she loses 48 Endurance Points. Once her Endurance drops below zero, she must pass a Constitution and Willpower Task at a -1 penalty for every five points below zero to stay awake. She repeats this Task every Turn until she fails and falls asleep.

If a character's Vision Quest takes place in an exposed wilderness area, the Chronicler may require a successful Constitution and Survival Task to avoid injury. Alternatively, the Chronicler may decide that the character automatically takes a certain amount of damage due to the environment. A seeker may suffer from hypothermia, heat exhaustion, or any number of conditions that the Chronicler wishes to inflict on her. Some seekers have even died from these conditions.

Once the seeker collapses, she may receive her Vision. Roll a D10 and compare the result to the Outcome Table (*WitchCraft*, p. 129). If the seeker collapsed before even the third day, her Vision Quest

automatically fails. If she stays awake at least until the third day, her roll suffers a -2 penalty. Staying awake through the fourth day receives no modifier. The seeker gains a +2 bonus for every day after the fourth that she stays awake. The Vision Quest should occur at a Place of Power. For every 20 points of ambient Essence at that Place of Power, add +1 to the result. Vision Quests may be attempted multiple times, even if a character has already had her Vision. Add +1 for every successful Vision Quest the character has experienced. Finally, add +1 to the result for every Success Level the character achieved with the initial two Rituals Tasks. If the modified roll is greater than nine, the character experiences a Vision.

An Adequate (one Success Level) result gives the seeker some insight about her destiny, usually enough to give the character her name. It may even result in a brief glimpse into the character's future. On a Good result (two Success Levels), a spirit approaches the seeker and becomes her guardian, but not Spirit Patron. The spirit may give the character any advice or instruction that the Chronicler deems appropriate. The spirit may even appear later in the character's dreams. On an Excellent result (three Success Levels) or higher, the seeker gains a Spirit Patron.

The Chronicler determines which spirit type appears to the character. Spirits that appear to the Ghost Dancers and other Native Americans may be Antelope, Badger, Bear, Buffalo, Coyote, Crow, Eagle, Elk, Hare, Skunk, Sky, Snake, Turtle, Wind, and Wolf. Sometimes the spirit that appears to the seeker is Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit—if a non-Gifted character experiences this Vision of the Creator, she automatically becomes Gifted (this usually means that the character was Gifted without any metaphysical skills, but the Chronicler may decide that the character has become Gifted during play). Also, any character receiving a Vision of Wakan Tanka becomes a Shaman—whether she wants to or not.

Urban Shamanism

With the decline of tribal societies in modern times, a new type of Shaman has emerged: the Urban Shaman. Like the traditional Shaman, the Urban Shaman receives her calling through dreams and contact with the Spirit World. Unlike the traditional Shaman, the Urban Shaman works in a society that has no cultural framework for Shamanism, so a lot of her training is through self-discovery. Improvisation is an essential part of Urban Shamanism.

Urban Shamans, like their traditional counterparts, are mostly Solitaires. Those who join Covenants usually choose the Wicce or the Brotherhood of Legba. The Ghost Dancers view Urban Shamans as illegitimate. For the most part, they treat them with the same disdain they reserve for New Agers who trivialize their traditions.

Basic Shaman Powers

Shamans always have a Rituals Skill appropriate to their culture. None of a Shaman's metaphysical skills may ever be higher than her Rituals Skill, including her Seer or Necromancy Powers. While a distinction is drawn between these abilities in modern occult Associations, the Shaman views them all as part of her calling. Most Shamans have a combination of Magical Invocation and Seer abilities. The typical beginning practitioner has the following abilities, at level one or greater:

Blessing Invocation

Communion Invocation

Warding Invocation

Lesser Healing or the Mindheal Seer Power

Divination or the Mindtime Seer Power

Farsight or the Mindview Seer Power

Almost all Shamans are Solitaires, so there are always exceptions to the above example. In combination, level one in the above abilities costs between 15 and 21 points (depending on how many Seer Powers, instead of Invocations the Shaman chooses). For this reason, the majority of Shamans are Gifted, though some are Lesser Gifted.

Common Shamanistic Lore

Shamans commonly learn the Invocations listed below. A character does not need to learn all of these, but she is more likely to learn these Invocations than any other. As part of a Shamanistic tradition, these may be the only Invocations that a Shaman's mentor knows, and, therefore, the only Invocations to which the character has access. Of the following Invocations, Soul Projection is by far the most common. If the Shaman learns no other Invocations from this list, she at least learns Soul Projection.

Cleansing
Consecration
Lesser Curse
Shielding
Soul Projection
Spirit Mastery (Ghosts)
Spirit Mastery (Nature Spirits)

Common Shamanistic Skills

The Shaman does not really distinguish between the metaphysical and the mundane—they are all part of a greater whole. While the Shaman focuses on Invocations or Seer abilities, she also learns some non-metaphysical skills.

As has been stated earlier, all Shamans know the Rituals Skill appropriate to their culture. None of a Shaman's metaphysical abilities may be higher than her Rituals Skill. Shamans also learn Occult Knowledge (nature spirits), Storytelling, and the Myth and Legend Skill appropriate to their society.

A Shaman gains insight into her culture's problems through traveling to the Dream Realms. For this reason, all Shamans learn the Lucid Dreaming Skill. Much of a Shaman's work takes place within her own Panorama, though Shamans also travel outside the Periphery to other Realms in the Sephiroth of Hod. This is why most Shamans have some kind of metaphysical projection ability.

Shamans commonly heal others. In addition to powers like Lesser Healing or Mindheal, a Shaman also knows more mundane healing techniques—First Aid and Unconventional Medicine (Herbal Medicine). A Shaman also learns the Survival Skill appropriate to her environment.

Symbols and Items of Power

Shamans often use the following Symbols and Items of Powers.

Mandala: Technically, a Mandala is a ritual aid the Buddhist Mystics use, but in this case, it also refers to Shamanistic Sand Paintings. The Mandala is usually a circular design created in the sand with powders, paints, and oils. The paintings are very elaborate and represent powerful spiritual forces. Mandalas are temporary and not designed to last longer than the ritual itself; in fact, they are part of the ritual.

A Mandala requires the Fine Arts (Sand Painting) and the Rituals Skills. It provides three Essence Points for any normal Invocation and six for a healing Invocation. Many Mandalas include a circle in their design—those gain an additional five or ten Essence Points (see *WitchCraft*, p. 204).

Medicine Bag: This leather bag is covered in elaborate designs and filled with items of ritual significance. The items within vary depending on the Shaman. Traditionally, the bag's contents have included things like animal bones, feathers, stones, and tobacco. Some modern Urban Shamans have added things like Barbie Doll heads or integrated circuits to their bags. The bag's contents, which are revealed in the Shaman's dreams, are always personal to the Shaman. Creating a medicine bag requires the following: all of the components, two days of ritual preparation, three Success Levels in an Intelligence and Rituals Task, and the expenditure of ten Essence Points. Once created, the medicine bag provides two Essence Points to any Invocation, provided it is used for at least one Turn as part of the Ritual.

Dance: Shamans often perform ritual dances, using the dances' elaborate movements to gather Essence. Such dances must take no less than five minutes. At the end of this time, a character can attempt a Dexterity and Fine Arts (Appropriate Dancing Type) Task. For every Success Level, the character gains one ambient Essence Point to use in a ritual or Invocation. Characters with Essence Channeling receive little benefit from the dance. Characters without Essence Channeling can also raise one point of their personal Essence for use in a ritual or Invocation. This ritual can be repeated, and for every additional five minutes of dancing a character loses D6(3) Endurance Points, but she may make an additional Task check for ambient Essence gain. The character cannot regain lost Endurance Points until she stops and rests—if the character collapses from exhaustion before performing a ritual, she loses all the Essence she gathered.

The Native American Ghost Dancers received their name from their ritual dance tradition—there have been Buffalo Dancers, Corn Dancers, Eagle Dancers, and Sun Dancers. Many of the sacred dances are still used in modern times and the Ghost Dancer Covenant has absorbed most of the older Native American Dance Societies.

Animal Sacrifice: Some Shamans still practice animal sacrifice rituals. As this is one of the oldest Essence-gathering methods, the Shaman sees nothing

wrong with it. Shamans usually sacrifice small animals (fowl, goats, etc.). A ritually killed animal provides D10(5) Essence Points for an Invocation. Those practicing in the U.S. should note that the authorities disdain such practices, and they arrest, fine, or imprison those caught conducting ritual animal sacrifice.

Spirit Patrons

For the most part, Shamanistic religions are animistic. They hold Nature in high esteem, and they know that their survival in the world is dependent on their relationship with the spirits around them. When the tribe experiences misfortune, it usually means that a nature spirit is displeased. The Shaman travels to the First World to appease the spirit. Additionally, some Shamans owe their abilities to a particular Patron Spirit.

The *Abomination Codex* supplement and the *Armageddon* corebook both describe the process of gaining a Spirit Patron in detail. Spirit Patrons are very important to the Shamanistic Tradition and maintaining a good relationship with the Spirit World is essential to the well being of the Shaman's people. Spirit Patrons are either nature spirits or Pagan Deities, though Urban Shamans may have City Ethereals as Spirit Patrons.

Shamans learn to respect the spirits very early in their training, as they can be dangerous. Shamans never try to bind a Spirit; only an arrogant Westerner like a Rosicrucian would try that. Spirits are part of Nature's balance and commanding them recklessly endangers the Shaman's world.

Gaining a Spirit Patron

Although a character may receive a Spirit Patron in many different ways, most Spirit Patrons approach the Shaman. A character usually meets them in an initiation ritual, like a Vision Quest, where she is trying to make contact with a spirit. If the spirit decides the person seeking it is worthy of becoming a Shaman, it becomes the neophyte Shaman's Patron at that moment. The spirit seeker need not be Gifted to attract the spirit's attention. The spirit may see qualities in that person which would make her a good Shaman, even without her having been born with the Gift. The spirit then provides her with the metaphysical abilities (including the Gift if necessary) to perform her Shaman functions.

A Spirit Patron is a Supernatural Quality and the character must expend Quality or Metaphysical Points to acquire it. To find a Spirit Patron's value, total up the value of the Boons (special powers the Patron gives the character) and Obligations (the Tasks or gifts required to appease the Patron). Obligations reduce the value, while Boons enhance the value. Obligations cannot reduce the Boons' cost below one half their original cumulative value.

Nature Spirits

Shamans commonly have nature spirit Patrons. The nature spirits demand respect and reverence, and those whom they bless must try to protect Nature from mankind's depredations. Animal spirits favor characters whose behavior or traits reflect the spirit's—a Bear spirit may forge a bond with a large, hulking character, while a Rat spirit may be more receptive to the entreaties of a city-wise, cunning person. The First World's animal spirits are also the first tribal societies' original Guardian Spirits. Some tribes still retain that guardianship. Alternatively, individuals whose bloodline is strong enough may lead the Animal Spirit to recognize her as one of its own.

Common Boons: Power, Vigor, Spirit Speech

Invocations: Cleansing, Communion, Lesser Healing

Special Boons: Summon Animal Spirits, Skin-Changer

Common Obligations: Conditional Boon (Any), Oath of Duty (defend nature, 1-2 points). Often no actual Obligation is demanded, so long as the character remains appropriately reverent.

The majority of these abilities are described in detail in *WitchCraft* or *Abomination Codex*. The two special boons are presented on p. 102.

Bear Spirits: The Bear Spirits were among the first spirits mankind worshipped. Shamans viewed them as spirits of power and healing. The Bears took their role as Guardian very seriously, actively taking part in their wards' affairs. But that was thousands of years ago, and the Bear Tribes, along with other animal tribes, have dwindled with civilization's onslaught. Only the Aboriginal Shamans of Australia and similar tribes recall their original Spirit Patron.

In the modern era, Bear Spirits grant their patronage based on a person's worth. They look for people who willingly fight the fight alone. The Bear is



New Boons

Summon Animal Spirits

4-point Power

The Shaman can call upon her totemic animal to summon a number of spirits to do her bidding. The summoning requires a Simple Willpower Test and the expenditure of five Essence Points per spirit summoned. The maximum number of summoned spirits cannot exceed the Test's Success Level, regardless of available Essence. *Mystery Codex* (p. 204) contains some sample spirits.

Skin-Changer

Variable Supernatural Quality

Prerequisite: Spirit Mastery (Type) 4+, Warding 1+

Shaman Skin-Changers can assume animal form by magically linking to a spirit. The Shaman voluntarily enters this process and remains fully in control. The Shaman requires the specially treated fur of the animal in question for transformation, so the process cannot be done quickly or without forethought.

The cost of being a Skin-Changer equals the cost of being a Feral of the same species (see *Adomination Codex*, p. 36). The needed prerequisites must be paid for separately. While in bestial form, the character cannot use Invocations, although previously performed Invocations remain in effect.

not a pack animal and it respects those who can act without the support of others. The Bear Spirit commonly grants the Power and Vigor Boons and the Invocation of Lesser Healing. Sometimes it grants the Skin-Changer Quality—the earliest Shamans could take the bear's form and this ability still exists today.

Buffalo Spirits: The Buffalo symbolizes the Sun and Fertility. As such, Buffalo Spirits grant the Vigor and Power Boons, though they give some Shamans the Boon of Prophecy. Buffalo Spirits have also been known to teach the Invocations of Communion and Greater Healing. The Ghost Dancers have stories of a powerful Spirit Patron named White Buffalo Woman who knew all the Greater Invocations and taught them to those she found worthy.

As the Buffalo is a herd animal, society is very important to the Buffalo Spirits. They reward generosity and punish miserliness. Among the Ghost Dancers, Buffalo Spirits often become the Patrons of young, unmarried women.

Crow Spirits: Crows are tricksters and they only grant their patronage to someone with the Clown Drawback. The Crow Spirits also favor characters with the Lazy or Showoff Drawbacks. They never accept a Humorless character, but they may decide to lighten up such a character (removing that Drawback as a Boon). Fun is what matters to them.

The Crow Spirits teach Invocations appropriate for a Trickster. This means that, in addition to the usual Invocations nature spirits teach, Lesser and Greater Illusion are imparted. Crow Spirits demand an Oath of Duty for their patronage, and that Duty always consists of playing a very great trick on the Crow Spirits' chosen victim.

Dog Spirits: Dog Spirits value Friendship and Loyalty, and these are the qualities they look for when granting their patronage. Knowing that humanity plays an important role in the Creator's plans, the Dog Spirits have always sought to ally themselves with humans. They have always taken mankind's side in debates in the First World.

The Way of the Dog is the way of servitude. The needs of the pack come before the needs of the individual and the pack must always serve the Master. The Dog Spirits consider Mankind to be their Master. It is important to realize the difference between humanity and an individual human: an individual human can be weak or unworthy, not fit to be part of the greater whole that is humanity. These weak individuals must be weaned out—the Dog Spirits have no moral qualms about descending on an individual human like the Wild Hunt of old, while striving to protect humanity as a whole.

Old Gods

Nature spirits are not the only entities the Shamans worship. The old gods are also part of various Shamanistic societies' pantheons. Some of their deities share similarities with gods in better-known pantheons, while others seem more like abstract forces of nature. A small sampling of gods from these pantheons is included below. These deities' Aspects are also included for those involved in *Armageddon* campaigns.

North America

Coyote: The Trickster God of Native America, the Coyote sometimes appears on four legs as a coyote. Other times he walks on two legs as a handsome young man. A master shapeshifter, he can transform into whatever amuses him. He has appeared as an old man, a beautiful woman, and, in modern times, a middle-aged, white salesman—anything for a laugh.

The Coyote mostly dwells in the First World, where he has a contradictory reputation. On one hand, he is truly a god, a powerful being descended from the Sephyr who helped create the world. On the other hand, he often acts like an idiot. Most of the First World's tribes have grown tired of his antics—they are just too afraid of the Coyote to tell him this in person.

The god sees Coyote Ferals as wayward children, even the cursed ones who cannot control their transformations. He often becomes their Patron Spirit.

Aspects: Beast (Coyote), Trickster.

Common Boons: Power, Spirit Speech, Vigor, Invocations.

Common Obligations: Conditional Boon (any that Coyote finds amusing at the time).

Special Obligations: Having Coyote as a Patron is similar to having the Crow Spirits as one; as long as the character maintains a sense of humor, things go fine. The Clown Drawback is a definite plus and Humorless is a definite minus.

Thunderbird: Thunderbird, like the Coyote, is a universal figure of worship in North America. Thunderbird is generally considered benevolent, but like most storm gods, he has a violent side. Coyote once had to protect mankind from Thunderbird's wrath, but neither of them talk about it.

Thunderbird appears as a giant black eagle with fiery eyes. If he has a human form, he rarely uses it. Thunderbird dwells in the First World, flying through the sky on powerful black wings. Storm clouds trail behind him, and lightning strikes wherever he gazes.

Aspects: Beast (Birds), Sky, War.

Common Boons: Spirit Speech, Power, Vigor, Invocations (Elemental and Weather Lordship).

Special Boons: Hard to Kill, Life Touch.

Common Obligations: Conditional Boon (Any).

Special Obligation: Devotees of Thunderbird must act bizarre. They must live on the outskirts of their town in a dilapidated home (in the old days this was a tipi of rotting hide; in modern times, any condemned building will do). They must wear heavy winter clothing in the summer and wear only a breechcloth in the winter. They must eat burning hot food with their bare hands. Having Thunderbird for a Patron makes life a little more complicated

Central America

Xipe Totec: The Nahualli Dark Covenant worships Xipe Totec, a form of the Aztec God Tezcatlipoc sometimes called the Red Tezcatlipoca or the Flayed Lord. The Cult of Pain also venerate Xipe Totec. Xipe Totec is often portrayed as wearing the skins of his human sacrifices.

Ironically enough, Xipe Totec is considered a vegetation god. His cloak of human skins is seen as symbolic of plants emerging from the earth after a rain. Whatever the symbolic rationalization, the Flayed God remains a deity that feeds on the torture of others.

Aspects: Fertility, Trickster, War, Wisdom.

Common Boons: Spirit Speech, Vigor, Invocations (especially the jaguar form of the Spirit Mastery Invocation).

Common Obligations: Beholden, Gift of Kin (Human Sacrifice), Oath of Servitude.

Special Obligations: Xipe Totec only patronizes those who practice the blood magic rituals that gather Sadicas from torturing others.

South America

Inti: Inti is the Incan Sun God and his consort is the Moon Goddess Mama Kilya. His son is Manco Capac, the first Inca (the Divine Leader of the Incan Empire). Some Peruvian Solitaire groups believe that the Inca, Inti's incarnation on Earth, are still active in modern times. The Sun God appears as a golden disc with a human face.

Aspects: Sun, Wisdom.

Common Boons: Spirit Speech, Power, Prophecy, Invocations.

Special Boons: Immortality.

Common Obligations: Beholden, Gift of Kind (gold), Oath of Duty.

Pachamama: The Apoanu Apyabaiba call this Incan Goddess Caipora, the Queen of the Forest. Pachamama appears as a Native Woman at home in the forest, though she also may be seen as an earthquake-causing dragon. She is also considered the Queen of the Dream Realms. It is said that Inti gives her gold and that Mama Kilya gives her silver. Pachamama weaves the two metals into the Universal Dream.

Pachamama does have a very strong connection to the Dream Realms. She holds court in the First World, but she can also be encountered in the City of Morpheus or pleading her case to the Three Sisters. Pachamama's fate is tied to the Rain Forest's fate.

Aspects: Fertility, Element (Earth).

Common Boons: Vigor, Life Touch, Invocations (Affect the Psyche, Lesser Curse, Lesser Healing, Communion).

Special Boons: Soul Projection (Sephith of Hod), Lucid Dreaming.

Common Obligations: Oath of Servitude.

Special Obligations: Pachamama favors those who work to save the Rain Forest.

Australia

Daramulum: Daramulum is a Sky God said to be the intermediary between humanity and the Creator. His name means "One Leg," and he appears as a one-legged Aboriginal Australian. His image is only shown during initiation rites. This secretive god is one of the main sources of power for an Aboriginal Shaman.

Aspects: Wisdom, Magic, Moon, Sky.

Common Boons: Power, Prophecy, Spirit Speech, Vigor, Invocations (Any).

Special Boons: Good Luck.

Common Obligations: Beholden, Oath of Duty (Preserve the ways of Alchera, the Dreamtime).

Special Obligations: Most Shamanistic deities are provincial and concerned only with their particular culture. Daramulum is especially so, and only favors an Aboriginal character.

Polynesia

Pele: The Hawaiian Goddess of Volcanoes, Pele appears as a beautiful Polynesian woman dressed in red. She can also appear as a small child or an old woman. Pele is a jealous Goddess who is very easily offended and she rewards any perceived slight with a lava flow. Those who give up the Old Ways really anger her.

Aspects: Element (Earth), Element (Fire), Vengeance.

Common Boons: Spirit Speech, Power, Vigor, Invocations.

Special Boons: Good Luck, Charisma.

Common Obligations: Beholden, Oath of Duty.

Abhijna

Tibet has always been a place of fascination for the West. There are countless stories of wise Tibetan Masters with powerful mystical abilities who can perform amazing feats. In *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon*, these abilities are real—they are called the Abhijna.

The Abhijna are the Shambalan Tibetan Masters' supernormal abilities. An Adept who masters these techniques becomes a Tulku. The Abhijna normally take years to master, but with the approach (or in *Armageddon*, the arrival) of the Reckoning, these abilities have become more commonplace. Learning Abhijna requires the Enlightened Quality. While there are many Gifted Monks in Tibet with Seer or Tao Chi abilities, only the Enlightened are considered Tulku Masters.

Abhidharma

To use any of the Abhijna Abilities, a character must possess the Abhidharma Skill. The Abhidharma are the Buddha's "Special Teachings." Through a true understanding of these special teachings, a character learns to manipulate Essence and reality in ways the Gifted envy. Abhidharma is learned as a Special Skill at two points per level until level five, and at five points per level thereafter. One step to learning to use the Abhijna is attaining a meditative state called Jhana. A character's Abhidharma Skill may never be greater than her Trance Skill.

Abhijna Abilities

During character creation, Abhijna can be bought at five points each; afterwards, they cost ten points each. Using Abhinja requires the Abhidharma Skill and usually either Willpower or Perception (the ability's description details which). Abhijna costs Essence to use, usually quite a bit, but since only the Enlightened may use Abhijna, this is not much of a problem.

Bardo Ascension

The Tibetan Masters wander the many planes of existence. Using the Bardo Ascension Abhinja, a Tulku may bodily transport herself to any Sephiroth. The Tulku accomplishes this through a Willpower and Abhidharma Task and spending twenty-five Essence Points. Success allows the Tulku to transport herself and roughly fifty pounds of equipment to the Otherworlds of Hod, Yesod, Netzach, or Geburah. Traveling to Chesed, Tiphereth, or Binah costs fifty Essence Points. Traveling to the primordial plane of Chokmah costs even more: one hundred Essence Points. Theoretically, a Tulku could expend one hundred Essence Points to travel to the Sephiroth of Kether, but those who do, never return.

To bring companions with her, a Tulku must spend an extra twenty Essence Points per person. For example, Master Lhamo-Dhondrupa wants to send her students Sengi and Takla to the Sephiroth of Hod to learn about the Illusionary Nature of Reality. The Master would need to spend sixty-five Essence Points to do this: twenty-five to bring herself to Hod and forty points to bring the two students with her.

Using this power is not exactly subtle; the Essence Manipulation required to travel to the Otherworlds is fairly easy to detect. Passing a Simple Perception Test alerts any Gifted or Supernatural characters within one hundred yards of the Tulku that a temporary dimensional gateway has been opened. The amount of information she receives depends on her Success Level in the Perception Test—one Success Level lets the character know that something manipulated a large amount of Essence in the area; two-three Success Levels gives a rough idea about direction and distance; four or more Success Levels gives the exact location of the Tulku as she is leaving Malkuth or returning.

The ability to travel to the Otherworlds does not protect the traveler from that Realm's dangers. Binah's energies can overcome a Tulku. The entities that hunt humans in Geburah or Hod or Yesod still attack the Tulku. Simply knowing how to get to the Otherworlds does not ensure safety and survival.

Divine Ear Element

The Divine Ear Element allows a Tulku to expand her perceptive abilities to superhuman levels. She must succeed at a Perception and Abhidharma Task and expend at least five Essence Points to activate it. She can then add a bonus equal to half the extra Essence spent. For example, Drolma wants to give herself a Perception bonus of +5. Doing so costs her fifteen Essence Points (five base and ten for bonus).

In addition to adding Perception bonuses, a Tulku can spend five more Essence Points and gain the ability to understand any language spoken to her. This includes such archaic languages as Sumerian, High Atlantean, or the Seraphim's Primal Language. The effect lasts for one minute per the Task's Success Level.

Divine Eye Element

A Tulku succeeding at a Perception and Abhidharma Task can use the Divine Eye Abhinja to perceive the true nature of things, including the truth of spoken words. Spending five Essence Points, the Tulku gains a +5 bonus to any Task to determine if someone is lying. This effect lasts for one minute per Success Level.

A Tulku can also use the Divine Eye to read a target's thoughts. This ability differs from the Mind Penetration Abhinja because the latter only allows the character to read enough of a target's thoughts to engage in Telepathic communication. The Divine Eye Element allows the Tulku to go deeper into the target's thoughts and memories. The Tulku must spend two Essence Points per target's Willpower. Unlike using Mind Penetration to control the others' thoughts, Divine Eye's cost is not modified by the target's nature. A Perception and Abhidharma Task is then attempted and the results are determined by using the Mindsight Success Level Table. This effect only lasts for one Turn, but the Tulku may repeat to

gain more information from a target's mind. This requires a new Task and new Essence expenditure per Turn, but Success Levels may be combined. The extra effort allows the Tulku to peer deeper into the target's mind. An unsuccessful Task requires the Tulku to start again without the benefit of the previous successes.

Tulku commonly use Divine Eye Element to perceive a subject's True Nature. This effect is similar to the Insight Invocation and it costs three Essence Points per the subject's Willpower to activate. The Tulku then rolls a Resisted Test between her Perception and Abhidharma Skill and the target's Intelligence and Willpower. If the Tulku succeeds, she perceives the target's True Nature, including all the subject's Qualities, Drawbacks, motivations, goals, and type (Gifted, Supernatural, etc.). The ability does not reveal surface thoughts or recent memories (that's a different use of this ability). The Divine Eye Element only reveals secrets about one target. Any additional subjects cost extra Essence based on their Willpower.

Invincible Sword

Using Invincible Sword, one of the oldest Abhinja abilities, a Tulku can focus Essence into a sword while it is being forged to create a deadlier, more accurate weapon. To create an Invincible Sword, the Tulku must first succeed in an Intelligence and Craft (Weaponsmith) Task to plan, and a Dexterity and Craft (Weaponsmith) Task to make the sword. She must then succeed in a Willpower and Abhidharma Task to imbue the weapon with mystical qualities. The Tulku can apply this bonus to the Hand Weapon (Sword) Skill to increase accuracy, or she can apply it to the Damage Multiplier to increase the weapon's lethality. Added Combat Task bonuses cannot exceed the Tulku's Abhidharma Skill or +5, whichever is greater. Damage bonuses cannot exceed the Tulku's Abhidharma Skill doubled. Creating the sword takes a minimum of one week, plus one week for each bonus. The Tulku must sacrifice a number of Essence Points equal to the bonuses put into the weapon. As the Tulku puts part of herself into the Invincible Sword's creation, she does not regain her lost Essence until the sword is destroyed. For all practical purposes, the weapon is indestructible, though its Tulku creator can easily unmake it.

Lung Gom

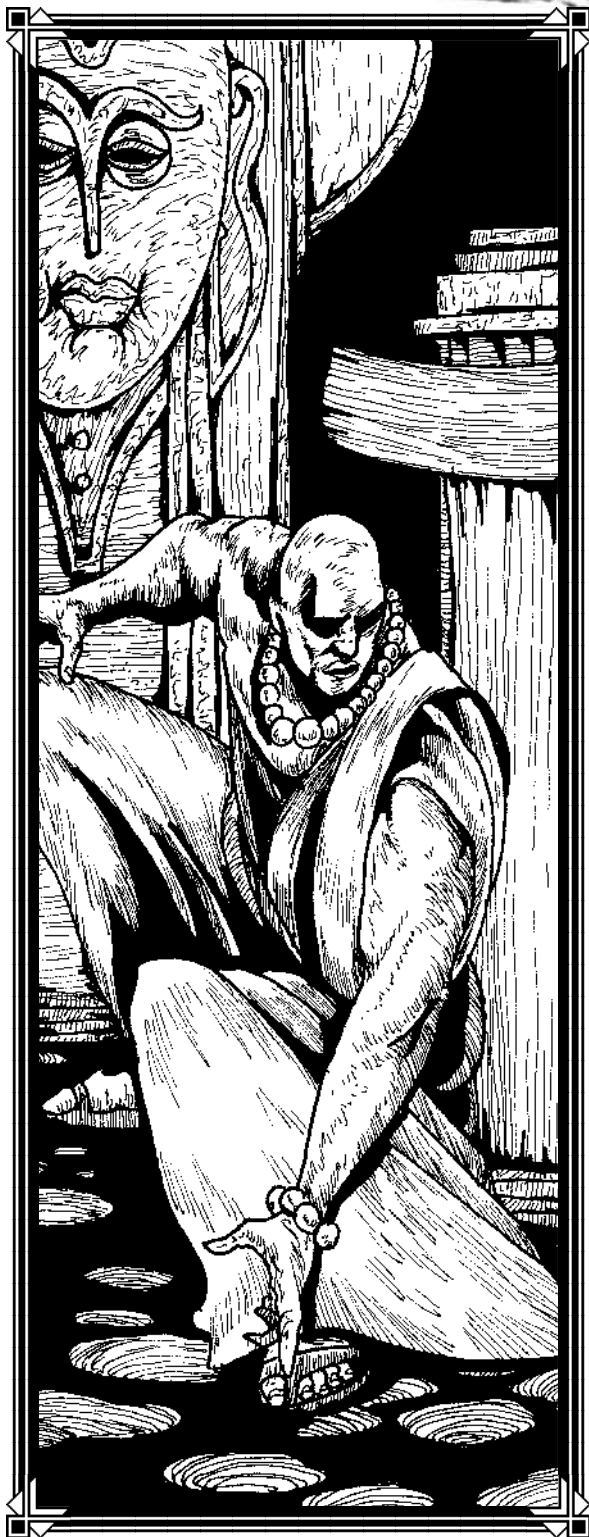
Tulkus use the Lung Gom Abhinja to travel with inhuman speed over great distances. Monks of the Shambala Order have been known to race each other using Lung Gom. There is a story of two Masters who raced each other wearing heavy chains around their legs, as they were worried about flying off the face of the Earth.

To use the Lung Gom Abhijna, the Tulku must first succeed at a Willpower and Abhidharma Task. Lung Gom costs five Essence Points, and it lasts for one minute per Success Level. For each additional Essence Point spent, the Tulku's Speed increases by one. Every six additional speed levels grants the Tulku one extra free action per turn. Every 10+ bonus to Speed grants a +1 bonus to Dodge Tasks.

Tulkus can also use Lung Gom to leap farther than normal. The initial five Essence Points spent allows the Tulku to make a high jump of one yard times the character's Strength, plus any Success Level in a Willpower and Abhidharma Task. She can broad jump five yards times her Strength, plus any Success Level in a Willpower and Abhidharma Task. The multiplier may be increased by one for every three additional Essence Points spent. For example, Sawanga-Chenpo is climbing Chomo Langma (Mount Everest) when she comes across a small problem in the Khumbu Glacier: an icefall has created a forty-three-foot gap. The monk spends five Essence Points to initiate the Lung Gom. Then she spends an additional nine Essence Points to increase her broad jump. Sawanga-Chenpo has Strength 2 and Abhidharma Skill 4. She rolls a five, which gives her a total of thirteen for the roll—three Success Levels. So, she jumps a total of nineteen yards (57 feet), and she lands fourteen feet past the edge of the icefall.

Mind Penetration

Similar to the Seer Mindtalk, Mindread, and Mindrule abilities, Mind Penetration allows a Tulku to communicate telepathically with someone. The Tulku must pass a successful Willpower and Abhidharma Task to send a thought. Then she must pass a Perception and Abhidharma Task to receive an answer. After succeeding at the two Tasks, the ability costs five points of Essence to maintain. Unless



Tulku knows the subject, the target must be within line of sight to initiate telepathic contact. If the Tulku knows the subject, she must pass an Intelligence and Trance Task to accurately visualize the target. If the Tulku succeeds, range is no longer an issue—as long as the target remains on the same plane of existence. A Tulku in London could reach her brother in Lhasa, but would she could not communicate with a friend enjoying the Garden of Earthly Delights in Hod.

A Tulku can also use Mind Penetration to control others' thoughts. A successful Willpower and Abhidharma Task allows the Tulku to issue a one-phrase command to any being. To affect a Mundane, the Tulku must spend two Essence Points per the victim's Willpower. To affect a Gifted or Supernatural being requires four points per Willpower level. Using the power against another Enlightened costs eight Essence Points per Willpower level. After expending the Essence cost, the Tulku rolls a Resisted Willpower Test: her Willpower and Abhidharma Task versus the victim's Simple Willpower Test. A Gifted or Supernatural target with applicable defensive powers may use them instead of the Willpower Test. The victim has a better chance to resist this power if the command is something that goes against their beliefs or nature; the Chronicler may assign a defensive bonus of +3 to +7 if this is the case.

Multiple Bodies

Similar to the Bilocate Invocation (see *Mystery Codex*, p. 150), the Multiple Bodies ability requires a successful Willpower and Abhidharma Task to create two separate bodies for the Tulku. These bodies last for one hour per Success Level. The effect costs twenty Essence Points and causes the double to appear anywhere within fifty miles of the caster. The Tulku increases the range by spending an additional ten points of Essence for every twenty-five miles. Unlike the Bilocation Invocation, the character does not split her Essence Pool between the two bodies. This ability carries an additional danger that the Bilocation Invocation does not: when the effect ends, the Tulku takes any damage dealt to the separate body during its existence.

As performing two separate tasks is difficult, a Tulku with multiple bodies performs any normal Tasks at a -3 penalty (the normal -2 for performing multiple tasks and an additional negative modifier

for the complication of being in two separate bodies). Any additional tasks are performed at the normal -2 for multiple tasks. Thus, a multiple Tulku performing two attacks in a Turn suffers a -3 penalty for the first attack and -5 for the second.

Past Life Recall

By succeeding in an Intelligence and Abhidharma Task, the Tulku recalls details of his past incarnations, including all memories and specific skills. Chroniclers should assume that most past incarnations have about eighteen points to spend on five-ten skills, and an incarnation's historical period limits these skill choices. Most Tulkus are Enlightened Masters who reincarnate as Enlightened Masters, so a lot of their skills overlap; the eighteen points should cover the skill differences. Recalling a character's previous incarnation costs one Essence Point. Each successive incarnation costs one more point to recall. Thus, recalling an incarnation fourteen lifetimes back costs fourteen Essence Points.

Past Life Recall also allows the Tulku to recognize another person's past incarnations. This is how the Monks keep finding the new Dalai Lama or Panchen Lama. This aspect of the Abhinja costs five Essence Points and requires a Perception and Abhidharma Task. If successful, the Task's Success Levels determine the level of detail. One Success Level gives the character a vague feeling about the subject; three Success Levels gives the character actual flashes of the subject's life; five Success Levels reveals important details from the subject's life. One Success Level is enough to know that someone was a peasant, lama, or a world leader in a past life.

A final aspect of this power gives the Tulku the ability to cause her own death and subsequent reincarnation. When the Tulku feels it is time for her to take another go at the Wheel of Life, all she has to do is succeed at a Willpower and Abhidharma Task and expend all her remaining Essence. The Tulku can use this ability to escape a particular torment or simply to fulfill a long-term plan. If the Order of Shambala decides that a Tulku needs to incarnate as the next King of Nepal, that Tulku ends her current incarnation so she can reincarnate to a place of choice. The Tulku finds it easiest to reincarnate in the same general region where she died, but she can attempt another Willpower and Abhidharma Task to reincar-

nate in a desired place. The Tulku's Task roll is at a -1 penalty for every three hundred miles she tries to transport her reincarnation from her death site. Failing the Task means the Tulku reincarnates randomly within two hundred miles of her original target for every point by which she missed the roll.

Perfect Pill

The Monks of Shambala can manipulate Essence to endow a simple pill with supernatural healing energies. To create a Perfect Pill, the Monk must succeed at an Intelligence and Abhidharma Task. The pill's effectiveness depends on the amount of Essence expended on its creation. For every Essence Point spent, the pill heals the Task's Success Level in Life Points. So, expending five Essence Points and rolling three Success Levels allows a total of fifteen Life Points to be healed. However, the pill can cure more than wounds. If the Tulku stores fifty Essence Points in the pill, all that Essence can be used to completely heal a subject, including restoring lost or crippled limbs, removing scars, curing baldness, and removing all disease, including cancer, AIDS, the common cold, etc. The Perfect Pill can eliminate any and all maladies.

The Tulku must sacrifice one-fifth the total Essence stored in the Perfect Pill. The Tulku does not regain the Essence until someone uses the pill. So, a Tulku creating a Perfect Pill to capable of healing all diseases temporarily loses ten Essence Points (one-fifth of the fifty Essence Points required to make it), gaining them back when someone uses the pill. For this reason, Perfect Pills are rare and the Order of Shambala uses them sparingly.

Spirit Form

Spending five Essence Points and succeeding at a Willpower and Abhidharma Task allows the Tulku to become immaterial like a spirit. The Tulku's body actually transforms into a spiritual form. Thus this ability differs from normal Projection powers, which only allow the Tulku to leave her body and project her spirit. In spiritual form, the Tulku can pass

through physical barriers and interact with spiritual beings. By the same token, the Tulku cannot interact with physical objects or people, except through metaphysical means.

Tumo

Adept Practitioners of Abhijna first learn the Tumo ability. Tumo, the ability to control the Fire Within, allows a Tulku to manipulate her body temperature. As part of her training, the Shambalan Masters place an Abhijna Adept in an icy mountain cave and throw dripping wet sheets over her. The Adept must dry the sheets by morning, using on her body heat. She uses Essence to create this heat or flame. The Adept must succeed at a Willpower and Abhidharma Task. Then she must spend one Essence Point to create enough heat to slowly dry one sheet or to ignite a flammable object. Using Tumo as a weapon causes one point of damage to the targeted victim. Of course, the Order of Shambala would never teach the Tumo ability to anyone who would want to use it against another being, as they are strict pacifists. Increasing the amount of Essence spent increases the ability's effects. Tulku can use Tumo to create a jet of flame, doing D6(3) points of damage per every two Essence Points spent. Spending twenty Essence Points allows the Tulku to surround herself in a nimbus of flame, lasting one minute per Success Level. The surrounding flames inflict D4 x 6(12) points of damage to anything or anybody within three yards (meters), unless the character succeeds at a Difficult Willpower Task. If successful, the flames do not automatically ignite everything the Tulku touches, but anyone physically attacking the Tulku suffers the flames' burning effects.

Chapter Six: Denizens



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Even after twenty years, Autumn still was not used to the sensation of entering another person's *Panorama*.

She found herself in an overly large schoolroom. The colors were all slightly off and some details were missing. She looked at the fuzzy writing on the classroom's board, but she could not decipher it. Out the window she saw only whiteness. The man whose dream she entered was sitting in front of the class; papers covered his narrow school desk. He appeared to be frantically trying to finish a complex test—one of those dreams, she thought.

Autumn had seen the man check into the hotel room next to hers the night before. That was how she usually choose her victims: whoever had the misfortune of sleeping on the other side of a wall from her at any random hotel became her target. She entered their dreams and terrified them into releasing the *Essence* that now sustained her.

While Autumn was working out the details of the nightmare she would inflict on the man, he suddenly jumped out of his seat and started screaming. As she hadn't done anything to him yet, the *Vampyre* started to think the guy was the biggest coward she had ever preyed upon. But then she looked up at the chalkboard; a woman dressed in blood-soaked rags walked right through it. Dark, matted bangs covered the woman's face, but Autumn could still make out its corpse-like features. The woman looked at the cowering man, but then turned her glowering face on the *Vampyre*.

The horrified man dropped into a fetal curl on the classroom floor, whimpering the same words over and over again: "*Bloody Mary. Bloody Mary. Bloody Mary.*"

Autumn cried out defiantly, "*This human is mine. I was here first. Go get somebody else!*"

In a whispering voice that sounded like a thousand scurrying cockroaches, *Bloody Mary* replied, "*You do not belong here. This is not your place. You should get out.*"

Before Autumn could respond, *Bloody Mary* jumped on top of her with alarming speed. The woman's taloned hands slashed at her. Huge chunks of Autumn's flesh flew across the room as *Bloody Mary's* heated attack continued. "*You do not belong here. This is not your place. Get out,*" the woman kept repeating like a mantra.

Autumn thought getting out sounded like a good idea. With the last of her strength, the *Vampyre* jumped out of the man's *Panorama*, emerging back in her room. Her chest torn open, she stumbled and fell to the floor. She crawled toward the bathroom, leaving a trail of blood and entrails behind her. The dying *Vampyre* vaguely heard the man in the room beside her throw off his sheets and jump awake.

Drenched in sweat, the man quickly scanned the hotel room, trying to get his bearings. His actions awakened the woman beside him and she murmured, "*What's wrong?*"

After a few minutes, he put his head back down on his pillow and wrapped his arms around her. Quietly, he said, "*Wow. You wouldn't believe the weird dream that I just had.*"

Introduction

This chapter describes the Dream Realms' denizens: nature spirits, Tainted Spirits, and Ethereals, including the Peris, the Oneirokitai, the Eidolon, and the Mara. Details about Morpheus, his two brothers, the angel Dumah, and the Aztec Nahualli, a new Dark Covenant, are also presented.

Nature Spirits

Animists in the world of *WitchCraft* and *Armageddon* know a fundamental truth: all things have spirits associated with them. People with the right abilities can communicate, make deals with, and to some degree, control those spirits. Nature spirits are powerful, but they rarely take an active part in day-to-day affairs. When a Gifted character "awakens" them, however, they can and do take action—the forces they control can behave in strange and "unnatural" ways if they decide to exert themselves.

Most nature spirits are associated with living beings, but rock, river, and storm spirits exist; they are more aloof and removed, though, and share more commonalities with the "classical" Elementals (so much so that they are nearly indistinguishable). Animal spirits also tend to be more self-aware and active than plant spirits, who are either too flighty, in the case of short-lived plants, or slow and ponderous, as with most trees.

Powers Common to Nature Spirits

Animate: Some nature spirits seldom materialize. Instead, they take over the proper animal or plants they represent and use them to deliver messages, attack enemies, and perform similar tasks. Large creatures, like trees and large animals, animate singly or in small groups, but small creatures, like insects or rats, can come in swarms. An angry Insect Spirit can unleash a veritable plague of vermin upon an offending human.

Curses: Occasionally (very seldom in recent times, although that changes as the Reckoning approaches, and arrives), nature spirits use their powers to punish a particularly noxious or harmful person, cursing them with bad luck, strange diseases, the Feral Curse, or worse.

Localized: Generally, nature spirits reside near the creatures or forces they represent. Trying to summon them far away from their "native" environment is very difficult; they receive a +5 bonus to resist such

attempts. The best place to contact a Tree Spirit is near a tree, and so on. The Gifted do not have to be right on top of the correct animal, plant, or feature, but the spirit worker should at least be in the same habitat—a large forest, for example. While in a city, the only spirits likely to answer a summons are city-dwelling spirits: roaches, rats, and dogs.

Spirit Entities: Nature spirits have all the powers and limitations common to all spirit beings (see *WitchCraft*, p. 258-259).

Rat Spirits

Prevalent in urban environments, Rat Spirits are scavengers, thieves, and disease carriers. They are concerned only with their and their swarms' survival. Some occult historians believe that a mass of summoned Rat Spirits caused the Black Plague in the Middle Ages. Perhaps this is true. The Black Plague was definitely a symptom of a Reckoning, and Rat Spirits are very prone to becoming Tainted.

Powers Special to Rat Spirits

Animate: The spirit can possess two rats for every Essence Point it spends. While controlled, the rats can carry messages, spy on enemies, and, in enough numbers, attack as swarms (*Abomination Codex*, p. 143). Typical rats swarm in groups of twenty or more, and can attack one person for every ten rats in the swarm (assuming there are enough people available). The swarm has an effective speed of 15 mph (24 kph), and it can climb over any wall, finding entrances into most buildings with relative ease. Each victim suffers D4(2) points of slashing damage per turn.

Attacking the swarm is possible, especially from a distance. A standard swam has forty Life Points per twenty rats. Hand weapons and fists do no more than two points per attack, and most firearms inflict the same. Shotguns firing scattershot (buck and bird shot) inflict full damage. Flamethrowers and the like also do full damage. Thus, a 200-rat swarm can attack as many as twenty people at the same time, and it can withstand up to 400 points of damage before being dispersed.

Materialization: Rat Spirits can also materialize without taking possession of a swarm, just like any other spirit. When physically manifested, they appear as a giant, man-sized rodent. They can also shapeshift into a human form for a cost of five Essence Points. Perhaps this is because of their association with humanity and urban environments.

Their human form is fixed and rarely very attractive, as their features remain rodent-like. The Red Lotus calls these materialized Rat Spirits "Nezumi," and they often use them as assassins.

Plague: With a successful Willpower and Spiritus Task, Rat Spirits can infect their victims with a form of the plague. Mundane victims resist with a Difficult Constitution Test, while Gifted or Supernatural beings resist with a Simple Test. Inflicting victims with the curse costs five Essence Points per day, which is not regained until the curse is lifted or broken. If a victim fails the Resisted Test, he is afflicted with the plague. Symptoms include vomiting, rising fever, and a pain that starts as a headache, but then spreads to back and limbs. The sufferer develops welts over his body, and loses $D6 \times 2(6)$ Life Points every day. Due to delirium, all his actions suffer a -4 penalty. As this is a supernatural curse, the damage cannot be healed normally; mundane medical treatment is useless, supernatural healing and regeneration is only one-fifth as effective as normal. For example, a Lesser Healing that normally restores ten points of damage only heals two points of disease damage. A cleansing Invocation, an Exorcism miracle, or similar Gifted powers can break the curse.



Rat Spirits

Strength: 2-7+ **Intelligence:** 2-4+
Dexterity: 4-9+ **Perception:** 3-5+
Constitution: 4-10+ **Willpower:** 2-4+
Vital Essence: 15-60+
Energy Essence: 10-90+
Life Points (when manifested): 25-150+
Speed: 15-25+
Spiritus: 2-5+



Curupira

Strength: 5-15+ **Intelligence:** 2-6+
Dexterity: 3-5+ **Perception:** 2-5+
Constitution: 5-10+ **Willpower:** 3-7+
Vital Essence: 20-150+
Energy Essence: 20-150+
Life Points (when manifested): 40-300+
Speed: 5-10+
Spiritus: 4-6+

Curupira

Like other tree spirits, these Amazonian tree spirits are almost always bound to an individual tree. When a tree dies, it greatly weakens the spirit; it permanently loses one half of its Vital and Energy Essence, and soon seeks to link itself to another tree, usually a young sapling. As events worsen in the rainforest, the Curupira have taken the offensive and now actively attack outsiders. They aid the Apoanu Apyabaiba in their guerrilla war against the Church of the Revelations in *Armageddon*.

Powers Special to Curupira

Animate: Under extreme circumstances, the spirit may awaken its tree and make it move, striking out with branches, or more rarely, even making it walk for a few steps. Making it uproot itself almost invariably kills it, so Tree Spirits only do this under the dire circumstances. An animated tree is a fearsome opponent. Its limbs inflict $D8(4)$ to $D10(5) \times$ Strength points of damage. It can create "mouths" that bite for $D6(3)$ to $D8(4) \times$ Strength points of slashing damage.

In an *Armageddon* campaign, the Curupira live under extreme circumstances.

Healing: The spirit can perform the Lesser Healing Invocation on anyone near the tree it lives in. Tree Spirits cannot be coerced into performing this service, but may be convinced or bribed.

Tree Curse: When someone commits atrocities against trees, he inadvertently awakens one of these typically slumbering entities, whereby the Tree Spirit curses him. The curse costs 75 Essence Points; the spirit does not regain these Essence Points until the curse is broken or lifted. In many cases, the spirit does not regain these Essence Points for decades or even centuries. The spirit uses Willpower and Spiritus, and is resisted by the victim's Simple Willpower Test. If the Spirit wins, the victim feels an irresistible urge to head for the nearest wooded area and stand in a clearing. There, he turns into a tree. Often, this happens in an area where trees have been cut down, in which case the victim dies.

In *Armageddon*, the Tree Curse has not discouraged the Army of Revelations from marching throughout South America.

Bear Spirits

Humanity has always held Bear Spirits in high regard. Prehistoric peoples worshipped the bears for its strength, and early shamans held them to be mankind's friends. Bear Spirits inspired the berserkers to become fierce warriors, yet some shamans claim that it was the Bear Spirits who taught mankind the healing art. The solitary Bear Spirit respects those who stand on their own against their Adversary, the lone hero facing overwhelming odds.

Powers Special to Bear Spirits

Berserker Fury: Sometimes a Bear Spirit gifts a particular warrior with the legendary berserker abilities. This costs the Spirit ten Essence Points, and it lasts one turn per Success Level. While under the Berserker rage, the character becomes an unstoppable weapon. The Berserker Fury increases his Strength and Constitution by three (even if this puts him over his racial limit), doubles his Life Points, and triples his healing rate (it even triples Supernatural regeneration rates). The character does not suffer any injury effects, even if his Life Points are reduced below zero. Only if he fails a Survival Test and dies does he stop fighting.

The berserker does not stop fighting until the fury's effects wear off or he dies; no other actions are allowed. The only way a berserking character can

help an ally is to kill someone threatening that individual. When all the enemies have been dispatched, the Berserker must succeed at a Difficult Willpower Task -3 in order to not attack his own allies. Once he snaps out of the Berserker Rage or the effects wear off on their own, the character's Essence and Life Points drop to zero (or less, if he took enough damage to reduce his Life Points below zero) and he falls into a coma-like state for at least an hour.

Feral Curse: Bear Spirits sometimes inflict the Feral Curse (see *Abomination Codex*, p. 33) on humans.

Materialize and Animate: Bear Spirits occasionally materialize physically. Sometimes, one of them seizes control over a real bear. In the former case, normal Manifestation rules (see *WitchCraft*, p. 259) apply; in the latter, ten Energy Essence Points must be spent. While the spirit completely controls the possessed animal, the animal cannot be commanded to go into suicidal situations—attacking a small group of armed humans is acceptable, but leaping onto the path of a truck is not.



Bear Spirit

Strength: 6-13+

Dexterity: 3-5+

Constitution: 3-7+

Intelligence: 2-5+

Perception: 2-5+

Willpower: 4-7+

Vital Essence: 20-150+

Energy Essence: 20-200+

Life Points (when manifested): 50-300+

Speed: 12-25+

Spiritus: 3-6+



Jaguar Spirits

Strength: 4-10+ **Intelligence:** 2-5+
Dexterity: 3-9+ **Perception:** 3-6+
Constitution: 4-10+ **Willpower:** 3-6+
Vital Essence: 20-150+
Energy Essence: 20-200+
Life Points (when manifested): 50-300+
Speed: 15-25+
Spiritus: 3-6+

Jaguar Spirits

A creature of night and earth, whose spots are said to represent the stars in the sky, the jaguar is the most feared and respected predator in the Americas. Hunters try to emulate the jaguar's strength and speed; magicians invoke Jaguar Spirits for the same reason. Jaguar Spirits are deadly and solitary predators—their solitary nature that often puts them at odds with their own kind. For instance, the Ocelotl Jaguar Spirits used by the Nahualli Dark Covenant and the Balam Jaguar Spirits of the Apoanu Apyabaiba of the Amazon hunt one another.

Powers Special to Jaguar Spirits

Feral Curse: Jaguar Spirits sometimes inflict the Feral Curse (see *Abomination Codex*, p. 33) on humans.

Materialize and Animate: Jaguar Spirits occasionally materialize physically and sometimes one of them seizes control of a real jaguar. The former case uses normal Manifestation rules (see *WitchCraft*, p. 259); taking possession of a jungle cat costs ten Energy Essence Points. The Jaguar Spirit completely controls the possessed animal.

Tainted Spirits

Sometimes, a spirit comes into contact with a Tainted being. These encounters usually prove fatal for one or both parties involved. On occasion, a spirit survives the ordeal, only to find itself infected with Taint. If the spirit cannot somehow rid itself of the Taint, two possible results ensue: the Taint poisons the spirit and it sickens and dies, or the spirit gradually transforms into a full-fledged creature of Taint. The second outcome is extremely rare, but when it occurs, it releases a dangerous abomination—a creature with the full powers of a normal spirit but enhanced with the Mad Gods' destructive forces. Fortunately, a Tainted creature's lifespan can usually be measured in days or weeks. Unfortunately, Tainted creatures can wreak extreme havoc and destruction in short periods of time.

The most likely spirits to become Tainted are nature spirits, Elementals, and Fiends. Ethereals always perish if infected.

Powers Common to Tainted Spirits

All Tainted spirits have the normal powers of their kind. Additionally, they have a number of vulnerabilities. First, Vital and Energy Taint replaces their Vital and Energy Essence on a one-to-one basis. They may also acquire some Tainted Powers (see *Abomination Codex*, p. 120). Finally, they continually suffer from their contact with Essence, losing two points of Vital Taint every day until they are destroyed. Another Tainted being may be able to heal this damage; otherwise, this drain cannot be regained, effectively condemning the spirit to a relatively quick death.

Raven Mockers

Taint-corrupted nature spirits, the Raven Mockers appear as deformed human bodies with bird heads and wings instead of arms. An aura of Taint surrounds them, appearing as a fiery dark nimbus by all who can perceive it. Raven Mockers act as minions to the Mad Gods, and Mad Cultists often summon them. In *Armageddon*, a swarm of Raven Mockers hides in the Appalachians.



Raven Mockers

Strength: 1-10+ **Intelligence:** 2-7+
Dexterity: 3-7+ **Perception:** 5-7+
Constitution: 2-10+ **Willpower:** 3-8+
Vital Essence: 20-80+
Energy Essence: 20-100+
Life Points (when manifested): 40-180+
Speed: 30-90+
Spiritus: 4-6+

Powers Special to Raven Mockers

Blast of Taint: Raven Mockers can fire a blast of Tainted energy, which does damage directly to the target's Life Points. The blast inflicts D4(2) points of damage per Taint point spent on it, and it has the range of an assault rifle. Aiming the blast uses the Raven Mocker's Dexterity and Spiritus.

Materialize: Raven Mockers do not possess living creatures; they find the whole idea abhorrent. Instead, they may manifest as described above. Only the Gifted can see the flames of Taint surrounding the creatures; a Mundane can only see the Raven Mocker's monstrous form. In that shape, the spirit can fly at great speeds. They inflict D4(2) x Strength in slashing damage with their beaks, or D8(4) x Strength on a dive attack. Each dive attack requires the spirit to spend two Turns on a flying "climb" to achieve the needed height. Raven Mockers prefer to dive attack and then carry their victims to a great height and drop them.

Night Terrors

Minor minions of the Mad Gods, the faceless, black Night Terrors have emerged from the Breach at the Sammael Gate. The bipedal, human-sized creatures have large fangs in their otherwise featureless face, and they have long, ape-like arms that end in talons. There have always been a few Night Terrors loose in the Sephiroth of Hod haunting small children's dreams, but with the approaching Reckoning they are starting to become more numerous, and some even hunt the Periphery in packs.

Powers Special to Night Terrors

Manifest: Night Terrors can manifest in the physical World of Malkuth, but it is not very easy. The spirit's summoner must contribute one point of Taint per the Terror's Vital Taint (typically 30). The Night Terror has no trouble traveling around the physical world at night, but it takes D4(2) points of damage every minute after sunrise and D6(3) points of damage from direct sunlight. Night Terrors are much more suited for roaming the realms of Hod.



Night Terror

Strength: 4 **Intelligence:** 1
Dexterity: 2 **Perception:** 4
Constitution: 4 **Willpower:** 5
Vital Taint: 30
Energy Taint: 50
Life Points (when manifested): 80
Speed: 20
Spiritus: 4

Physical Attack: The Night Terrors attack with their claws for D4x4(8) points of slashing damage. While in the Panorama, this damage affects the victim's Essence Pool. If the Night Terror reduces the victim to -30 Essence Points, the victim may become Tainted; he must make a Difficult Willpower and Constitution Test to avoid this fate. Many Night Terrors continue to attack a victim until he dies. As they cannot feed on the released Essence, they generally avoid attacking beings with large Essence Pools in favor of weaker prey.

Terrorize: Night Terrors can enter an individual's Panorama at the cost of five Taint points. While in the Panorama, they may attempt to take over the Dreamscape, turning it into a horrible reflection of their own twisted selves. Doing so requires them to make a successful Simple Willpower Test; a Lucid Dreamer may resist with a Simple Willpower Test. Terrifying the dreamer causes him to release D6(3) to D8(4) Essence Points per turn. As the Night Terror is a creature of Taint, it cannot feed on this released Essence, but the victim's Essence loss makes him weaker and easier to attack.

Ethereals

A varied and odd lot, the Ethereals are single-minded servants of a greater supernatural being. Other Ethereals serve the Seraphim, the Old Gods, and other powers of the universe. A few Ethereals are dedicated to single concept or idea, like Justice or Vengeance.

Powers Common to Ethereals

Iron-Willed: An Ethereal cannot be compelled to act against its nature. It can be destroyed or imprisoned, but it cannot be forced to obey a third party. Spirit Mastery only works when the orders or compacts attempted somehow serve the principles the Ethereal espouses.

Physical Manifestation: Like Elementals, Ethereals can materialize more easily than normal spirits. To appear physically, the Ethereal must spend one Essence Point for every five points of its Vital Essence. The Ethereal does not regain these Essence Points until it returns to its natural state or to its plane of existence. Furthermore, Ethereals who materialize in front of crowds risk being drained of power, as the Crowd Rules (see *WitchCraft*, p. 200) that affect magic also apply to manifested Ethereals—unless the



Ethereals

Strength: 2-8+	Intelligence: 3-6+
Dexterity: 4-6+	Perception: 3-7+
Constitution: 2-8+	Willpower: 3-6+
Vital Essence: 20-100+	
Energy Essence: 20-100+	
Life Points (when manifested): 40-200+	
Speed: 20-30+	
Spiritus: 3-6+	

Ethereals can either fool the audience into believing they are a natural phenomena or can quickly terrify them into submission.

Spirit Entities: Ethereals share all basic spirit abilities, with some modifications noted below.

War Ethereals

Better known as the Valkyrie, War Ethereals also appear in Celtic Mythology as Raven Goddesses. They hardly ever manifest physically, but when they do, they appear as ravens on the battlefield. To those who can perceive Spirits, they appear as pale women with dark, dead eyes, and long black hair. Sometimes they wear raven-feathered cloaks, other times they appear in archaic armor. At their most disturbing, the War Ethereals can be seen dancing across the battlefield wrapped in the dead's entrails.

The War Ethereals come to Malkuth during times of conflict to gather the fallen soldiers they deem worthy. They always show up in groups of three. Most

often, they take the dead soldiers to the Plane of Battles. Still, as many of the War Ethereals serve Odin as Valkyries, they sometimes bring the slain to Valhalla, where the fallen become Einheriar, warriors who battle every day in preparation for what some believe will be the Reckoning's Final Battle.

The battles the War Ethereals are drawn to do not necessarily have to be national conflicts. In modern times, they sometimes roam cities, searching for warriors who died in gang war battles with, what the spirits consider, honor.

Powers Special to War Ethereals

Call Weapon: The spirit can summon either a sword or spear by spending five Essence Points. Either weapon does D8 x 5(20) slashing damage, and affects both physical and spiritual beings.

Judge the Slain: This power works basically like the Insight Invocation, except that it only shows the spirit what kind of warrior the subject was in life. By

spending five Essence Points, the spirit sees a brief overview of the casualty's conduct in battle. If the warrior acted bravely and like a true warrior, the War Ethereal takes him to his final reward. If he acted cowardly or otherwise dishonorably, the spirit leaves him to another fate.

Physical Manifestation: Spending one Essence Point for every five points of its Vital Essence allows a War Ethereal to manifest. When manifesting on Malkuth, War Ethereals appear as Black Ravens feasting on the slain. When in other Sephiroths, they appear in more human form. The old Celtic stories of the Raven Goddesses training warriors are true. The Raven Goddesses trained those warriors in both Yesod and Hod, where humans and Ethereals can interact physically

Peris

Love is patient; love is kind. Love has no jealousy and does not swagger. But, in the case of love-associated Ethereals, love is a force of nature that draws two random people together to consummate so that the Ethereal can feed. This does not fit the modern romantic notion of love, but the Peris, or Love Ethereals, used to have more to do with fertility than with happily ever after. Some Love Ethereals still serve in various realms of the Otherworlds as servants to Fertility Deities or concubines for the faithful. In the Otherworlds, the Love Ethereals have a physical form and can engage in sexual acts, though not with their own kind. They need the Essence release of another being brought to pleasure in order to feed.

Peris are no longer concerned with fertility, though they still retain the power to ensure a woman's pregnancy. With changes in the modern conception of love, the Love Ethereals' attitudes toward pregnancy have evolved; they no longer care if conception occurs. They just want to feed on two peoples' moment of bliss.

Wicce and Shamans mainly summon Love Ethereals to ensure fertility or help with the occasional love charm. Rosicrucians usually have nothing to do with the Love Ethereals; they find the whole idea of trafficking with such sexual spirits undignified and beneath them. The Dark Covenants occasionally summon Love Ethereals as sexual servants, a type of Succubus for the Black Magician.



War Ethereals

Strength: 5	Intelligence: 4
Dexterity: 6	Perception: 4
Constitution: 5	Willpower: 4
Vital Essence: 75	
Energy Essence: 100	
Life Points (when manifested): 175	
Speed: 25	
Spiritus: 5	

Powers Special to Peris

Attraction: The Love Ethereal may temporarily make the character appear more attractive by succeeding at a Willpower and Spiritus Task; the effect lasts one hour per Success Level. This costs the Ethereal twice the bonus to Attractiveness and Charisma in Essence. So, if the Ethereal Matchmaker wants to grant +3 to the character's Attractiveness and +2 to his Charisma, it costs the ten Essence Points.

Blessing the Union: This power increases the chance of a woman conceiving, provided that she engages in a sexual relationship that would allow her to do so. By spending five points of Essence, the Love Ethereal automatically increases the chance of conception over the next month by 25% per Success Level.

Cupid's Arrow: By spending five Essence Points, the Ethereal can make a character fall madly in love with someone. This lasts for one hour per Success Level. Victims resist with a Simple Willpower Test (at a +3 for Gifted or Supernatural characters). If the Ethereal succeeds, the victim falls hopelessly in love with whomever the Ethereal chooses. If the Ethereal affects both parties, consummation is just about guaranteed—people with strong reasons to resist those sexual impulses (like being in love with someone else, of a different sexual preference, etc.) must pass a Difficult Willpower Test at a +1 to +4 bonus to suppress these sexual urges. Bear in mind, however, that forbidden love is often the hardest to resist.

Physical Manifestation: Peris may appear physically by spending one Essence Point for every five points of its Vital Essence. When manifesting on Malkuth, they appear as very beautiful humans clothed in deep red. Sometimes they also manifest a pair of pure white wings. Their apparent gender and race depends entirely on the area's culture in which they manifest. In Western society, they often appear as blond young boys with a penchant for archery.

The Sustenance of Love: When any two people consummate their relationship in a physical way, that physical and psychic union releases a certain amount of primal energy into the world. In other words (at least for Mundanes), sex releases Essence. That is why the parties involved often feel both exhausted and ecstatic afterwards. When a Love Ethereal is present, both parties involved in the sexual act release D6(3) to D10(5) Essence Points, depending on circumstances.



Peri

Strength: 4	Intelligence: 5
Dexterity: 4	Perception: 6
Constitution: 5	Willpower: 5
Vital Essence: 60	
Energy Essence: 80	
Life Points (when manifested): 120	
Speed: 30	
Spiritus: 5	

Love Ethereals feed on this Essence, so the whole process of making two people fall in love and into each others' arms has very little to do with any noble impulse of the Ethereal's part. It is all about the Ethereal's need to feed on the released Essence. Therefore, love is not necessarily blind; it is apathetic. As long as the Love Ethereal brings two people together and their union releases Essence, the Ethereal does not care on whose Essence it feeds.

Peris can also feed off a lone person's ecstasy (Essence). Of course, one such person releases a lot less Essence, usually D6(3) Essence Points, unless a Very Good (four Success Levels) result or higher is

achieved on the Ethereal's Love Seduction Task. Obviously, the Ethereal finds such feedings less profitable, so it prefers to feed on two lovers. On Malkuth, a Love Ethereal must manifest physically to feed on a human's Essence. In this case, the Ethereal must act as that human's partner or it cannot feed on any released Essence. This means that the Ethereal must spend Essence in order to get Essence while on Malkuth. For this reason, Love Ethereal partners encountered on Earth have usually been summoned for that specific purpose. In Otherworlds, like the Garden of Earthly Delights, where the Love Ethereals have a physical form and numerous people to couple with, the Love Ethereals just feed on the Essence released through sexual acts with such partners.

Love Ethereals cannot feed off each other's Essence. They can only feed on the Essence that physically blissful humans release.

Genius Loci

Urban spirits are as varied as the cities they represent. The more powerful Ethereals live in larger cities, some as powerful as the Seraphim or Titans.

The Genius Loci often appear as typical city residents, usually as street persons but not always. Some City Ethereals in New York look like the homeless, stereotypical street muggers, 17th-century Dutch merchants, giant albino alligators (Tainted), and there are some that even look like the Statue of Liberty.

As spirits of place, they work to guarantee a place's continued existence, as their fate and the city's are tied together.

Powers Special to the Genius Loci

Awareness: A City Ethereal may enter a state of awareness that gives it knowledge of events taking place in the city around it. By spending two Essence points, the Ethereal knows about absolutely everything that occurs within a radius of ten yards per Willpower. By spending more Essence, one point per every additional five yards per Willpower, the Ethereal may extend its awareness radius. No matter how much Essence the Ethereal expends, it can never see beyond the limits of the city itself.

Correspondence: A city's life depends on the Genius Loci that dwell there, and the Genius Loci's life likewise depends on the city's continued existence.

Any damage dealt to the city causes damage to the Genius Loci. If someone bombed half of Chicago out of existence, all of the Windy City's Ethereals would lose half their Vital and Energy Essence. For example, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused most City Ethereals living there to unravel.

This also works in reverse. If something destroyed all a city's Genius Loci, that City would cease to exist, crumbling into ruins as the last inhabitants abandoned it. The armies of the ancient world understood this—they often employed Magicians to attack the city's Ethereals, while their armies attacked the walls. This is why there is no longer a great city of Troy, Tyre, or Carthage.

Physical Manifestation: The Genius Loci may appear physically by spending one Essence Point for every five of it Vital Essence Points. A City Ethereal



Genius Loci

Strength: 4-8+

Dexterity: 5-9+

Constitution: 5-9+

Vital Essence: 50-100+

Energy Essence: 100-200+

Life Points (when manifested): 150+

Speed: 20+

Spiritus: 4-8+

Intelligence: 4-8+

Perception: 3-6+

Willpower: 4-9+



Oneirokitai

Strength: 4 **Intelligence:** 5
Dexterity: 5 **Perception:** 5
Constitution: 5 **Willpower:** 6
Vital Essence: 50
Energy Essence: 70
Life Points (when manifested): 120
Speed: 25
Spiritus: 5

always has the same physical appearance when it manifests. Many City Ethereals stay manifested on their city's streets and they become as much a part of the neighborhood as any of the real people living there. Most City Ethereals prefer to dwell in contemplation of the Ideal City in the heart of the Plane of Ideals in Hod, though.

The Oneirokitai

The Oneirokitai, or Dream Ethereals, appear in dreamers' Panoramas, often acting as teachers or advisors. One school of thought suggests that the Oneirokitai are in fact the dreamers' Higher Souls, not Ethereals at all. Of course, there is no proof for this theory.

Much like the Angelic Ethereals who serve the Heavenly Host, the Oneirokitai act as guardians of humanity. The Dream Ethereals seem to have an agenda of helping mankind to reach their full poten-

tial. The Oneirokitai consider Hod their domain and they resent other Supernaturals who try to manipulate humans by entering the Periphery. They see little difference between a Vampyre using the Nightmare power and one of the Kerubim using Dreamshape; no matter the reason or the method, they view the Supernatural's presence as unwanted interference.

In their natural form, the Oneirokitai appear as androgynous, thin humans made of bright light. In dreams, however, they appear as whatever they feel the dreamer needs to see. This could be anything from a lost relative, to a bearded Angel named Philemon, to Elvis Presley. Thus, its appearance in dreams depends on the dreamer.

The Dream Ethereals very rarely manifest outside of Hod. A summoner suffers a -5 penalty to any Willpower and Spirit Mastery Invocation Task, unless the summoner wishes to have the Dream Ethereal appear to him in a dream. That does not stop the occasional arrogant Magician from trying it anyway, though if he is successful, the Dream Ethereal proves uncooperative. The Oneirokitai have appeared on Malkuth as guardians for a particular individual. This usually involves a Gifted or Enlightened child with Seer powers, and the Oneirokitai become his "Imaginary Friends."

Powers Special to the Oneirokitai

Dreambolt: This ability allows the Oneirokitai to use the Dreamscape's malleability as a weapon. This power costs twenty Essence Points. A Resisted Task pits the Dream Ethereal's Willpower and Spiritus Task against the victim's Simple Willpower Test. If the Oneirokitai wins, it can inflict up to D10(5) x Willpower points of damage on the victim. The cause of this damage can be anything imaginable: falling ACME safes, barbed metal chains appearing out of the walls, a swarm of flesh-eating beetles, or a monstrous clawed version of the victim's abusive parent.

Dreamshaping: The Oneirokitai can affect dreams in ways similar to the Dreamer Primal Powers described in the *Armageddon* book. To enter a particular dream, the Ethereal must perform a Willpower and Spiritus Task. Once within the Dream Panorama, the Oneirokitai may alter the Dreamscape to suit its needs. This initially costs the Dream Ethereal ten Essence Points and two more points to make any subsequent changes. For the most part, the Oneirokitai use this ability to make the Dreamscape both com-

fortable for the dreamer and more conducive to learning. They also use this ability to counteract any outside manipulation of an individual's Panorama.

Healing: The spirit can heal injuries as if using the Mindheal ability. This is done with a Mindheal Art equal to its Spiritus level and a Mindheal Strength equal to its Willpower.

The Eidolon Dybbik

Eidolons cannot really be thought of as beings. They are more like free-floating forms of Essence created by the Sephiroth of Hod that attach themselves to the Panoramas in the Periphery. They are benign parasites with no self-awareness that the dreamer's subconscious shapes, allowing them to become actors in the dream.

These mindless entities may appear as a dreamlover one night and a dark stalker representing some secret part of the dreamer the next night. Most nightmares are really just the Eidolons reacting to the dreamer's subconscious. Eastern Traditions, like the Storm Dragons and the Red Lotus, teach their students to confront their nightmares to discover hidden things about themselves. They believe Eidolons are mirrors reflecting the dreamer's True Self.

Eidolons are not self-aware.

They have no thoughts, motivations, or desires.

Usually . . .

Sometimes a person struggles with a particular issue for so many years that it becomes a recurring dream. Filling the same role in the same dream night after night can trigger something in an Eidolon that creates the possibility of self-awareness. First, the Eidolon must make a Difficult Perception Test (an Eidolon's attributes are the same as the host dreamer's). If it succeeds, it suddenly achieves sentience and realizes that it has become part of another's mind, a mind that is obviously not doing a very good job of running its life, else the mind would not continuously dream the same dream night after night. It usually does not take long for the Eidolon to realize that it could do a better of running it host's life.

At this point the Eidolon and the host dreamer must make Resisted Willpower Tests. If the Eidolon fails and the dreamer succeeds, the Eidolon loses its self-awareness and once again becomes another actor in the dreamer's Panorama. If they both succeed, both identities have control, and a Resisted

Willpower Test is required to see who is in control at any given moment. If the Eidolon succeeds and the dreamer fails, the dreamer's identity becomes trapped in his own subconscious and the Eidolon controls the dreamer's body.

When this happens, the Eidolon becomes a Dybbik, and it proceeds to take over the dreamer's life, possibly changing it completely. For instance, the Dybbik might stop drinking and treat its inherited family better or it might suddenly quit the job its host held and take a trip. The Dybbik's attributes are the same, and it has all the same memories and skills as before. Some of the Qualities and Drawbacks may differ, however.

For a period of days equal to the victim's Essence Pool, any Gifted who can actually observe Essence patterns and succeeds at a Simple Perception Test can tell that something is wrong with the Dybbik-controlled person. When that time has passed, however, only actively using powers like Mindread or Insight on that person reveal anything strange about him. Confronting the Dybbik at that point becomes difficult, as it (he) no longer remembers ever having been an Eidolon. The person thinks that he is just a normal Joe who finally made some positive changes in his life. Now, he is happy and enjoying life.

And, he no longer has those bad dreams like before.

The Mara

The Mara are Nightmare Spirits that prey on the Essence of sleeping dreamers. They usually roam the Periphery, searching for victims, but Cast Members can encounter them anywhere in Hod. Some Scholars believe the Mara originated in the Sephiroth of Chesed, but they have no proof, and no one has encountered Mara outside of Hod.

A Mara's appearance is unique and varied; no two Mara look alike. The Mara can alter their shape to appear like just another background figure in the dreamer's Panorama though. They feed off living beings' Essence, but only if released through terror and fear.

Anyone foolish enough to summon one of these Nightmare Ethereals finds himself confronted with all of his fears and phobias and must pass a Difficult Willpower Test to remain coherent. Summoning a Mara to Malkuth, like summoning an Oneirokitai, incurs a -5 penalty on the Willpower and Spirit Mastery Invocation Task. Once summoned, the sum-

moner can send the Mara to attack his enemies. The only other time that they ever appear on Malkuth is when they are feeding on a victim's Essence. Any Gifted in the presence of a Mara attack can sense it. Those with the appropriate abilities can see a faint image of the Mara straddling its victim, with its clawed hands firmly inserted in his chest, drawing out the Essence.

Powers Special to the Mara

Drain Essence: The Mara feed by draining humans of their Essence through the use of fear. A panicking human releases D6(3) to D8(4) Essence points every Turn, which the Mara absorbs automatically as long as it is in the Dreamer's Panorama. This continues as long as the Mara wishes and may result in the victim's death from Essence loss, though usually the Mara does not take things that far. As mentioned above, this attack can be seen by any Gifted with the appropriate abilities. Still, they have to actually enter the Panorama if they wish to fight the Mara.

Human Possession: The Mara can possess humans, but they did so more in the past than at present. In the past, the Mara routinely possessed the women of ancient Greece's Dionysian Cult, the Maenids, causing them to go on destructive rampages across the countryside. To possess someone, the Mara must expend twenty Essence Points (which the Mara cannot regain until it releases its victim) and make a successful Willpower and Spiritus Task, resisted by the victim's Simple Willpower Test. If the Mara wins, it successfully gains control of the victim. The victim may continue to make resistance attempts every ten minutes. If the victim fails four or more resistance attempts in a row, however, the Mara gains full control of the victim for a 24-hour period; thereafter, the victim can make further resistance attempts. Willing victims, like the Dionysian Maenids, allow the Mara a +4 bonus to the initial possession Task. The Mara can control them indefinitely, though Mara rarely control them for more than one night.

While possessed, the victim adds at least three to his Strength. The Mara can further improve its victim's Strength by one for every four Essence Points it chooses to expend (the Maenids were known to manifest inhuman amounts of Strength). The possessed human's features change—his face contorts into a grimace and his nails harden and grow into beast-like talons, allowing the victim to make attacks for D4(2) x Strength in slashing damage. The victim can also

withstand a large amount of damage; he gains forty Life Points while possessed. When the Mara relinquishes control, however, any damage incurred remains. If the victim suffered damage greater than his normal Life Points, he dies.

Physical Manifestation: The Mara rarely manifest physically on Malkuth. Those on Malkuth have usually been summoned there, though there have been instances of Mara manifesting on Malkuth for a short killing spree. While on Malkuth, the Mara require an outside Essence source in order to remain there. Without this source, they rapidly lose their own Energy Essence at a rate of six points per hour. When they reach zero, they return to Hod.



Mara

Strength: 6

Dexterity: 5

Constitution: 6

Vital Essence: 70

Energy Essence: 90

Life Points (when manifested): 160

Speed: 25

Spiritus: 5

Intelligence: 4

Perception: 5

Willpower: 5



Shift Form: Although the Mara have a unique form, they can, at the cost of five Essence Points and an Intelligence and Spiritus Task, disguise their true natures. If successful, the Mara can take the form of anything it can visualize, but they generally choose forms that allow them to travel through a victim's Panorama without garnering suspicion. It can also use this power to manifest as something the victim strongly fears.

Morpheus

Not much is known about the Lord of the Dream Realm. He is a Titan whose true face has never been seen. Those who have met him say he initially appears wearing thick black robes and a plain white mask, as though he were a somber Venetian during Carnival. But, like many of Hod's denizens, Morpheus changes shapes—he may appear as a fat, jolly king one moment and a pale, quiet man the next.

Morpheus is immensely powerful; in Hod, his will is absolute. Not even the Archangels can control Hod's reality in the way that he can. Only the Three Sisters inspire more fear and awe. Yet, for two reasons, Morpheus does not delight in his power. First, he was forced to kill the previous insane Lord of the Dream Realms, Hypnos, his father, to gain his power (Morpheus' Throne depicts a large sculpted relief of Hypnos' face, with spread wings growing from his temples). Second, a Tainted Rift, the Sammael Gate, is growing larger in the Wastelands, and, for all his powers, he cannot close it. The rift is what drove his father insane and he fears that he might one day share his father's fate.

Icelus and Phantasus

Two Incarnates, Icelus and Phantasus, reside at Morpheus's Court. They are sons of Hypnos and Nix, the Goddess of the Night, and thus, Morpheus' brothers. Hypnos' children do not share a tight familial bond, however.

Icelus spends the majority his time roaming the First World, spending more time with the nature spirits than he does at Morpheus' Court. He has existed for thousands of years and he has many Primal Powers. He is known to have access to Dream, Fertility, Illusion, Nimbleness, and Thievery. When encountered, he appears as a dark man dressed in various furs and rugs. He wears

various bones and other exotic trophies as jewelry, and has griffon and phoenix feathers braided in his dreads. Icelus carries a spear tipped with a unicorn's horn.

Phantasus, Icelus' brother, is almost a complete opposite. He spends most of his time in the Morpheus' Tower, making sure that everything runs smoothly in the Dream Lord's Court. He appears as a thin bureaucrat dressed in a dull, gray Victorian suit. He wears his black hair in a ponytail and his pulled-back hair emphasizes his pale face. He is as old as his brother Icelus and he has many skills. He is known to possess the Primal Powers of Dream, Magic, Illusion, and Wisdom. He meticulously takes care of every object within the Tower and nothing is ever out of place. He takes particular care of the Books of Lost Magic in Morpheus' library.

The only physical aspect the two brothers share is their dark black eyes, a gift from their mother. These dark eyes seem to reflect the sky at midnight, and most people find them so disconcerting that they avoid their gaze.

Dumah, the Silent Angel of the Dream Realms

The Heavenly Host has one representative in the Sephiroth of Hod, Dumah the Silent. She roams the Dream Realms in her celestial form, a silver-winged angel in simple, hooded gray robes. The only glimpse of skin showing is her marble-white bare feet that never quite touch the ground, although she sometimes draws back her hood to brush away the shining silver hair from her beautiful marble-white face, revealing eyes like two bright, full moons. She does not talk, nor send telepathic messages to her viewers, but when she wants them to know something, they somehow do.

Dumah is an Archangel, but like the Angel of Death, she has no army and does not dwell in Elysium. The only other angels that she associates with are Azrael, Sofia, and Raphael. Gabriel and Uriel avoid her at all times—an Alliance member in an *Armageddon* campaign may have heard Michelle remark that this is because the two Archangels find the scrutiny of her gaze more than discomfiting.

The Nahualli

The Dark Covenant Nahualli are a small group of Jaguar Ferals and Skin-Changers living in Mexico. The Aztecs once held them in high esteem as power-

ful sorcerers and shapeshifters, though the Nahualli Covenant dates back before the Aztecs. In fact, the Nahualli claim to be the oldest Dark Covenant in existence, though there is no proof that they existed as an Association any earlier than the 15th century.

A rather small Covenant, the Nahualli's members are rarely encountered outside of Central America, though it is not unknown to see a Nahualli Feral roaming the streets of America. This Dark Covenant often involves itself in drug smuggling, so its agents can be found in the United States' inner cities from time to time.

History

According to Nahualli tradition, the society of were-jaguars were founded during the time of the Olmecs, in 955 BCE, which is also the first year of an era the Aztecs called the Sun of the Jaguar. According to Nahualli legend, this Golden Age lasted for 676 years, ending in 279 BCE, when the Jaguar People ate all the other people on Earth. This, of course, does not explain why there are still human beings on the planet, or why there are no records of a human extinction in the 3rd century BCE, but nobody really expects the Dark Covenant's religious beliefs to make much sense.

Though Jaguar Ferals and Shamans have existed in the Americas for as long as humans have, they were not organized into any coherent group. The real history of the Nahualli as they exist in modern times did not begin until the Aztec Empire. Montezuma I founded the Nahualli Covenant in 1450 CE, when he gathered together sixty sorcerers and sent them to search for the lost city of Aztlan, which they believed to be the original home of the Aztecs.

The Sixty summoned spirits to guide them in their search and the spirits led them to the Pacific Coast, near the Grande de Santiago River. There they found an ancient Gateway to the First World in Hod. When the sorcerers opened it and went through, they found themselves in the middle of the Jaguar Totem Nation. The sorcerers met with spirits of the Ocoatl Clan of the Jaguar Nation. The Jaguar Spirits claimed to be the descendants of the Jaguar People who ruled the world during the Sun of the Jaguar Age. The Ocoatl Clan wanted to use the Sixty as instruments to bring back this Golden Age. A Jaguar Spirit possessed each sorcerer, imposing the Feral Curse. In turn, the Jaguar Spirits promised the sorcerers access to hidden knowledge, as long as they continued to keep the Gateway's location secret. The Nahualli were to continue what the Ocoatl Clan claimed to have started:



the Jaguar Ferals would become a powerful nation on Malkuth and would rule from Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Empire's capital.

The Sixty returned to their emperor with an allegorical story about finding Aztlan but being denied entry because the Aztec people had become too lazy and indulgent. Because of this slough, they revealed that it had been prophesied that a greater power would conquer the Aztecs. The Jaguar Spirits of the First World told them this prophecy and the Sixty assumed the Nahualli would be the greater power of which they spoke.

Thinking this to be the case, the original sixty Nahualli began breeding, producing numerous Inborn Feral children. Within five generations, they expected to have the makings of a mighty Feral army, which they would use to overthrow Tenochtitlan and use the city as a base from which to systematically conquer the rest of the Americas.

If Spanish ships had not arrived off the coast of Mexico in 1519, the Nahualli might have succeeded.

Over the next ten years, the Spanish crushed the Aztec Empire, killing most of the Sixty. The Nahualli should have been able to decimate the Spanish, and in the beginning they managed to terrorize a few conquistadors, but for some reason, the Nahualli's powers failed to work during many battles. Without Invocations or Feral Abilities, the Nahualli could not withstand the Spanish onslaught.

After the fall, the Covenant went underground. While they still dreamed of conquest, they never regained the power they had controlled at their height. In modern times, the Covenant is very small and larger Dark Covenants, like the Cult of Pain and the Red Path, use them to do their bidding.

Goals and Beliefs

The Nahualli worship the Aztec deity Tezcatlipoca of the Smoking Mirror, whom they consider to be the patron of the Jaguar Ferals. Tezcatlipoca has different forms, but the one the Nahualli most revere is Xipe Totec, the Flayed Lord. The Nahualli believe themselves to be blessed by the Gods. They hold that they will one day rule the Americas.

As a part of this destiny, they desire to build a new Sun of the Jaguar Age. With this in mind, the Nahualli monitor the original Sixty's remaining bloodlines. These bloodlines often produce Inborn Ferals, which the cult holds in high esteem, or Gifted,

which the Nahualli teach Invocations and the art of Skin-Changing. They consider any child not born a Feral or Gifted defective and they either cast these children out or hold them for later to sacrifice. In Mexico, in fact, the Nahualli have several enclaves in which they keep these Mundane children in pens like cattle.

Organization

Status within the Nahualli is based on martial prowess and kills. Those in the lowest caste do not have formal names; they are just regarded as Commoners and they serve the Nahualli. Most of them do not even know they are working for a Dark Covenant. There are no prerequisites for being a Commoner.

A Captor is the first real membership level. To be a Captor, one must have killed at least one person in service to the Nahualli. To gain membership in the higher ranks, one must be Gifted or Feral. A Mundane may only rise as high as Captor in the Covenant, no matter how many people he kills. Those Mundanes chosen as Captors come from the Commoners' ranks, as no Mundane child descended from one of the Sixty's bloodlines lives to join the Captors.

Any member with the proper prerequisites who has killed at least four victims for the Nahualli may rise to the Pipiltin rank. Inborn Ferals are considered Pilli rank at birth, as it is assumed that they will kill four rather quickly. A Pilli must have a Hand Weapon Skill 3 (usually with Knife or Macuatl Sword). A Pilli is also supposed to have Ritual Magic (Nahualli Black Magic) 2, Myth and Legend (Aztec) 2, and Language (Nahual) 2. Ferals are expected to know at least two abilities. Magicians are expected to know at least three Invocations, including Spirit Mastery (Jaguar Spirits). If the Magicians are not yet Skin-Changers, they are expected to become so.

The Otontin are considered the Nahualli's elite fighters, but being an Otontin is really more of a question of rank than ability. Some Pilli Ferals are better warriors, but they are just too lazy to take the steps needed to become Otontin, never learning more than the basics of Aztec Mythology or Spoken Nahual. As long as they get to kill someone once in a while, they are happy. To rise from Pilli to Otomitl the warrior must kill an important adversary of the Nahualli. Sacrificing one hundred villagers to Xipe Totec does not help one become Otomitl, but killing the Mayor of Mazatlán because he had discovered the Nahualli's Gateway to the First World does. An Otomitl must also have Hand Weapon (Knife or Macuatl Sword) 4,

Ritual Magic (Nahualli Black Magic) 3, Myth and Legend (Aztec) 3, and Language (Nahual) 3. He must also either have at least three Feral abilities or at least four Invocations, including the Skin-Changer Quality.

The Quachic, the highest-ranking Nahualli caste, are considered the Dark Covenant's nobles. Only Ferals and Skin-Changers can rise to this rank. A Quachic must have Hand Weapon (Knife or Macuatl Sword) 5, Ritual Magic (Nahualli Black Magic) 4, Myth and Legend (Aztec) 4, and Language (Nahual) 4. The Ferals must have at least four abilities and the Skin Changers are expected to know at least five Invocations.

There is rumored to be a Nahualli Emperor who rules from among the Ocelotl Clan of the Jaguar Nation in the First World in the Sephiroth of Hod. The Nahualli aspire to overthrow the Mexican government and re-establish the Aztec Empire, which the Nahualli Emperor will rule, growing the Empire beyond Mexico's border to include all the Americas.

This goal remains in the back of the Covenant members' minds, even though most do not believe it will happen in their lifetime. Most Nahualli see the present as a time for delights and mayhem; the New Sun of the Jaguar Age will rise tomorrow.

Allies and Enemies

The Nahualli deal with the Cult of Pain because of their mutual regard for the Xipe Totec, the Flayed Lord of the Aztecs. After the Spanish invasion, the Nahualli were amazed to find Europeans who understood about feeding the Gods and who even showed the Flayed Lord proper respect. The Cult of Pain considers the Nahualli to be a minor yet helpful ally. They have been known to use them as foot soldiers.

As a Mexican-based Covenant, the Nahualli have allied with the Caribbean Dark Covenant of the Red Path, as they share similar beliefs, attitudes, and geography. Like the Cult of Blood, the Red Path considers the Nahualli a minor yet useful ally, a nice big jaguar-spotted gun to point at their enemies.

Because of these alliances, the Nahualli become minor league pawns of the Combine. Every once in a while, those important Nahualli enemies needing killing are merely enemies of the Combine. Ironically enough, the Combine helped the Spanish defeat the Nahualli five hundred years ago—they were responsible for the Nahualli's failing powers in those battles. As long as Nahualli do not actually overthrow the Mexican Government and set up a New Sun of the Jaguar Age, they will remain minor pawns of the

Combine . . . unless a new Aztec Empire in Mexico is what the Combine is planning all along.

Regardless, allying with these cults makes enemies of the Templars, the Rosicrucians, and the Brotherhood of Legba. Of course, most of these Covenants have never actually heard of the Nahualli. Those that have consider them to be the lackeys of other Dark Covenants in the Western Hemisphere. No one considers them a serious threat—not more serious than any other cult, anyway.

Of the other Covenants, only the Nomads and the Apoanu Apyabaiba give them any thought at all. The Nomads want to see the Dark Covenant destroyed because they are Ferals gone bad. The Apoanu Apyabaiba fight against the Nahualli for many reasons; they find themselves caught in the middle of a Clan War between the Balam Jaguar Spirits and the Ocelotl Jaguar Spirits in the First World in Hod. The Nahualli deeply hate both Associations and they kill any member they encounter.

None of the other Covenants really know anything about the Nahualli, except for a few learned scholars who know a little bit about all sorts of things. As a general rule, only the Storm Dragons and the Sentinels come into much contact with them and that is purely because they hunt down monsters.

Special Nahualli Powers

Inborn Jaguar Ferals serve as the Nahualli's ruling class. As rulers, they learn all the abilities open to a Feral. In fact, those abilities are one of the things that determine status among the Nahualli. There are also a few Jaguar Ferals who have Jaguar Spirit Patrons. Some of the Quachic also have Xipe Totec as a Patron.

The Gifted learn Blood Magic Invocations. This uses Ritual Magic (Nahualli Black Magic) as a skill, but apart from a different cultural frame, it is the same as Blood Magic. Like the Cult of Pain, the Nahualli must fuel their spells with Sadicas gathered from the Essence released by the torture and sacrifice of other human beings.

In order for the Gifted to gain any status among the Nahualli, they must also have the Skin-Changer Quality. Only those who can take the shape of the Jaguar can rule when the New Sun of the Jaguar Age rises.

Using the Nahualli

The Nahualli serves as a good minor Dark Covenant. They are a bunch of fanatical shape-shifting lunatics, but they are not an especially powerful bunch of fanatical shape-shifting lunatics. Their main strength is in surprise, as most modern people have never even heard of them. It can be quite a shock when the lone Feral drug dealer that the Cast had taken care off is suddenly replaced by a group of bloodthirsty, revenge-seeking Otontin.

Nahualli also work well as part of an ongoing campaign dealing with uncovering Combine secrets. Investigating the Nahualli leads to the Cult of Pain. Investigating the Cult of Pain leads to the Combine. Investigating the Combine usually leads to a series of nasty rumors surfacing about the Cast Members, destroyed credit histories, eventual abductions aboard Black Helicopter, and being locked in a Secret Detention Facility in the middle of nowhere. Fighting the Combine sucks.

The Nahualli in Armageddon

There is no love lost between the Nahualli and the Mad God Cults. The Aztec Jaguar Ferals have even managed to help thwart the Cult of Rending Shadow on occasion. Most Dark Covenants are focused on gaining personal power regardless of the means. This makes them undeniably evil, but it also gives them a vested interest in preserving the world as we know it. If a Mad God is set loose in Malkuth, all of that wealth and power will be meaningless. It is with this attitude that the Aztec Jaguar Ferals were at first opposed to the Church of Revelations.

This opposition did not last long, as one of the Quachic became tainted as early as 2011. By the time the Third AoR had formed, the entire Quachic caste had gone Wendigo. When the Third AoR marched into Mexico, there was a loose band of Tainted Jaguar Ferals ready to assist them. Those Nahualli who would not accept the Mark of the Leviathan were killed by their tainted brethren. The bodies of Nahualli who protested that no New Sun of the Jaguar Age would rise if the Dark Apostle was allowed to rule the world were found mutilated and hanging from street corners throughout Mexico. The remaining Nahualli have been absorbed into the Mendicant Knights of the Leviathan. They assist the Soul Police and the Third AoR in North America and the Amazon.

Tiacapan

Pilli Warrior for the Nahualli

After her brother's murder at the hands of Storm Dragons, the Nahualli sent Tiacapan to Los Angeles to look after their interests. Los Angeles is a test for Tia, a rite of passage to prove herself to the Dark Covenant. She has taken control of a gang in East Los Angeles and she is currently using them to sell drugs for the Nahualli. If she can turn a profit and get her fourth kill in, she will return to Mexico with honor.

The young woman is eager to turn a profit, even though she has been skimming some money for herself. So far, this has been a comparatively minor amount and the Nahualli have yet to notice. Tia's gang is fiercely loyal to her, as they have seen her beat a man three times her size into a bloody pulp (she was using Strength of the Beast at the time). Because of her Feral regenerative powers, Tia also survived a drive-by shooting. The shooter's remains were later found hanging from a telephone pole as a warning to any other drug lord who dared to stand against Tia.

The Mundane criminals live in fear of the Pilli, but there are others in the city who have taken notice of her. The Storm Dragon who killed Acolmitzli is looking to finish the job he started. A Sentinel, a Rosicrucian Marcher, and a Brotherhood of Legba Mamboh have each also begun separate investigations of the young Feral. Some dark forces are watching Tia's activities, too—a Vampyre has been running his own operations in the City of Angels for a few years now and he does not like the new competition.



Strength: 2/6

Dexterity: 3/6

Constitution: 3/5

Intelligence: 2

Perception: 4/5

Willpower: 3

Life Points: 30/105

Endurance: 29/47

Speed: 12/22

Essence: 42

Qualities: Attractiveness +2, Increased Essence Pool +15, Influence 1 (Los Angeles Underworld), Nerves of Steel, Situational Awareness, Resources (Well-off)

Drawbacks: Covetous (Greedy) 2, Cruel 2, Minority (Aztec Indian)

Skills: Brawling 2, Climbing 3, Hagglng 2, Intimidation 3, Hand Weapon (Knife) 3, Language (Nahual, Native) 5, Language (English) 3, Language (Spanish) 4, Myth and Legend (Aztec) 2, Questioning 2, Ritual Magic (Nahualli Black Magic) 2, Smooth Talking 2, Stealth 4, Streetwise 3, Tracking 3, Traps 2

Metaphysics: Inborn Jaguar Feral, Strength of the Beast, Camouflage

Special: Tiacapan has an Armor Value 1 and she may attack by biting for D4(2) x 6 slashing damage or clawing for D6(3) x 6 slashing damage when in Jaguar form.

Glossary

Abhidharma: The skill the Monks of Shambala use with their Abhinja powers. Use Abhidharma and the appropriate Attribute in a Task to see if the particular Abhinja power succeeded.

Abhinja: The metaphysical power used by the Monks of Shambala. It is different from other metaphysical abilities because the Cast Member must have the Enlightened Quality in order to purchase it, instead of just Gifted.

Akasha: The Realm of Visions. One of the Dream Realms of Hod, Akasha is the realm where everything that has ever happened can be observed. It is also possible to catch glimpses of the possible future in this realm as well.

Apoanu Apyabaiba: One of the largest Solitaire Groups on the planet. The Apoanu Apyabaiba is a coalition of shamans and spirits fighting to protect the Amazonian Rainforest.

Baraka Sabil: The metaphysical martial arts the Society of Assassins practices. It is equivalent to the Storm Dragons' Tao Chi.

Bodhisattva: A soul who is able to enter Kether, but rejects it temporarily so that she can work to help others reach Kether is a Bodhisattva. They are a subgroup of Kerubim.

The City of Bubastis: A Dream Realm that is the dwelling place of the goddess Bast. It is also where the Bast Race go when they dream.

The Coma Kingdoms: Small Dream Realms created by those individuals who find themselves cut off from the everyday reality of the Waking World. In the past

they were mostly created by the insane, but in modern times an increasing number of them are the results of a victim being in a coma for an extended amount of time.

Curupira: The Tree Spirits of the Amazonian Rainforest. They are much more aggressive than most Tree Spirits and fight alongside the Apoanu Apyabaiba.

Dais: The Initiated. The lowest rank of the Society of Assassins.

Dalai Lama: The spiritual and political leader of Tibet and the leader of the Order of Shambala. He is a Tulku who has served as the Dalai Lama for fourteen incarnations.

Dilmun: The Capital City of the Sephiroth of Hod, more or less. It is a constantly shifting dream city that is the dwelling place of Morpheus.

Divine Twins: The Inheritors Sun and Moon, who lead the Apoanu Apyabaiba Association.

The Domain of Morpheus: The Dream Realm which includes the City of Dilmun and the Tower of Morpheus. It is said to be the heart of the Sephiroth of Hod.

Dream Lords: Individuals who rule the Coma Kingdoms. Some are insane, some are in a deep coma, and some have died. None of them realize that there is any other reality besides the one that contains their private realms.

Dumah: The Silent One. One of the Heavenly Host who spends all of her time roaming the Dream Realms of Hod. In the politics of Binah, it is unclear where her loyalties lie.

Dybbik: An Eidolon who gains control of its host and proceeds to masquerade as that individual.

Eidolon: The bit players of the Panorama. Essence forms who

become whatever the dream requires. Those with more control over the dreamscape can make the Eidolon become whatever the dreamer desires.

Fedavis: The Devoted Ones. The highest rank of the Society of Assassins (except for the Imam who leads them).

The First World: The Dream Realm of Totem Nations and Ancestor Spirits. Events in the First World can influence events on Earth. The reverse is also true. Shamans frequently visit this part of Hod.

The Garden of Earthly Delights: A Dream Realm that exists as a sensual Eden, where every physical desire is fulfilled. Many of the souls there believe that they are in Heaven, but the Garden is a pale shadow of the True Paradise.

Icelus: An Incarnate and Morpheus' younger brother. He spends most of his time in the First World.

Lucid Dreaming: The skill used to control one's dreams. It is similar to a metaphysical ability, but even Mundanes can learn Lucid Dreaming.

Madrassa: The Society of Assassins' training schools, which are located in the Garden of Earthly Delights.

Manjushri Lama: One of three powerful Tulkus who serve as the Order of Shambala's leaders. Where the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama are leaders of Tibet, the Manjushri Lama is the leader of the Dream Realm of Shambala in the Sephiroth of Hod. He has served as the Manjushri Lama for the past nine incarnations.

Manjushri Rimpoche: Another name for the Manjushri Lama.

Mara: The Nightmare Ethereals. While they are dangerous, they are still part of the natural order and should not be confused with Tainted Spirits like the Night Terrors.

Morpheus: The Dream Lord, Ruler of Hod. Morpheus is one of the Old Gods, and his mastery over the Dream Realms is said to be absolute. Despite this, there are still some things in Hod that even he cannot control.

Nahualli: An Aztec Dark Covenant composed of Jaguar Ferals and Black Magicians. Their influence is strongest in Mexico, and they are allies of the Cult of Pain.

Night Terror: A Tainted Spirit that roams the Dream Realms. They are mostly encountered in packs, hunting for victims in the Periphery.

Oneirokitai: The Dream Ethereals. They seem to have an agenda of helping humanity reach its full potential.

Otomitl: Singular of Otontin.

Otontin: The middle rank of the Nahualli. They are considered the fighters of the Dark Covenant.

Panchen Lama: The Great Scholar—a purely religious figure and Tibet's second most powerful leader. He is a Tulku who has served as the Panchen Lama for the past eleven incarnations. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Panorama: An individual's Dreamscape. All the events that happen in a dream take place in that dreamer's Panorama.

Peris: Love Ethereals who dwell in the Garden of Earthly Delights.

Periphery: The Realm that serves as the border between Malkuth and Hod, much as the Threshold is the border between Malkuth and Geburah. The Periphery is the Realm where all the Panoramas exist; all dreams take place here.

Phantasus: An Incarnate and a younger brother of Morpheus who oversees the everyday functions in the Tower of Morpheus.

Pilli: Singular of Pipiltin.

Pipiltin: Second lowest rank of the Nahualli. Inborn Ferals automatically have at least this rank.

The Plane of Ideas: The Dream Realm that is the home for the Ethereals.

Quachic: The nobles of the Nahualli, and the highest rank to be achieved in that Covenant.

Ra'd Quwwat: The martial arts style of the Society of Assassins. It is similar to the Storm Dragons' Stormfist style.

Raven Mocker: A type of Tainted nature spirit encountered mostly on the East Coast of the United States and in the First World.

The Red King's Dreaming: A small Dream Realm that is home to the Red King, who some scholars believe is the Tzaddik of Hod.

Refiks: The Students. The rank which is achieved in the Society of Assassins after an individual has gone through the Society's Initiation in the Sephiroth of Hod.

The Sammael Gate: A breach between our universe and the Otherworlds of the Mad Gods. Even if a Mad God cannot manifest on Earth, it can still influence dreams due to the Sammael Gate.

Shambala: The Dream Realm controlled by the Order of

Shambala. Once, there were numerous Gateways connecting Shambala to Tibet, but the Combine has had them systematically destroyed. Only a handful remain.

The Three Sisters: The Fates. They are not Seraphim. They are not Old Gods. They are more powerful than that. Nobody is sure what their true nature is, but all fear them. They are fate.

Totem Nations: Large tribes of nature spirits which exist in the First World.

Tulku: A Lama who controls his own reincarnation through Abhinja.

Tzaddik: According to legend, a Tzaddik is an individual appointed by the Creator as the source of any given Sephiroth's continued existence. Theoretically, if someone destroyed a particular Tzaddik, then the related Sephiroth would also be destroyed.

Uktena: The Ghost Dancer's name for the Leviathan.

Ulunsuti: A legendary artifact said to have been taking from the Leviathan during its first time on earth during the age of Atlantis. The Ghost Dancers believe that it is hidden somewhere in North America and that it might be used to defeat the Leviathan during the Reckoning.

Vision Quest: An initiation rite used by Shamans.

Visualizations: Specializations of the Lucid dreaming skill.

The Waking World: What the denizens of Hod call Earth.

The Wasteland: The Dream Realm surrounding the Sammael Gate. It is an area of ambient Taint that is slowly growing each year.

Index

- Abhijna 105-109
 - Bardo Ascension 105
 - Divine Ear Element 106
 - Divine Eye Element 106
 - Invincible Sword 106
 - Lung Gom 107
 - Mind Penetration 107
 - Multiple Bodies 108
 - Past Life Recall 108
 - Perfect Pill 109
 - Spirit Form 109
 - Tumo 109
- Abhidharma 23, 105
- Akasha 49
- Alamut Sect 69
- Archetypes 66-67, 72-73, 80-81, 82-83
 - Dream Realms Explorer 82
 - Ghost Dancer Prankster 66-67
 - Shaman Guerrilla Fighter 86-87
 - Shambala Lost Child 80-81
 - Society of Assassins Professional Killer 72-73
- Associations 13-21, 55-57, 60-87
- Apoanu Apyabaiba 20, 84-87
- Bodhisattvas 78
- Bubastis 36
- Character Type 12
- Coma Kingdoms 52-54
- Combat Move 23
- Dalai Lama 76-77
- Daughters of Endymion 48
- Dilmun 46-47
- Divinatory Specializations 92-93
- Dream Catchers 94
- Dumah 125
- Eidolon Dybbik 122
- Ethereals 117-122
 - Genius Loci 120-121
 - Oneirokitai 121-122
 - Peris 118-120
 - War Ethereals 117-118
- First World 33-36
- Garden of Earthly Delights 42-44
- Garden of Eden 44
- Ghost Dancers 13, 60-67
- Ghost Shirt 96
- Greater Gifted 12
- Invocations 91-93
 - Divination 91-93
 - Night Curse 93
- Lucid Dreaming 23-25
 - Awaken 24
 - Conjuration 25
 - Dream Attack 25
 - Dream Flight 25
 - Dream Shift 25
 - Fermata 25
 - Transformation 25
 - Visualizations 24-25
- Mad Gods 38
- Mara 122-123
- Metaphysics 23
- Morpheus 45-49, 124-125
 - Domain 45-49
- Nahualli 125-129
- Nature Spirits 112-115
 - Curupira (Tree Spirits) 113-114
 - Bear Spirits 115
 - Jaguar Spirits 115
 - Rat Spirits 112-113
- Order of Shambala 17, 74-81
- Plane of Ideas 51
- Qualities and Drawbacks 21-22
 - Enlightened 21
 - Limited Dreamer 22
- Skin-Changer 102
- Summon Animal Spirits 102
- True Dreamer 22
- Panchen Lama 76-77
- Panoramas 30
- Periphery 29-31
 - Supernaturals 32
- Red King 51-52
- Sammael Gate 36-37
- Seer Powers 94-96
 - Minddream 94
 - Mind Projection 94-96
- Shamanism 97
 - Basic Powers 99
 - Common Lore 99
 - Common Skills 100
 - Spirit Patrons 101
 - Symbols and Items of Power 100-101
 - Urban Shamanism 99
 - Vision Quest 97-99
- Shambala 39-41
- Skills 23
- Skin-Changer 102-
- Society of Assassins 15, 68-73
- Summon Animal Spirits 101
- Tainted Spirits 115-117
 - Night Terrors 116-117
 - Raven Mockers 115-116
- Telepinu 91
- Three Sisters 50
- Wasteland 36
- Wizards of Oz 19, 82-83

WITCHCRAFT

Primary Attributes

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DEXTERITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="checkbox"/>

Secondary Attributes

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ENDURANCE POINTS	<input type="text"/>
SPEED	<input type="text"/>
ESSENCE POOL	<input type="text"/>

Greater Gifted

Qualities

Point

Drawbacks

Point

Skill

Level

[illegible]

Skill

Level

Metaphysics

Level

[illegible]

You've been here before.

EVERY NIGHT, IN FACT, YOU VISIT THIS REALM. WHILE YOU DREAM, YOUR DREAMSCAPE FLOATS IN THE CLEAR, INFINITE OCEAN THAT IS THE PERIPHERY, HOD'S BORDERLANDS.

BUT THERE'S MORE TO HOD THAN THE PERIPHERY. MUCH MORE.

BREAK FREE OF YOUR PANOGRAMA, TRAVEL TO THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS, VISIT THE FIRST WORLD, ENTER THE SANCTUARY PARADISE CALLED SHAMABLA, OR DISCOVER THE VAST WORLDS COMA VICTIMS LIKE OTIS KLINE BUILD WITHIN THEIR MINDS. AND IF YOU FEEL REALLY ADVENTUROUS, EXPLORE THE SAMMAEL GATE, WHERE THE MAD GODS' TAINTED MINIONS EDGE THEIR WAY INTO MANKIND'S REALITY.

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