

MYTHIC

A Role-Playing Game of, Well, MYTHIC Fantasy

A game by William Prahl

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0.1 Introduction

MYTHIC is a role-playing game.

This is a game of, well, mythic fantasy. A game of stories. A game of mighty and magical heroes, of life and death. MYTHIC is a role-playing game. Role-playing games are a unique category of games in that they are almost entirely open-ended. As I write MYTHIC, I can no more imagine every session of play that could result from it than I could imagine every conversation a person might have, or story they might tell.

MYTHIC is slightly different from other role-playing games in that the focus of the game is on the play, not the creation, of heroes. MYTHIC is, as its name suggests, based heavily on the sorts of heroes found in, well, myths. Gilgamesh, Achilles, Odysseus, Heracles, Beowulf, Siegfried, Arthur; the characters you create in MYTHIC may not be as famous as these, but their deeds will be no less heroic.

Though set in a fantasy world, MYTHIC strives to maintain a fair level of historical accuracy. Also, MYTHIC is set up to conduct play beyond the simple level of hack n slash dungeon delving often expected from fantasy rpgs. Characters are expected to be part of the game world, not some nameless killing machine.

MYTHIC is both similar to and distinct from existing RPGs. Its character creation system does not use character classes, templates or anything of the sort. In MYTHIC, you create a character by choosing traits and using them to determine numerical attributes about your character.

There are a few things to keep in mind while playing MYTHIC.

1. This is a pen-and-paper role-playing game. Grid paper, use of miniatures, computers, or props are not required to play MYTHIC, and distract from the game. Also, it is only a game. Keep a grip on things.
2. The game world¹ is not Earth. Though the social structure and technological development of the worlds intended for MYTHIC is very similar to Earth circa 1200, they are entirely separate worlds from Earth.
3. The game world has its own rules, but it has rules. Magic is real, but it works in specific ways. There are natural laws, and many of them are exactly like the laws of the real world.
4. At the same time, the game world is a mythic world. The heroes have capabilities that are simply beyond ordinary mortals, but they are still human. This is not a superhero game.
5. Superstition is everywhere. Magic as a formal practice is derived from superstition and divination. Some things just work, and everyone can do a little magic.

¹There are five upcoming worldbooks for MYTHIC, each one covering at least two different worlds. They are, in expected order: *Mothers Nature* (Arcadia and Telluris), *Celestial Fathers* (Hatha and Lumen), *Children of the Gods* (Tethys and Marmaron), *The Soul gates* (Jotunheim and Deled), and *Realms of Power* (Daat, Etheris, and Abyssa).

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Chapter 1

Heroes

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First of all, the characters that the players create in MYTHIC are heroes. They aren't ordinary people, nor are they villains. Storytellers can make other characters the same way that players make heroes, but usually they shouldn't need to.

Second of all, while there are many (nearly ten, in fact) game worlds designed for MYTHIC, MYTHIC is designed for most all mythic fantasy settings. In general, it is a low-fantasy game. There are magical and mysterious things in the world, but it is a realistic, medieval world. That is to say, it is a scary and mysterious place for the people who live there.

Third, MYTHIC has an intentionally high-level interface for the player. You don't need to do any math beyond simple arithmetic to make a character for

MYTHIC. The Storyteller's job is more complicated, but not very much more. We've done most of the work for you.

1.0.1 The Heroes as a Group

It is an important feature of hero myths that the hero is usually alone, or else accompanied by only a few companions. This is fine, if that is what your players want. If one player wants to be the leader and the others want to subordinate to him, go ahead and roll with it.

More likely, one of the following arrangements will probably be better, for arranging the roles of the heroes within the story:

- The Partners — this setup works for two players, or possibly three. The heroes are an existing group, possibly siblings or a master and an apprentice. The key of this is that, although there is a junior and senior partner, both are on equal footing and have worked together for a while.

A third partner may be introduced, but they should have to earn the trust of at least one of the partners. The third partner should be either an eager but inexperienced aspiring hero, to play foil to the experience of the partners, or someone experienced with the Night (the evil that must be opposed), to contrast the alienation that the partners will feel upon delving into the Night.

Examples of such an experienced person might be a local guide, or a magician of questionable status.

- The Strange Bedfellows— this setup involves two to six heroes being thrown together unceremoniously by the circumstances. Perhaps they were the only witnesses to an event, or the only people for miles around, but few would be willing to work with the others under normal circumstances.

The four or more-person version setup can be formed using one or two sets of partners, as well. The partners are forced into a situation where they need the help of the other two, and by working together they must gain a grudging sort of respect for each other.

- The Selected — some agency bigger than any of the individual heroes has determined that something needs to be done and has selected the heroes individually or as a group, and brought them together to explain the gravity of the situation and to ask for their help.

The individual selected heroes may already be part of a group. They may be relatives, all called to the aid of another relative, or friends recruited by a visitor on a quest. The act of selection constitutes the call to adventure for the heroes, and, possibly after some trepidation, they proceed.

- The Team — this setup is like the Partners, but the heroes exist as members of some kind of team, possibly a military unit or something of the

kind. The way that this diverges from the Partners is that each hero in the team has his own defined role within the group.

Teams of three tend towards dynamics resembling the Buffered Opposites. Teams of four or five should consider having each person take one or more of the following roles: leading the team, being the skilled soloist, being the knowledgeable one, being the "workhorse" or "powerhouse" of the team, and helping the team get along.

Teams may be joined by novice members, much like the Partners. Again, novices should be either an eager but inexperienced aspiring hero, to play foil to the experience of the team, or someone experienced with the Night, to contrast the alienation that the team will feel upon delving into the Night.

- The Buffered Opposites — this setup requires that there are two heroes, each formidable in their own right, very much unlike each other in temperament, skills, and background. One or more other heroes join them through whatever mechanism (probably a setup akin to the Selected or the Strange Bedfellows), who bridge the gap between the opposite heroes, and help them work together.
- The Veteran and Recruits — much like the Selected or the Team, except that one of the heroes is the agency doing the selection. One of the heroes has had the Night brought to his attention, and has decided to do something about it. To this end, he has assembled his own team of recruits, some of whom could be hardened veterans themselves, as well as green aspiring heroes and local guides, etc.

The recruits should play foil to each other and to the determination of the recruiter.

1.1 Traits: Leading and Hidden

Heroes in MYTHIC are broken up into two parts. First are their leading traits, which make up what the hero wants to be. Leading traits are what the hero does, and they are the face that the hero shows the world. In addition, there are hidden traits, which are the dark parts of the hero. A hero's hidden traits make up who they are, whatever they may wish they are. Hidden traits are a hero's inner source of strength.

Hidden traits are secret, and shouldn't even be shared with the other players. Only a hero's player and the GM should know what that hero's secret traits are. Hidden traits are, by definition, more powerful than leading traits, so Hidden traits are worth half again their leading value, rounded up (note: -1.5 rounds to -2, not -1). Traits which are easily detected, such as Great make poor choices for hidden traits, unless something is done to conceal them. A Great hero could, for example, always slouch and have generally unassuming mannerisms, only revealing his huge stature when it is least expected (however, Great as a hidden

trait would be worth +6, more than most heroes should allocate to any one virtue).

Traits can be virtues, which are good for the character, or they can be flaws. Remember, however, that heroes don't have flaws simply because characters are supposed to have a flaw, or I want more points for my character. Heroic flaws are integral parts of the character, not second thoughts tacked on for game balance.

Heroes are greater than ordinary people. It isn't just that they are brave, or that they understand something other people don't; they have inner reserves of spirit and body unavailable to ordinary mortals. All Heroes are required to take the following three traits:

- Heroic Spirit (+16 virtue)

You have the potential for greatness. With training, your body, mind, and magic can all surpass those of ordinary mortals. Note that this virtue does not grant you incredible strength, or anything like that. It simply allows you to reach levels (after buying the appropriate traits, of course), above and beyond those available to normal humans. One thing that Heroic Spirit does do, however, is make you resistant to fear. A hero is rarely frightened.

This trait confers on the hero a more powerful mortal spirit, capable of driving the body and mind. It gives the hero a default Mentality of 4.

You have the ordinary human ability to learn and perform magic. It does not come naturally to you, but the ability is there, nascent, and generally stronger in you than in ordinary mortals. Prayers and simple rituals that you make will occasionally take effect, although formal training is required to make this less of a hit-or-miss proposition.

- Human Mind (+5 virtue)

You have the faculties of a human. You think, see, and speak as well as any human can be reasonably expected, although this trait does not, in itself, guarantee greatness. Additional mental traits modify these abilities.

This trait confers on the hero a human mind and sensory apparatus and all the appropriate psychological traits that entails, and a default Wit of 3.

- Human Body (+9 virtue)

You have a humanoid body. You must breathe, eat, and sleep regularly (some more often than others, naturally). You have two arms, two legs, a head, and all of the other features of a human body. This trait makes you a more or less average human, which can, of course, be modified with bodily traits later on.

This trait confers a human-shaped body with all the appropriate organs, and gives the hero a default Vitality of 2 and a default Agility of 3.

- Human Training (+2 virtue)

You have lived a human life, and as such have been required to develop your mind and body accordingly. You gain the prowess and lore trainings at +1 level, and they are considered to be on your path.

All heroes, therefore, begin with four virtues, totaling +32. We personally recommend an upper limit on the traits of starting heroes to be set at +40–45, at the GM's discretion, allowing additional traits and trainings purchased to total up to +10. None of the above four virtues may be taken as a hidden trait.

1.2 Social traits

There are a number of social aspects of your character which should be considered first, as traits. Is your hero male or female? Do they come from wealth or poverty? Do they have a reputation? How about a liege-lord or other patron? Allies? Enemies? Vassals, servants, or dependents?

Heroes must choose four traits that make up his hero's social background. These traits determine the hero's birth, upbringing, profession, and mastery. They amount to a backstory of sorts, although countless details are left to the imagination and ingenuity of the individual player.

There are five births from which heroes may arise:

- Low Birth (-1 flaw)

Heroes may rise from particularly humble or disreputable birth, such as beggar, foreign, heretic, illegitimate, outcaste, slave, or witch parentage

- Common Birth (no cost)

The hero's parents were commoners, who worked land for their lord and who could expect nothing but hardship and work their entire lives.

- Free Birth (+1 virtue)

The hero was born free, outside the domain of any mortal lord. He is free to choose his own fate, and his own way in life.

- Noble Birth (+2–3 virtue)

The hero's parents were hereditary landowners, for whom commoners labored, and who themselves owed allegiance to their king.

- Royal Birth (+5 virtue)

The hero was born into the most powerful families in the world, the rich and mighty royal families who control their entire country. He is minor royalty, but royalty nonetheless, and can expect nothing other than devotion or hate wherever he goes.

Regardless of birth, heroes may have any sort of upbringing, from the following list:

- Criminal (-1 flaw)
The hero spent time as a criminal, acquiring himself notoriety, but keeping himself fed.
- Fortunate (+1 virtue)
The hero, through his own presence of mind and good luck acquired a small fortune of his own.
- Inherited (+2 virtue)
The hero inherited valuable land, title, and/or wealth from a relative, and never had to work for his station.
- Military (+1 virtue)
The hero is a veteran of a recent war, or else serves as a man-at-arms to a lord of some kind.
- Professional (+1 virtue)
The hero devoted himself wholeheartedly to his chosen trade, or else took up the family business and made it his life, becoming a member of society.
- Scholastic (-1 flaw)
The hero attended a university, and bettered his mind, although it represented a drain on his resources
- Seminary (+1 virtue)
The hero attended a seminary, honoring his family and increasing his station by serving a church.
- Wild (-1 flaw)
The hero grew up in the wild, learning how to make his own way at the expense of learning how to work with others.

Though there is considerable overlap between his upbringing and his profession, a hero's upbringing determines his training in socialization, while his profession determines his skills and, well, professional training.

- Acolyte
The hero became initiated into a church, and invested with clerical authority.
- Heir
The hero ascended to his hereditary title, becoming a lord.
- Infamy
The hero excelled in being a charlatan, confidence artist, thief, spy, or the like.

- Journeyman
The hero was taken into a trade, and completed his apprenticeship.
- Savant
The hero entered service to a magician, and began learning the magical arts.
- Scholar
The hero finished university and received an academic degree.
- Soldier
The hero rose to a position of authority and respect in the army.

All heroes have achieved mastery. They select any one training that they possess at a +3 level (if it belongs to their path) or +2 level (if it does not), and permanently receive a +1 die bonus on all attempts they make with that training. They must possess at least one training at this level. The form that their mastery takes, however, has social factors as well:

- Doctor (+2–3 virtue)
The hero not only mastered his art or craft, but has risen to a level of distinction in it as well. He may be a clergyman of note, or a sorcerer, or a doctor of medicine or of philosophy. He may even be a renown military man.
- Master (+1 virtue)
The hero is a master of arts or of a craft, and has earned the right to set up shop or perform his own research. This applies to magicians and priests as well.
- Outcaste (-1 flaw)
The hero was on the verge of success when he crossed a line or was double-crossed, resulting in his being cast out from his chosen profession and hung out to dry. Alternatively, the hero has for his entire life lived beyond the borders of civilization.

In some places, especially those resembling middle-ages Europe, being a woman should be worth -1, although this is not always the case.

The GM should require a full backstory from each player for their character.

1.3 Virtues

Virtues are positive traits that your hero can possess. Unless otherwise noted, you may not take any virtue more than once. Unless otherwise noted, a +1 virtue adds a +1 bonus to any attempts that it describes. A list of virtues follows:

- **Acute Senses (+1 virtue)**
Your vision, hearing, or smell is particularly acute, nearly twice as good as a normal person's. You gain a +1 bonus to one type of sense roll, either visual, audial, or olfactory.
- **Big (+1 virtue)**
You are a big person, weighing 4/3 as much as an ordinary person, and are correspondingly harder to move and more intimidating. Your threshold is increased by one.
- **Bright (+1 virtue)**
You're unusually smart. You can think up a solution to many problems quickly. You'll rarely be outsmarted by an enemy, and when you have time to plan, you'll often be able to outsmart them!
- **Brilliant (+2 virtue)**
Like Bright, but more so. A brilliant character can instantly understand the solution to all but the most fiendish of problems. They can make excellent deductions from little evidence, and pay close attention to everything they see. A Brilliant hero cannot be outsmarted, save by another Brilliant character.
- **Charismatic (+1 or +2 virtue)**
You may buy this virtue at +1 or +2 level. You are naturally good with people, and they like you. This makes you a good leader and negotiator, even if you aren't Well Spoken or Bright. It might not make you a competent leader, but people can't help liking you. The +2 version amplifies this effect.
- **Coordinated (+1 virtue)**
Your movements are smooth and intentional. You'll rarely make mistakes or falter, unless you are rushed or threatened, and even then you'll usually maintain your grace.
- **Deep Breaths (+1 virtue)**
You don't tire easily. Where ordinary men would give up, you continue. You can continue performing a strenuous activity for half again as long as an ordinary person. You treat your fatigue score as if it were one level lower than it is.
- **Favored (+1 virtue)**
For some reason, some divine force likes you. It very occasionally intercedes as a patron, and it also means that your prayers usually, but not always, take magical effect. This adds a +1 bonus on any attempts to pray for intervention.

- Flexible (+1 virtue)
Your joints are particularly flexible. You can more easily escape from attempts to hold you, whether they are with rope, manacles, or by a person.
- Fleet of foot (+1 virtue)
You move unusually quickly for someone your size. This virtue lets you run as if you were one size category smaller than you are. This virtue makes you move as though you had $3/2$ your agility.
- Great (+4 virtue)
You are huge, weighing $5/3$ as much as an ordinary person, and are correspondingly harder to move and more intimidating. This virtue cannot be taken with Big. In addition, this virtue includes the benefits of Healthy and Deep Breaths, and cannot be taken without them. Your threshold is increased by two.
- Healthy (+1 virtue)
You are healthier than an ordinary person, and in generally good shape. You can recover from injury half again as fast as most people.
- Magical Knack (variable virtue)
You have the ability to learn the magics of your world. If you wish to be adept in several, you must take this trait once for each type of magic. Aptitude for any Greater magic can be taken at +1, +2, or +3 levels, making your magic stronger with each level. Aptitude for Lesser magic ¹ can be taken at +1 or +2 levels. Aptitude for simple magic (one of the magical trainings described in this book) is simply a +1 virtue. All your magical knack traits may not total more than +4.
Add the value of this trait to your resistance.
- Quick reflexes (+1 virtue)
You respond faster than normal to danger. It is easier for you to avoid attacks or other hazards, as long as you are aware for them.
- Vera Fides (+2 virtue)
You are truly faithful to whatever religion you hold. You gain an extra point of faith, and may pray for intervention as though you had the prayer training.
- Well Spoken (+1 virtue)
You pick your words particularly well. You can talk your way out of most situations, and can convince or trick people into doing what you want if they aren't on their guard.

¹The Lesser and Greater magics are described in upcoming supplements that describe the worlds of MYTHIC

1.4 Flaws

Flaws are positive traits that your hero can possess. Unless otherwise noted, you may not take any flaw more than once. Unless otherwise noted, a -1 flaw incurs a -1 penalty on any attempts that it describes. A list of virtues follows:

Note that you are not required to take flaws. If a flaw does not fit the archetype of hero you have in mind, don't take it. Heroic flaws should be integral parts of the character. Before taking any of the ordinary flaws, consider either using low status to gain points (not always appropriate, however) or taking the Troubled flaw, both of which options are more suited to the heroic genre than most of the other flaws on this list.

A list of flaws follows:

- Clumsy (-1 flaw)

Your movements are jerky and uncoordinated. It's hard for you to make accurate, controlled movements without making physical blunders. Incompatible with Coordinated.

- Disfigured (-1 flaw)

Disease, injury, or deformity has left your face Disfigured. This will almost always shock those who first meet you, usually illiciting a poor reaction. If taken as a hidden trait, you must take pains to cover your face with a mask or veil at all times. That usually still provokes a negative reaction, as most people are inherently distrustful of people who do not show their face.

- Faithless (-1 flaw)

You just can't seem to believe in the reassurances of your god. You have no points of faith. Ordinary prayers almost never benefit you, and truly faithful prayers on your behalf are only half effective. Incompatible with Vera Fides.

- Poor senses (variable flaw)

Your vision or hearing is particularly bad. One particular sense may be bad, for the -1 level of this flaw. A bad sense imposes a -1 penalty on any sense rolls using it. Both senses may be bad, or the hero may be blind for -2. Heroes cannot get points for having poor smell. Deaf heroes are worth -3. A bad sense is incompatible with the same Acute Sense.

- Poorly spoken (-1 flaw)

The right words just don't seem to come to you. Public speaking and all but the most simple falsehoods are beyond you. Heroes may take this flaw to denote a general lack of charisma or a moral inability to tell lies.

- Lame (-1 flaw)

You move unusually slowly for someone your size. It's possible that one of your legs is injured, or some similar handicap prevents you from moving quickly. This flaw forces you to run as if your agility was half its actual value. Incompatible with Fleet of Foot.

- Short of Breath (-1 flaw)

You tire easily. You have difficulty keeping up with most people. You can only perform strenuous activity for half as long as an ordinary person. You treat your level of fatigue as though it was one higher than it actually is. This may be taken in concert with Sickly or Troubled to represent poor health, but is incompatible with Deep Breaths, Big, or Great.

- Sickly (-1 flaw)

You far less healthy than an ordinary person, and in generally poor shape. You can recover from injury half as fast as most people. This may be taken in concert with Short of Breath or Troubled to represent poor health, but is incompatible with Healthy, Big, or Great.

- Simple (-1 flaw)

You're unusually dull. It takes you a while to figure out what to do, and you're unlikely to see the flaws in a plan or adapt to changing circumstances. You'll rarely be able to outsmart an enemy, and without help you might yourself get outsmarted. Incompatible with Bright or Brilliant.

- Slight (-1 flaw)

You weigh about 2/3 of an ordinary person. You make physical feats as though your vitality was 2/3 its actual value The flaw is is incompatible with Big or Great. Reduce your threshold by 1, to a minimum of 1.

- Stiff (-1 flaw)

Your joints are particularly stiff. If you get tied up, you won't be able to wriggle free. Forget about squeezing through small gaps. Incompatible with Flexible.

- Troubled (-1 flaw)

You are plagued with a disease spirit, haunted by a ghost, tormented by a spirit, or something of the like. This flaw can be used to represent most chronic ailments which lie dormant then recur, requiring a battle of wills to drive them off.

1.5 Trainings

While traits are integral parts of a hero, it is the hero's training that makes him so capable. A Big hero might be matched for strength with your average Big person, but a hero trained with a blade cannot be matched by any commoner who happens to pick up a sword.

Trainings are specific to castes. A peasant will never get formal fencing practice. Some worlds may have trainings not included on the list that is provided with MYTHIC, but the list that follows should encompass the majority of trainings that your game will involve. Heroes will not have many trainings, probably no more than five or six at the very most, and maybe as few as two or three.

There are two special trainings, available to any hero or mortal. It is strange to encounter a man or woman without at least prowess 1 or lore 1.

- Prowess - use prowess for all feats of vitality
- Lore - use lore for all feats of mentality

Heroes acquire their trainings from the social paths that they have pursued. Every birth, upbringing, and profession trait has a set of trainings associated with it. The list of all the trainings that are included in a hero's social traits is called the hero's path.

Heroes have a +1 bonus to all trainings that are on their path, but to be considered trained in them, the hero must purchase levels of training. The trainings from a hero's chosen path are worth +1 for each level of them that is purchased.

All heroes are required to have at least one training at the +3 level (if it is on their path), or +2 level (if it is off their path). One of those trainings is chosen to be the hero's mastered training, which can never be changed. The hero permanently gains a +1 die bonus on all attempts he makes with that training. If the hero chooses a training from off his path to be his mastered training, he gains the +1 on path bonus for that training, in addition to gaining the +1 mastered bonus.

No training on the hero's path may be taken at more than the +3 level, and no training off his path may be taken at more than the +2 level, unless the training is the hero's mastered training.

The list of trainings associated with social traits follows. For births:

- Low birth: Survive
- Common Birth: Resilience
- Free Birth: Presence
- Noble Birth: Warfare
- Royal Birth: Inspire

Upbringings determine the social experience of a hero, and either prepare him for life as a well-adjusted human being and member of society, or leave him clueless as to the way that the world and people in general work. They are:

- Criminal: Lie, Presence

- Fortunate: Impress, Lie, Presence
- Inherited: Debate, Impress, Lead, Lie
- Military: Inspire, Lead, Resilience
- Professional: Impress, Lead, Lie
- Scholastic: Debate, Impress
- Seminary: Inspire, Presence
- Wild: Animal, Presence, Resilience

And finally, professions determine the skills with which the hero thought he would make his living, or was otherwise required by his family and his station to learn. They are:

- Acolyte: Ritual—*or*—Prayer
- Heir: Craft
- Infamy: Sleight
- Journeyman: Craft—*or*—Medicine
- Savant: Esoterica
- Scholar: Scribe, Know. If the scholar's field of study is alchemy or medicine, that training is on path.
- Soldier: Archery—*or*—Skill-at-arms, and, if the total value of the hero's social traits is 3 or higher, Warfare.
- Outcaste: Survive

1.5.1 List of Trainings

An alphabetical list and description of trainings follows:

1. Animal — use animal to befriend or understand wild animals.
2. Alchemy — use alchemy to prepare distillations or reagents, and to make or operate catalysts.
3. Archery — use archery to strike a foe with a bow.
4. Craft — use craft to practice one of the crafts and earn a living
5. Debate — use debate to convince a skeptic of your opinion or stance, using argument.

6. Esoterica — use *esoterica* to work traditional magic, such as figments and inscription.
7. Inspire — use *inspire* to instill awe, love, or fear in those around you through sheer force of personality.
8. Impress — use *impress* to influence with one's charisma, stature, or position.
9. Know — use *study* for all attempts to know or discuss academic subjects.
10. Lead — use *lead* to effectively and confidently command and manage those under your authority, control an animal as a mount, and cooperate with your peers.
11. Lie — use *lie* to tell a convincing falsehood, or to detect falsehood.
12. Medicine — use *medicine* to prepare an infusion or fight a spirit.
13. Prayer — use *prayer* to ask divine powers for guidance or intervention.
14. Presence — use *presence* whenever a hero's awareness is tested.
15. Resilience — use *resilience* to ignore wounds, harsh conditions, or intoxication.
16. Scribe — use *scribe* for all attempts to compose or write poetry or prose. Without *scribe*, a hero is illiterate.
17. Sleight — use *sleight* to pick a lock, pick a pocket, move stealthily, or assume a disguise.
18. Skill-at-arms — use *skill at arms* to defend one's self in a fight (see *Combat*).
Skill-at-arms applies to a specific way of fighting. Each of the following styles is its own training: Single weapon, single weapon and shield, single weapon and knife, great weapon, pike, and lance (on horseback).
19. Survive - use *survive* to find food, water, or shelter in the wild.
20. Warfare — use *warfare* to determine logistics and come up with strategies to win battles, as well as prepare men for battle.

1.6 Attributes

Attributes are numerical values attached to various aspects of a hero, which are abstract representations of his capabilities. There are four attributes: vitality (VT), agility (AG), mentality (MN), and wit (WT). Vitality and agility are physical attributes. Mentality and wit are mental attributes. Vitality and mentality are power attributes. Agility and wit are skill attributes.

Unlike in other rpgs, where the player directly chooses or randomly determines his hero's attributes, mythic generates a hero's attributes based on what virtues and flaws the hero has. Each attribute has a default value. Heroes have, by default, VT 3, AG 2, MN 4, and WT 3.

Look at the following chart. The top row indicates the attribute of that column, the second row lists the virtues associated with that attribute, the third row indicates the flaws associated with that attribute.

Vitality	Agility	Mentality	Wits
Big, Deep Breaths, Great, Healthy	Acute Senses, Coordinated, Flexible, Fleet of foot, Quick reflexes	Charismatic, Favored, Magical Knack, Vera Fides	Bright, Brilliant, Well Spoken
Lame, Short of Breath, Sickly, Slight	Clumsy, Lame, Stiff	Disfigured, Faithless, Troubled	Poor senses, Poorly spoken, Simple

In each attribute's column, there is a list of the virtues and flaws that add to that attribute. Take the default value of each attribute, and add the value of each trait that the hero has associated with that attribute. Note that, since hidden traits have half again their normal value, they increase or decrease attributes by half again their normal value.

1.6.1 Secondary Attributes

Some secondary attributes are derived from the main attributes of a hero. Record them as they are determined, on your hero's character sheet.

A hero's social standing is a combination between his material wealth and his contacts. To determine these rather abstract values, the hero takes the sum of the value of all his social traits, and divides that total between his wealth and contacts values. Wealth represents a hero's ability to buy goods and services, as well s his holdings and income. Contacts represents a hero's social connections and reputation.

Criminals and outcastes often have their own networks of communication and stockpiles of wealth. For every two full points of negative social standing that a criminal has, he may add one point to his wealth or to his contacts. Criminal wealth and contacts work just like regular wealth and contacts, but criminals are more likely to pay cash and to have particularly shadowy ways of reaching their contacts, who are likely not the the most reliable and trustworthy of people.

Threshold is how a measure of how much punishment a hero can take before they begin to be seriously hurt. A hero's threshold is equal to half his vitality, rounded down.

Defense is a measure of a hero's ability to handle himself in an armed fight. A hero's defense is equal to the sum of his skill-at-arms and presence, or

his half his AG, rounded down, whichever is higher. Resistance, on the other hand, is the untapped strength of a hero's spirit, with which he fights off malign magic and works his own. A hero's resistance is equal to $8 - VT$.

Heroes may not have a vitality that is so high their resistance is zero or below. As a result, they may not have vitality traits totaling +4 or higher.

Faith is a hero's trust in and value according to various divinities, as well as his metaphysical grounding in the reality of the world and his personal store of energy. The faith of a hero is equal to $1 + MN - WT$. If he has the *vera fides* virtue, add one point to his faith. If he does not, subtract one point.

A hero has a store of willpower equal to twice his MN score, although it may vary as he spends or regains willpower.

1.7 Heroic Advancement

Heroes are not static objects. They grow and develop over time, through their experiences. Keep in mind that improvement requires two things: experience and practice. Heroes can only put experience towards trainings or attributes which they use or exercise.

1.7.1 Psychology

Experience is a hard teacher, but it is unfortunately the one at whose feet most heroes are forced to study. Experience is acquired through two main mechanisms: stress and trauma. Stress represents things which test the hero's resolve and ability to persevere. Trauma, on the other hand, represents psychological shock suffered by the hero undergoing difficult conditions.

A hero incurs a level of stress whenever he fails an attempt or suffers the continuing consequences of a previous failure. Spending a day in unfamiliar territory, doing hard work, or travelling incurs a level of stress. A full night's rest reduces a hero's stress by one level, as does spending a night cavorting or fraternizing. Should a hero ever go to bed with more levels of stress than he has points of willpower, he rolls his mentality as an untrained attempt at a difficulty equal to his current level of stress – his current willpower. If he fails, he incurs a level of trauma. if he succeeds, he earns a level of experience.

A hero also incurs a level of trauma every time he suffers a wound, fights in a battle, or kills someone in cold blood, he must make a simple lore attempt or incur a point of trauma. For every man that a hero wounds in the heat of a battle, he has a fifty per cent chance to incur a level of trauma, although he immediately recovers that trauma if he learns that the subject survived. Should a hero ever have more points of trauma than he has willpower, he suffers a breakdown.

Recovering Willpower

Heroes spend willpower for all kinds of tasks. A hero may recover willpower only in very specific circumstances. A hero may recover willpower from inspiration,

as described under inspiration. A hero recovers a point of willpower every time he overcomes a hazard or other significant obstacle, or succeeds on attempt that helps other people.

A hero who wins a significant conflict or who accomplishes a definite goal recovers a point of willpower, and earns a level of experience.

Heroes may never have more willpower than two times their MN.

Mitigating Trauma

A hero's trauma can rapidly spiral out of control. There are, however, several ways to mitigate this. Faith and rest can both alleviate trauma. A hero who spends a few hours in pious supplication can make a simple prayer attempt to remove a number of levels of trauma equal to his faith. Similarly, a hero who prays with another pious person may remove a single level of trauma, even if he is not trained in prayer. Even faithless heroes can gain this benefit, but few are willing to. A hero who does this gains levels of experience equal to the number of levels of trauma reduced.

A hero who spends an entire day in rest, reflection, and exercising his skills may reduce his trauma by one. He also reduces his stress by two. A hero turns this trauma and stress into two levels of experience.

Breakdowns

A hero who is overwhelmed by trauma suffers a breakdown. He may continue doing whatever he is doing if he succeeds a lore attempt with difficulty equal to his level of trauma – his current willpower, but he otherwise locks up or flees from whatever task he is doing, and may do nothing except try to recover.

A hero may choose, if he has any willpower left, to spend a point of willpower and enter a berserk rage, gaining a bonus on any prowess attempts he makes equal to his trauma, but incurring fatigue at one level per attempt. A berserk hero may not use esoterica or skill-at-arms. After ending a rage, the hero incurs another point of trauma, plus any for lives that he has taken, and one for taking a life. He must then recover normally.

He makes a sustained simple lore attempt with a target number equal to his trauma. Every attempt that he makes represents a day and a night in which the hero does nothing but make a quiet, troubled convalescence. It is possible for a well-wisher to make a simple inspiration attempt for the hero, as normal, and cause the hero to recover one point of willpower.

A hero may make prayer attempts to mitigate his trauma as normal. Rest is an enforced requirement, so the hero gains no additional benefit from using rest to mitigate his trauma. Upon reducing his trauma to zero earns a number of levels of experience equal to half the number of levels of trauma he had when he triggered the breakdown, rounded up.

1.7.2 Experience

Heroes gain experience from accomplishing goals, mitigating traumatic experience, overcoming stress, and working through breakdowns. A hero may use experience that he has earned, combined with long hours of practice and exercise of his abilities, to advance his trainings, his attributes, or gaining boons.

To increase a training to the next level, a hero must spend a number of weeks practicing and must spend a number of levels of experience equal to the current level of the training. To increase an attribute to the next level, a hero must spend a number of weeks practicing equal to twice the current level of the attribute, and must spend a number of levels of experience equal to the current level of the attribute plus one.

Boons

Boons have levels. The first level of a boon costs one level of experience, and to increase the boon to a new level requires a number of levels of experience equal to the current level of the boon.

Boons are gained from events in the story. Wealth and contacts may be improved like boons, as can the charismatic, favored, and vera fides virtues. Improving those virtues does not improve a hero's MN.

Humans are fundamentally adaptable creatures. What once traumatized becomes almost bearable. To represent this, heroes have a boon called Jade. In any given day a hero can "absorb" a number of levels of trauma equal to his Jade. Levels of trauma incurred beyond this are incurred as normal. Jade is taken like an ordinary boon. A hero may never have a higher level of Jade than he has of MN.

Heroes, as they gain experience, become hardier and tougher. To represent this, heroes take the Hardness boon, just like they'd take any other boon. Every level of hardness increases the hero's vitality and the threshold of the hero by one for the purpose of dealing with shock and injury. A hero may never have a higher level of Hardness than he has of MN.

A hero can acquire magical artifacts as boons from supernatural patrons, which function as charms or wards with strength or barrier equal to the level of the boon. Such boons add their level to the integrity of whatever object is enhanced.

The GM should allow heroes to acquire thematically appropriate powers as boons.

Chapter 2

Heroics

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What is a hero, after all, without heroic deeds for them to fulfill? Your heroes are all well and good on paper, but it is in play that their deeds will be remembered.

How, then, is a game of MYTHIC played? For much of the game you will simply tell a story, collectively. The GM will describe a scene, populating it with non-player characters and creating a plot. Then it is up to the players to narrate the actions of their heroes. For most actions, this is sufficient, and no rolling of dice is required. There are, however, occasions when the results are uncertain, or when the wills of the players conflict.

2.1 Attempts

Whenever the success of a hero is in doubt, there being a legitimate chance for failure, an attempt must be made. Attempts call for the rolling of dice to determine success or failure. MYTHIC uses ordinary, six-sided dice for attempts.

When a hero is going to make an attempt, the GM determines which attribute and training they are using. If the hero is untrained in the relevant training, that's too bad. They roll their entire attribute, but only count 6's as successes.

For trainings that the hero has, take the attribute being used, or the level of the training being used, whichever is lower. Roll that number plus one, in dice.

If the hero is using a normal training, he scores a success succeeds on 4+, but trainings with which the hero is unfamiliar score successes on 6's only.

Subtract 1 from the number of successes for simple tasks, 2 or 3 for difficult tasks, and 4 for heroic tasks. The resulting number is known as the margin. If the margin on an attempt is zero, no progress is made. If the margin is negative, the attempt ends in failure. If the margin is positive, the attempt is successful.

The GM has the option to apply either a penalty or a bonus due to circumstances. Generally speaking, a favorable condition is worth +1 dice, and an unfavorable one is worth -1 dice. If the hero has help, anyone aiding may add their half their level of training (for their favored specialty) or simply +1 dice (if they are untrained, or aren't using their favored specialty in that training). No more than the attempting hero's level in the training people may help him.

2.1.1 Sustained Attempts

If an attempt is not of the type to be resolved in a single action, it is considered a sustained attempt. The hero must accumulate a certain total of successes.

After each attempt, he adds the margin of the attempt to his running total. If this total ever drops to zero or below, he fails and must begin again. Once the total reaches his goal, he is successful.

These rules are generally used for crafting, or some other process that takes an extended period of time, such as climbing a mountain (in which case failure may prevent successive attempts!). In these cases, the number of attempts needed to reach the target number of successes is proportional to the time it takes to finish the task.

2.1.2 Contests

The rules described above work fine for when heroes are simply laboring, but often they will be placed in competition with NPCs, or with each other. In these cases, the hero must engage in a contest. There are two types of contests: quick contests and extended contests.

In a quick contest, two heroes or characters are forced to compete directly, and a winner is rapidly determined. The characters determine their totals, roll, and compare margins. If the margins are the same, no winner emerges and the contest may simply be retried, or else each character shares incomplete success or failure. If the margins are unequal, the character with the higher margin wins, and enjoys success.

A simple example of a situation where quick contests are required is a brawl. Sir Francis is brawling with a peasant knave. Francis's brawl total is 8, the knave's total is 7. They both roll, and come up with margins of 1 and -1, respectively. Francis lands a punch on the knave.

Another example would be a footrace, in which two merchants, Edmund and Thomas are competing. Edmund is a trained sprinter and has prowess 2, while Thomas is rather out of shape and has only prowess 1. Edmund rolls three dice, but only scores one success, for a margin of zero. Thomas, by a stroke of luck, scores two successes, for a margin of 1. Thomas wins the race, and his friend Samuel, who bet on him at five to one odds, makes a killing.

In an extended contest, the characters continue making attempts until a clear winner emerges. The characters keep a running total of their margins, adding to this total the margin from each attempt. In general, an extended contest continues until either character obtains a lead of X or more, where X is some number usually between 3 and 5.

An example of an extended contest would be a marathon. The first character to accumulate a running total margin of 5 is the winner. Another example is a battle of wills. The contestants struggle to accumulate a running total of 3.

2.2 Feats

It is ultimately the deeds of a hero for which they will be remembered, not only their traits. This section details what it is possible for a hero to achieve, based

on their attributes. There are four main types of feats: vitality feats, agility feats, mentality feats, and wit feats.

2.2.1 Feats of Vitality

Feats of vitality are the upper limits on what a hero can do, physically. They are, as their name implies, based on the hero's vitality score. If a feat of vitality requires an attempt, it is using the Prowess training unless otherwise specified.

The amount that a character can carry, in kilograms is determined by his vitality score. He may carry, without penalty, a number of kilograms equal to his vitality squared. He may carry comfortably up to twice this amount, but each hour of carrying is considered hard work (see below).

Anything carried on the hero's person contributes to encumbrance, although the weight of any object is doubled if it is carried in an unwieldy fashion, or its weight is unevenly distributed. Objects in packs must be carefully packed to evenly distribute weight, and heavy objects are considered unwieldy if they are carried in pockets, belt pouches, or the like. The amount that can be carried before being encumbered is reduced to a third if the hero is lame or wounded.

By making an attempt, a hero may lift, shift, pull or drag a number of kilograms equal to his own weight times his margin (on a failure, the object fails to budge). Shifting heavy objects for any length of time incurs a level of fatigue.

Hard work fatigues heroes. Every hero can accept a number of fatigue levels equal to their vitality score minus twice the number of wounds they have suffered. On six to eight hours rest and two to three meals, performing hard work and walking at a brisk (3-6 miles an hour) pace counts as a level of fatigue. Running hard for half an hour, or sprinting for a quarter of an hour incurs one level of fatigue. Every fight the hero gets into counts as a level of fatigue.

If a hero takes a rest of a quarter to half an hour after incurring a number of levels of fatigue equal or lesser than his threshold since his last rest, he may remove those levels of fatigue. Once a hero has incurred a total number of levels of fatigue equal to his threshold, he takes half that number, rounded down, as a penalty on all vitality-based attempts.

Fights

If a hero is fighting in a careless, unscientific manner such as a fistfight or other brawl, he resolves his attacks in contest. Each makes prowess attempts against a difficulty equal to his foe's defense *minus* the number of paces that his foe has taken and the number of attacks his foe has made in this round. Whoever wins the contest inflicts a wound on his opponent of severity equal to the difference in the margins scored, plus the damage bonus of his weapon.

If a hero is wearing armor and takes a wound, he subtracts his armor's resilience from the severity of the wound.

If the hero is fighting with his empty hands or with blunt objects and the intent to subdue, he inflicts shocks instead of wounds. If he is using a blunt

object, however, he inflicts at least one wound per successful attack, and the rest of the damage is shock.

If a hero is using skill-at-arms, he uses the rules presented in the Combat section instead of those presented here.

Injury

Heroes, sadly, live dangerous lives. That is, after all, what makes them heroes. In the course of their deeds, they often become injured. There are a virtually infinite variety of ways to be injured, from physical brawls, to overexertion, to the heat of a burning inferno. In mythic, any injury that a hero sustains is called a wound.

Wounds represent representing damage to the tissues, broken bones, loss of blood, and the like, as well as to the nerves and muscles, restricting movement and reflexes. Every wound has a severity, which they subtract from the hero's vitality until the wound heals.

If a hero is ever suffering from more wounds than their vitality score, or more mental wounds than their mental resilience score, the hero is slain. If any spirit or poison causes an attribute to be reduced to zero or below, the hero is also slain. Immediate (within moments) medical attention can revive a hero slain by physical wounds, requiring a difficult medicine attempt. Such a hero has the attribute temporarily raised to 1, although any wound at this point will permanently slay the hero, and they remain unconscious.

Surgery is often required to save a slain victim, and the odds are good that some infection will be contracted during any surgical procedure.

A special kind of wound, called shock, represents serious sudden shocks to the system, making concentration and coordination difficult. Shocks fade in severity at a rate of 1 point per turn, but apply their severity as a penalty to all agility, mentality, and wit-based attempts. If a hero ever suffers from more shock than his vitality score, he is knocked unconscious.

Recovery

A hero's wounds are healed by rest and care, usually at a rate of one point per week of rest or therapeutic activity. Heroes with the healthy virtue recover 1 wound every four or five days, and heroes with the sickly flaw recover only 1 wound every fortnight. For each wound suffered, a successful simple medicine attempt can shorten the recovery period by one week, to a minimum of a day. No more than one such attempt may be made per wound.

Less severe wounds, however, heal considerably faster. Any wounds of a severity equal to or less than a hero's threshold may be converted, after a full night's rest, into permanent levels of fatigue that heal at a rate of one per day.

Any time that a hero has suffered a wound or undergone surgery (a component of most medicine attempts to save the hero), there is a chance that he will draw the attention of a disease spirit.

2.2.2 Feats of Agility

Feats of agility are primarily concerned with movement and coordination. Agility is required to make ranged attacks in combat, or to do a number of athletic tasks, such as climbing. While vitality governs how long a character can run, agility dictates how fast.

In a combat situation, a hero can take a number of paces per turn equal to $2 + AG -$ half their current levels of fatigue $- 1$ if they are encumbered, to a minimum of 1 pace per turn. Unencumbered, fresh heroes, should therefore be able to take $2 + AG$ paces every turn.

A hero's brisk walking pace is equal to two plus his agility, in kilopaces per hour. He may run from half again to twice this speed, and may sprint two and a half times this speed over short distances.

A hero can jump, from a standing start a number of paces horizontally equal to their agility, and a number of paces vertically equal to half that distance, rounded down. From a running start of more than half a dozen strides, a hero can leap a maximum horizontal number of paces equal to twice their agility score, clearing an obstacle of no more than half that number of paces in height.

In a combat situation, a hero may make a number of offensive and defensive actions in defense combat on his turn equal to half his agility score, plus the rate of his weapon. In addition, he may never make more attacks than his agility score or the rate of his weapon, whichever is lower.

2.2.3 Feats of Mentality

Feats of mentality include attempts to influence and convince others, superstition, and battles of will. Mentality represents a hero's willfulness and force of personality, as well as the strength of his magic. The vast majority of magic has its roots in superstitious and divinatory practices. Ordinary people pray, curse, swear oaths, and invoke all the time. Sometimes these methods are effective.

Through experimentation and tradition, people determine what is most often effective. Any ordinary human with a nonzero resistance score can attempt simple magic. In fact, they frequently do this without conscious effort.

A simple lore attempt may be made reflexively, to notice the presence or influence of a spirit. Once recognized, the hero understands how to deal politely with the spirit. A simple lore attempt may be used reflexively to identify if some misfortune has supernatural cause, and to guess how much bad luck the hero has incurred. Whenever the hero encounters something tabu or ritually unclean, he may make a simple lore attempt to defend himself from bad luck.

Upon swearing an oath or invoking some power, the hero may make a simple lore attempt to attract supernatural significance to those words. An oath attracts the attention of a spirit, who punishes oathbreakers, and gives a bonus on any one attempt made to fulfill the oath equal to the margin on the lore attempt. Invoking a power provides the hero with a pool of dice equal to his margin on the attempt that he may add to attempts that he makes for the rest of the scene. Failure to invoke some power incurs a number of points of bad

luck equal to the margin of failure.

Exhausting a bonus pool from an invocation causes the hero to lose a point of willpower. If he has no willpower, he incurs a level of fatigue. Entering or breaking a sworn oath that has supernatural power requires a point of willpower to be spent.

A hero who curses another man in the street, or wills him ill enough to do so may spend a point of willpower and engage him in a luck duel.

Hexes and luck

Anytime that a hero comes across a man who wishes to hex him, they may engage in a duel of superstition. They engage in a sustained contest of lore, where the target number is the opponent's resistance. The loser suffers bad luck. Note that the resistances of ordinary mortals are considerably lower than the resistances of heroes, so it is unlikely that most mortals can put a hex on a hero. Players and GMs should roleplay the encounter where the hero fends off the hostile magic by reciting a rune, drops a hexed coin into the pocket of his foe, or the like.

In addition, any hero who fails his reflexive lore attempt to avoid bad luck after encountering something tabu or unclean, or being casually cursed by a man in the street, may acquire 1 point of bad luck. The GM may spend points of a hero's bad luck to either increase the difficulty on an attempt by one or to complicate a situation by introducing a new factor.

If prayers of protection are active around a hero, that hero is protected from ordinary sources of bad luck, and gains a 1 die bonus in any luck duel.

A hero who acquires more bad luck than his resistance has his bad luck reset to zero and suffers some catastrophic misfortune that can either reduce his wealth or contacts by one, or give him a 1-point flaw. Heroes may attempt to roleplay the encounter in which this happens, to give them a chance to defend themselves.

Battling spirits

If a hero is unlucky enough to attract the attention of a spirit, he must fight it off with a battle of wills. This is a sustained contest, where the hero makes lore attempts at a difficulty equal to the spirit's virulence, and the spirit makes virulence attempts at a difficulty equal to the hero's lore. Each attempt takes hours.

If the spirit accumulates a running total of the hero's resistance or more, it may inflict a wound on the hero. If the hero accumulates a running total of the spirit's resistance or more, he may banish the spirit from his body and recover normally. Medical infusions administered to the hero while he is fighting the spirit add their potency in automatic successes to the Hero's attempt.

Win or lose, a battle with a spirit costs a number of points of willpower equal to the spirit's virulence.

If a spirit kills a hero with wounds it may, if it has a virulence greater

than the hero's faith, choose instead to possess him. A possessed hero's soul is suppressed, and the spirit takes over, adding the hero's faith to its virulence and taking that as its level in the lore training, even if the result is more than +3 level. In addition, the spirit substitutes its own mentality, resistance, and wit for the hero's, and may continue to use whatever spiritual powers it possessed.

Exorcism or medical infusions with potency greater than the spirit's virulence can drive out a possessing spirit. Exorcism is treated as a magical duel, but the exorcist uses his prayer training instead of his lore training.

2.2.4 Feats of Wit

Feats of wit deal with perception and cogitation. There are few pure wit feats, since the majority of applications of a hero's wits are covered by various trainings, and are difficult to define numerically.

Any time the awareness of a hero is tested, this is a wit-based presence attempt. A hero can see in poor illumination (but not total darkness) a number of paces equal to his wit beyond the area lit by any light source, unless he has the poor senses flaw.

A hero may participate in a number of ticks every turn equal to twice his WT.

Battles of Wits

Unlike an argument, as described under Feats of Mentality, heroes in a battle of wits are trying to outsmart each other, not trying to convince or win each other over. A battle of wits is initiated whenever a player says something like, "I outsmart the guard and convince him that I really should be taking over for him," "I force the prince into a verbal bind, where he is humiliated and unable to sound coherent to the audience," or "I set up a series of traps by my window to catch the assassin if he comes in."

Whenever a hero is making an attempt with the deliberate intent to outsmart another character, even if he is using a normal training, he also makes a battle of wits contest. He and his opponent both make an attempt, rolling their full wit as if they had a training of that level, and the hero subtracts his opponent's margin on the attempt from his own, then subtracts that difference to his difficulty on the other attempt, and makes it as normal.

If the difference in margins was negative, then the hero's opponent has the opportunity to counter his scheme with a scheme of his own, and may make a battle of wits attempt of his own.

The lie and sleight trainings do not normally call for a battle of wits, since it is their express purpose to deceive their targets. However, if the target of a lie or a sleight attempt is aware that he may be being deceived, a battle of wits is called for.

2.3 Social Attributes

MYTHIC employs two separate social attributes, both of which are abstractions of the complex and difficult to recreate systems of real life. The first is wealth, which measures how the hero lives and how much he can afford to spend on various things. The second is contacts, which measures not only how many people the hero can count on to come through for him every now or then, but also his reputation and breadth of influence.

2.3.1 Wealth and Extravagance

Heroes with or without significant wealth may wonder exactly what their wealth score means. The wealth score of a hero is an abstraction. If they have a wealth of zero, the hero has nothing to their name, no possessions, no cash, no credit, no land. They may find work or get money to raise themselves out of this state.

Heroes with wealth 1 own or rent a home, buy much of their own food, grow the rest, can support a small family, and can rarely make any serious expenditures. Heroes of wealth 2 own a home or a small manor, as well as some land, buy their food, and can support themselves and their estate with the money that their holdings, business, and/ore investments. Heroes of wealth 3-4 live like rich lords, own large tracts of land, probably several homes, never buy anything for themselves, and maintain a large servant staff. Heroes of wealth 5 or above live like kings.

Whenever a hero wishes to purchase something, they roll their wealth score in dice, and for every success they roll they can afford an additional 1 point of expenditure (see Heroic possessions). A hero can produce no more than his wealth in points of expenditure every season.

In addition, a hero may sell goods that he owns or that he has found, stolen, or taken as spoils for their listed sale value. Whenever he does this, he rolls a number of dice equal to the sale price of the goods, and for every success may make an additional 1 point expenditure.

Investment

Whenever a hero decides that it is time to increase his wealth, he must invest. He makes an expenditure of value equal to twice the number of points of the investment, and buys something to enrich himself.

A one-point investment is a small shop, a draught animal, or something of the kind that will turn a small profit if maintained. A two-point investment is a larger shop, herd or flock of animals, or piece of land, from which the hero can profit from if he can hire people to help him (see Heroic Possessions for rules about hiring people). A three-point investment is an established firm, large piece of land, or the like, which requires the hero to maintain a staff.

Investments are independent sources of wealth for a hero. They are the only way that a hero can increase his wealth permanently. To increase his wealth one level, the hero must buy and maintain investments that have a total

equal to his wealth level for a number of seasons equal to his wealth level. If he does this, his wealth permanently increases by one, and the investments become part of his assets, permanently.

An investment may be expanded to the next level with a number of points of expenditure equal to its level.

Loans

It is common for the poor to be unable to better themselves because of a lack of funds. Those who know the right people, however, can sometimes get a loan to make an investment or an important purchase. Every loan has a value.

A one-point loan is enough to make a 1-point expenditure, and so forth. This means that, if a hero is able to produce 1 point of expenditure in a season, and he takes out a loan, he is able to make a 1-point investment.

All loans incur interests at various rates, often high-extortionist rates. The worst incur a point of interest every season. One point of interest is a one point expenditure. Interest accumulates unless it is paid. Should a hero be unable to pay interest for a number of seasons greater than the value of the loan (2 seasons without payment for a 1 point loan, 3 seasons without for a 2 point, etc), the possession of whatever the hero bought with the loan defaults to the lender.

Some lenders, particularly disreputable ones, may have other consequences for failure to pay...

If a hero has paid the interest for a season (of if the loan has yet to incur interest), the hero may pay towards the original value of the loan. If he does, he reduces the value of the loan by one for every point of expenditure he makes. If he reduces a loan to zero, his debt is paid and no longer incurs interest.

2.3.2 Contacts and High Society

While wealth is an abstraction that determines what a hero can afford in the world, contacts covers what kind of company the hero maintains, his reputation, and who he can count on. A hero with contacts of zero knows no one in the world. He cannot call on anyone for help, everyone he meets is a stranger, and if he gets a loan it will be at best a 1-point loan with an interest rate of a point a season.

A hero with contacts 1 knows a half dozen or so associates in the place he lives and works. His comrades are probably of the same wealth as him, and if he has a reputation it is probably something minor, like honesty, luck, or piety. If he needs a loan, he can get at best a 1-point loan with a point of interest every two seasons. He may be able, if he's lucky, to get a 2-point loan with 1 point of interest every season.

A hero with contacts 2 knows about a dozen or more colleagues, friendly competitors, distant relatives, etc, in his home who are willing to help him out, as well as maybe half a dozen or so people that he's met in various other places he's been. He may know a few wealthier and more powerful people than him.

He may have serious reputation, so that even people he hasn't met have heard about him in his area of influence. If he needs a loan, he could get a 1 or 2 point loan with a point of interest every year. He may be able, if he's lucky, to get a 3-point loan with 1 point of interest every season.

A hero with contacts 3-4 knows several dozen people in his place of work and residence, and even his competitors give him a grudging sort of respect. He is well known to people even near his primary area of influence. If he needs a loan, he can get at best a 1-point loan with a point of interest every two seasons. He may be able, if he's lucky, to get a 2-point loan with 1 point of interest every season.

A hero with contacts 5 is known to everyone in the land. There are few people who would be unwilling to extend him aid, and he has a reputation, for good or ill, with nearly everyone he meets. If he needs a loan, he could easily get a 3-point or smaller loan with a point of interest a year. If necessary, he could get a 4- or 5-point loan with a point of interest every season or two seasons.

To get a loan with a good interest rate, or to get information about local goings on, a hero rolls a number of dice equal to his contacts score. On a success he gets a decent loan or reasonable information. If he rolls more than one success, he produces someone unusually helpful or in the know, who could make a valuable ally down the road.

2.3.3 Social Trainings

All heroes, as a consequence of the way that the training and social trait system is built, will possess one or more social trainings in their path. This section covers how they are used. Unless otherwise noted, social trainings attempts are wit-based.

Animal

Whenever the hero attempts to make befriend, command, or intimidate an animal, he makes a simple vitality-based animal attempt. On a success, he makes himself known as a figure demanding respect to the animal. On a failure, the animal continues to consider him either unimportant or a viable food source.

This training only works on wild animals. Shepherds use craft to command a flock, and mounts are commanded by the lead training.

Debate

In a debate, the hero should establish his position, state generally what sorts of arguments he will be making, and then use the Battle of Wits rules presented above. The GM and player then describe the course of the argument.

Impress

Whenever the hero attempts to make a good impression on someone who has not already formed an opinion about him, he makes an impress attempt at a

difficulty equal to one (if the subject has the same contacts score as him), or else the difference in contacts scores. If the GM determines that the subject has heard of the hero's via his reputation, the hero adds his entire contacts score as a bonus on the attempt. In addition, if the hero has the funds to make some slightly showy display of wealth (wearing finery, smoking an expensive cigar), and the subject would be impressed by this, he may make add his wealth as a bonus as well.

Those who have already formed some sort of (negative) judgement about the hero may instead call for a quick contest of impress, using all the above bonuses, at a difficulty equal to the difference in contacts scores between them and the hero, or one if they have the same contacts score.

The margin on an impress attempt or difference in margins in a contest is applied as a modifier on all further social rolls, until the hero has an opportunity to make a second impression.

Inspiration

It is not only miraculous intercession that a prayer can grant, but also the inspiration and revitalization of one's comrades. Those trained in inspiration may, with a simple inspiration attempt, banish fear or trepidation from those to whom he speaks, or else fill them with a strong emotion appropriate to the content of the hero's words.

The speaker adds his faith as a bonus on the attempt. If an inspiration attempt follows a successful endeavor, the attempt is at a bonus of +1 to +3, depending on the impressiveness of the attempt. If it precedes some sort of dangerous endeavor, being appropriately inspired adds a bonus equal to the margin of the inspiration attempt to any attempts the group makes after hearing the hero's words. This bonus is reduced by one die per attempt it is used on, until it vanishes entirely.

In addition, any successful inspiration attempt meant to restore the morale of a group removes a number of levels of fatigue from the hearers equal to the speaker's faith, and a successful inspiration attempt made to a single subject known to the speaker removes a single level of trauma. Only one such attempt may be made per day.

Lead

Whenever the hero attempts to command those under his authority, he makes a simple lead attempt or a difficult one if the group is particularly large. On a success, the people he is commanding may act as a team (below). He adds the margin on his attempt to the team's camaraderie.

When the hero is working together with comrades, a simple lead attempt is called for. Everyone in the group makes a simple lead attempt, and they add the result together. This total is known as the team's camaraderie. Then, the ability of the team is determined, by totaling all of the participants' training levels in the relevant training. The team's camaraderie or the team's

ability (whichever is lower) plus one is rolled as a single attempt.

A hero who is unskilled in a task, but willing to assist, may make a simple lead attempt, and add his margin as a bonus on any task that could use an assistant for grunt work.

Lie

Whenever the hero needs to tell a convincing falsehood, he makes a quick contest of lie versus presence if the subject is unsuspecting, or lie versus lie if they are suspicious. The hero's attempt's difficulty is increased by 1 for every falsehood the subject has known the hero to tell in the past.

Note that a failed lie attempt does not reveal the truth, it merely betrays the fact that the hero is telling a lie. His subject may even choose to let the obvious falsehood pass, but remains suspicious of future information.

A hero who has to tell an extraordinary truth without evidence is treated as having to lie, and suffers the same penalty for having lied previously. A hero with a reputation for honesty gets a bonus equal to his contacts on such an attempt.

2.4 Combat

Heroes are nothing without heroic deeds and conquests to glorify them. However, for all of the glory that is associated with bravery and victory in battle, it is a dangerous affair.

Note that the system for resolving combats in MYTHIC is an abstraction. In it, combatants act in turns. In each of their turns, they make an attempt for the type of combat they will be engaging in, then allocate points to various goals. Once every hero and enemy has done this, contests are resolved in the order of the characters who initiated them. Wounds are suffered immediately after the contest that determined them. The wound penalty to the attribute it wounds is applied immediately, so further contests are affected.

While the rules presented under Feats of Vitality are sufficient for an unscientific brawl, and simple attempts are all that are required to determine the success or failure of a thrown (prowess) or archery attack, more developed forms of combat are required for combat using skill-at-arms or esoterica.

2.4.1 Turns, ticks, and the tick order

Combat is divided into turns. During a combat turn, all participants experience a number of ticks. Each action, attempt, or contest takes exactly one tick.

Heroes have two secondary attributes, each associated with one of these trainings. The first is basic defense, which is associated with skill-at-arms. The second is basic resistance, which is associated with all magical trainings.

At the beginning of each turn, a hero declares which training he will be using. Heroes attempting to fight physically with hand weapons use skill-at-arms, while heroes attempting to fight psychic duels use magical trainings,

usually figment. He then makes an ordinary simple attempt, with no modifier except the path or mastery modifiers, for that training. He adds the margin from this attempt to his defense or resistance, respectively, for the remainder of the turn. That total is known as his active defense or active resistance, and is used for the rest of his turn.

A hero prioritizes points from his active value to actions, attempts, and contests. He should probably leave points in reserve to defend himself with.

Once all the participants have a list of all the actions that they are going to take during this turn, the tick order is assigned. Each action, attempt, or contest takes up one tick, regardless of the number of participants. The tick order goes like this:

1. The first action that every participant takes is listed on the tick order in descending order of agility or (failing that) ascending order of size.
2. The second action of every participant is listed in the same order, beneath all the first actions.
3. The third action, and so forth, are listed...

The tick order is the order in which ticks are resolved. A hero may participate in a number of ticks every turn equal to twice his WT. For any contests which the hero cannot participate in, the hero is assumed to generate a margin of zero.

Contests

In defense or resistance combat, points of defense and resistance prioritized by a hero to a contest count as automatic successes on that hero's attempt.

2.4.2 Defense Combat

In defensive combat, a hero takes actions, usually moving, attacking, holding ground, or pressing an offensive. He prioritizes points of his defense to these actions, probably holding some in reserve to defend himself against attacks.

For every point of defense prioritized to movement, the hero may move a pace. Remember that the hero's maximum movement is limited by his agility, his fatigue, and his encumbrance. Movement takes one tick per pace moved, and actions may be taken on the move.

A hero who is more than three paces from a foe is said to be at the level of ground known as At Range. If a hero is between two and three paces from a foe, he is at Distance and can be struck with a pike, thrusting sword, or staff. If a hero is between two and one pace away from a foe, he is said to be At Reach, and may be struck with a chopping sword, longsword, mace, or shortsword. If a hero is less than a pace away from his foe, he is said to be At Hand and may be struck with fists, a knife, a club, the haft of a pike or staff, or a handaxe.

If a hero is at the maximum range to strike a foe with a given weapon, he gains the weapon's defensive bonus, in dice, to parries. If his foe is within

the maximum distance (a swordsman whose foe has closed to At Hand, for example), he gains no defensive bonus.

If a hero wishes to close the distance between himself and an attacker who is within range of him and has prioritized points of defense to Holding his Ground, he must prioritize points of defense to a quick contest of skill at arms or skill at arms vs prowess between himself and his foe. If the hero fails the attempt, he cannot close the distance and his opponent gets to make a counterattack. The hero gets no bonus from unallocated points of defense in this contest (see below), but gets the defensive bonus of his weapon regardless of distance.

If there are any foes At Hand of a hero, they may physically grab or grapple him with their open hands. The participants prioritize points to a grab, and the hero to breaking free, and they make a quick contest of prowess. If the hero loses the contest, he is immobilized and his assailant may make a simple prowess attempt to knock him down or throw him (though he must prioritize points to this action to do so). Knocking down or throwing a hero robs of his next tick, and he may be attacked with little fear. If the hero wins the contest, he may break free and take his ticks normally.

To attack a foe who is within a hero's reach, he prioritizes points to the attack and engages his foe in a quick contest of skill-at-arms or skill-at-arms vs prowess. The difficulty of the attacker's attempt is equal to the number of points of unallocated defense the defender has. The difficulty of the defender's attempt is the number of points the attacker prioritized to the attack.

The winner of an attack contest inflicts a number of wounds on his opponent equal to the difference in margins, plus the damage bonus of his weapon. His opponent then subtracts the soak of any armor he is wearing, and takes the wound.

A hero may choose to "bide" a certain number of points of defense, allowing him to use them on the defensive side of any attack contests he is forced into. He may use each point that he bides on only one contest, but gets to choose how many points he uses on each one.

2.4.3 Resistance Combat

In resistance combat, a hero takes actions, usually moving, creating ephemera, empowering ephemera, or working countermagic. He prioritizes points of his defense to these actions, probably holding some in reserve to defend himself against ephemera¹

Points of resistance may be prioritized to movement the same way points of defense are. Range, however, is mostly unimportant. Anyone the magician can see, within a stone's throw, are considered to be in the magician's presence, and can be affected by his ephemera.

¹It is important to note that all this business about ephemera is entirely incidental. Magicians, when they're serious about killing each other, don't *intend* to create elaborate illusions to do so. The illusions are a mutual hallucination of the psychic trauma that is being thrown around, the only way that the human mind is prepared to deal with visualizing the magic.

A magician may prioritize any number of points of resistance to creating a general ephemeron. He makes a simple esoterica attempt, and creates an ephemeron with strength equal to his margin on the attempt. Unless he just wants to create a general illusion to hamper nonmagicians, the ephemera that a magician knows how to create are defined by which ephemera the magician has learned (see the Figment section of the Magic and Faith chapter for more information)

Similarly, he may prioritize points of resistance to empower an ephemeron, making it seem real. He creates either a general sort of illusion to confound his enemies, or weaponizes a specific ephemeron against another magician. He only needs to prioritize a single point of resistance to empower a general illusion.

Once empowered, ephemera take on a hallucinatory, but decidedly visible, shape. General illusions become natural hazards of a hazard rating equal to half their strength. The magician needs to describe the type of the hazard when he creates the ephemeron. General illusions can be completely cosmetic as well, such as masking a snare or creating an appealing image. Ephemera must be entirely visible.

The hazards created by ephemera are entirely real unless a hero disbelieves it. By spending a point of willpower or else by making a lore attempt with difficulty equal to the ephemeron's strength, the hero can disbelieve the hazard and simply step through it without harm.

Specific empowered ephemera can be thrown against other magicians, or even ordinary mortals, to try to wear away at their psyches. He assigns an empowered non-general ephemeron to a foe in his presence. Once a mortal has a total amount of empowered ephemera strength assigned to him greater than his unallocated resistance, any magician how has assigned ephemera to him can engage him a simple contest of esoterica or esoterica versus lore.

This is just a simple contest. If the attacker wins the contest, he inflicts a single wound and shock wounds equal to the strength of the most powerful ephemeron attacking. If the defender wins the contest, he destroys a total strength of ephemera equal to the difference in the margins.

Magicians wishing to take a more active stance in defending themselves may empower ephemera specially to use as countermagic against extant ephemera. Any ephemeron whose description states that it can be used as countermagic as another may be employed against its target.

Both magicians prioritize points of resistance to their ephemera, and they make a quick contest of esoterica, each at a difficulty equal to the strength of the opposing ephemeron.

Chapter 3

Heroic Possessions

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Though heroes are defined by their deeds, it is their weapons, their armour, even their clothing which makes those deeds possible.

You will notice that nowhere in MYTHIC are there magic items. This is not to say that magic is never bound up in an object, but rather that the magical qualities of an object are reflected subtly, in its quality and usefulness. A sword cannot be made good merely by enchanting it, but must be made well, with magic folded into the blade with the steel.

3.1 Clothing

Though, as far as heroes are concerned, the clothes do not make the man, they certainly make his first impression. It is amazing how much of the greatest king or noble's influence is built on his garments. Certainly, bearing and manner convey a considerable portion of influence, but something as simple as garment is telling.

Cloth is, in the pre-industrial civilizations that make up the worlds of MYTHIC, invariably expensive. Fine cloth, prohibitively so. Most people,

barring the wealthiest of nobles, own at most a few suits of clothes. Peasants, in all likelihood, own only work clothes and their best, to be worn on festivals and for important ceremonies. Nobles own a few more suits of clothes, but even the wardrobes of the fabulously wealthy seem platy in comparison to our modern world of industrially-produced cloth. Heroes possess clothing appropriate for someone of their caste and wealth (or clothing for another caste, if their caste is a hidden trait).

Expenditure

A decent suit of clothes for a commoner or free man is expenditure 1. Richer suits of clothing for independently wealthy free men or poor nobles are expenditure 2. Clothes fit for royalty are expenditure 3.

3.2 Goods

Heroes may have call to purchase various goods. It would be difficult and pointless to provide a comprehensive list of expenditures for all the goods and services that one could possibly attain. Instead, take the following as guidelines on what a hero of a given wealth can buy, and how often.

A hero of wealth 0 can buy nothing unless he comes into money. He must beg for his money or for food.

A hero of wealth 1 may make small expenditures, like buying a meal, a coil of rope, a sack, a skin, a vessel for water, or a bottle of liquor, about once a fortnight. He eats rough bread and drinks water or cheap liquor.

A hero of wealth 2 may make small expenditures on a weekly basis, and eats finer breads and drinks clean water or wine. A hero of wealth 2 eats meat on a regular basis.

A hero of wealth 3 may make small expenditures several times a week, and eats good breads and drinks wine or more expensive liquor with each meal. He eats meat frequently.

A hero of wealth 4 or higher does not notice small expenditures. He eats only the best foods and drinks only the finest wines and liquors.

3.3 Arms and Armour

For heroes who become embroiled in physical conflict, arms and armour are indispensable. They clothe and protect their bearer, and allow him to cut a path through his foes. However, arms and armour are expensive, and should not ever be available easily to the heroes, unless they are men-at-arms to some noble who provides for them.

3.3.1 Armour

Armour is very, very expensive. While one might imagine a horde of maille and plate-clad soldiers charging across the battlefield, the truth is slightly less picturesque. Leather, rope, hide, and furs are all employed for the minimal protection they offer the impoverished peasant conscript. Veterans and professional soldiers fare slightly better, more likely to be clad in maille, scale, or partial plate. The most prized possession of any knight, however, is his articulated plate armor.

Articulated plate is worn over maille or similar protection (to ward against arrows), and is virtually impenetrable to all but the strongest blows. It takes years to forge, is enormously heavy, and is incredibly expensive. Pieces of plate armours are the most common spoils taken from battlefields. Plate armour is tailored to an individual, and requires great stamina and training to use. Donning it requires help and time, and so does removing it. In general, a hero who is fortunate to own such armor is certainly a wealthy knight or nobleman, and is unlikely to wear it casually. The majority of heroes are more likely to wear maille, scale, partial plate, or weaker armours.

In addition, armours and suits of clothing are bulky. Heroes will find it almost impossible to remove and carry the armour of their fallen foes in any quantity, even if they did have some purpose for it (to boot, many armourers will not buy spoils, stripped unceremoniously from dead enemies and often damaged).

All armour is heavy, and encumbers the wearer. It also subtracts from the movement of the wearer by a number of paces called its constraint. Armour's protective value is called soak, and the soak of an armour is subtracted from any wounds that the wearer suffers from physical attacks. A list of armours, weights, constraints, and soaks follows:

<i>Armour</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Constraint</i>	<i>Soak</i>
Leather or hide	1 kg	0	1
Scale mail	8 kg	-1	3
Maille shirt	6 kg	0	2
Maille coat	10 kg	-1	2
Partial plate	4 kg	-1	3
Plate corselet	6 kg	-2	4
Articulated Plate	20-30 kg	-3	5

Note that an armour is only provides soak if it covers the part of the person being attacked. Also, particularly well-made suits of armour have higher soaks and lower constraints and weights. The GM adds to the soak and constraint of an armour a number from 1 to 3, depending on the quality of the armour. He also lightens the armour by 2 to 10 kilograms.

Armour has an integrity equal to twice its soak.

Expenditure

Leather or hide armour, scale maile, and partial plate are generally expenditure 1-2, depending on quality. Maille shirts are expenditure 2. Maille coats and plate corselets are expenditure 2-3, depending on quality. No hero will be able to find a coat of articulated plate for less than expenditure 4.

Armor stripped from the dead can be sold as spoils for half its expenditure as a sale value.

3.3.2 Armaments

Weapons are less expensive, but it is again unlikely that they can be found readily in any great quantity. Weapons are hard to come by. Many knives, axes, and polearms are simply repurposed farm implements. Spears intended specifically for combat use are typically fitted with mass produced blades or relatively poor quality, mounted on a solid length of wood. The lance or pike of a professional soldier is typically custom made, of slightly better quality, but these are significantly more expensive than most tools.

Swords, particularly shortswords for use on foot, are sometimes mass produced in times of war. These swords are not very good steel, but are readily available after most battles, when peasants creep over the battlefield and strip the dead of their valuables. Better swords are very expensive indeed, especially because the steel has to be worked for sometimes days on end. These swords are valuable, take a long time to forge, and are reserved for the wealthy.

Weapons may be improvised, but their unwieldy nature imposes a penalty on the attempt of any attack made with them, as determined by the GM. Most objects with reasonable weapon potential impose a -1 or -2 penalty, while larger objects may impose up to -4.

A table of common weapons follows. Each weapon has preferred level of ground listed, as well as a defensive bonus for that level of ground. Weapons may not be used at any level above their preferred level of ground. Weapons also have a defensive bonus, an integrity, a damage bonus and a rate listed. The integrity of a weapon represents how much damage the weapon can take before it is damaged or broken (see Maintenance). The damage bonus is the number that is added to the severity of wounds inflicted with the weapon. The rate is the number of separate attacks that can be prioritized points in defense combat, and the number of attacks that can be blocked in a turn.

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Defensive bonus</i>	<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Damage bonus</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Club	+1	3	0	2
Staff	+1/ (haft) +2	3-4	+2 / (haft) +0	2 / (haft) 1
Knife	+2	3	+1	3
Mace	+2	5	+1	1
Shortsword	+1	5-7	+3	1
Chopping sword	+1	4-6	+3	1
Longsword or broadsword	+2 / +1	6-8	+4/+2	1
Thrusting sword	+2	6-8	+3	2
Handaxe	+1	4	+2	2
Pike	+2 / (haft) +2	Haft 2, Head 3	+3 / (haft) +0	1 / (haft) 1
Lance (mounted only)	+3	Haft 4, Head 3	+5 on the charge	1, unready after charge

Well-made weapons, on the other hand, are easier to use because of their balance, keen edge, or magic. The standard for weapons of wrought iron, bronze, cheap steel, or the like is a +0 modifier. Pattern-welded weapons, or finely sharpened or balanced weapons can provide +1 to +2 bonuses. Very fine steel or the like will provide up to a +3 bonus. This bonus is added to the integrity of the weapon, as well.

When heroes are not using the skill-at-arms training but are fighting with the prowess training, they apply their defensive bonus to their defense score, making them harder to hit.

Expenditure

Clubs and staves are generally made by the hero himself, for essentially zero cost. A good knife, handaxe, or spear point is expenditure 1. A lance point or chopping sword is generally expenditure 1-2, depending on quality. A short-sword is expenditure 2, and a longsword or thrusting sword is expenditure 2-4, depending on quality.

Arms stripped from the dead can be sold as spoils for half its expenditure as a sale value.

Archers generally make their own bows and do their own fletching. A particularly fine bow of good horn and metal inlays is expenditure 1-2, and might have considerably better range than an ordinary yew or hardwood bow.

3.4 Crafting

To craft an object, the maker must have the appropriate craft specialty. If he has access to the necessary raw materials and tools, he may begin the crafting process. Every kind of object has a certain craft value equal to half again its integrity, rounded down, or (in the case of armour) three times its soak, whichever is higher.

The maker makes simple crafting attempts and adds his margin to a running total. Once he has accumulated a total margin equal to or greater than the object's crafting value, he is finished. Each attempt represents a week of work or more. Armour must needs take a long time to craft, as it generally has a very high craft value.

When an object is being made, a magician can improve it with magic. He may work into the fabric of the object any charm, marker or ward he could normally inscribe. If he knows how, he may also strengthen it with prayer. With every attempt that the crafter makes, the magician may add another one point of magic to the object, as though he rolled a margin of 1 on his attempt.

Every two attempts a craftsman makes is expenditure 1, although this is entirely offset if the craftsman sells the item for a profit. Craftspeople do not need to make crafting attempts unless they are trying to produce an item for a special purpose. They are assumed to produce a few items to stock their shop over the course of a normal season. If they do not, they will have their wealth reduced by one for each season until they begin working again.

3.4.1 Wear and Tear

Objects can stand only so much use. All objects have a score called integrity, which measures how much stress and use the object can have. Every time the object is used stressfully or else is damaged, they incur levels of wear equal to the difficulty on the attempt for which they were employed, or else the amount of damage they received.

Whenever a contest to attack is resolved between two weapons, both take damage equal to the other weapon's damage bonus. Whenever a hero in armour soaks damage with his armour, his armour takes damage equal to the amount of damage soaked.

When an object incurs more levels of wear than its integrity, its integrity is permanently reduced by one and the remaining levels are applied. If an object ever has integrity zero, it is damaged past repair.

All of the wear on an item can be removed without an attempt by anyone trained in the maintenance or crafting of such an item, if they have time. Blades are sharpened, hafts are polished, and points are pointed. This does not repair any damage to the integrity of the object.

A simple craft attempt can repair a level of integrity to a damaged object, but a failure incurs levels of wear equal to twice the margin of failure.

Chapter 4

Magic and Faith

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Humans are engines for altering the very fabric of the world. Beyond their ability to use their minds and bodies in concert, their animating spirit's power is not entirely bound up in their physical forms. And the spirit of the hero is considerably stronger, with manifold tendrils that stretch out beyond his physical form, just waiting to exercise his will.

It is a law of nature that the more flesh there is to animate, be it muscle, fat, or bone, the less potent the hero's magic. The strongest magicians

are not particularly able-bodied, but are in decent shape. The latent strength of a hero's magic is represented by his Resistance.

In addition to the magic of his spirit, all humans possess some metaphysical weight. This is represented by their Faith score. More than representing their faith in any spiritual sense, their willingness to offer themselves up to their divinity (though it does represent that as well), it represents their mental grounding in the world.

Faith is the one thing that spirits crave, the one thing that allows them to stay in the world and manifest their powers. When a spirit possesses a mortal, it is the mortal's faith from which it draws its power.

4.1 Alchemy

Alchemy is the ultimate science that any mortal can hope to master. It covers the creation of alchemical reagents and the operation of catalysts that alter matter on a fundamental level. Magicians (practitioners of the esoterica), are adamant in their stance that alchemy is not truly magic. To a certain extent, they are correct. Alchemy does not depend on the alchemist at all, only his knowledge of the world and ability to manipulate it in specific ways.

4.1.1 Matter, Metals, and Salt

Alchemists hold that there are three types of matter. The first is stony matter, exemplified by dirt, earth, rock, and sand. The second is aquatic matter, water. The third is airy matter. Metal is viewed as entirely apart from these forms of matter, and is exempt from alchemy: no alchemical process affects metal.

Metal takes to heat the most strongly of any earthly substance, and is seen as connected most to the heavens and to fire. Alchemists view metallurgy as a holy practice entirely separate from alchemy. Base metals seem to degrade over time, acquiring rust. Alchemists have no single explanation for this phenomenon, although they suspect that purified metal seeks to return to its mineral state. Noble metals do not rust.

Salts are alchemical compounds composed primarily of stone, but possessing sky or sea components as well. Common salt is a compound of sea and stone, which explains its ability to become dissolved in water. Minerals are alchemical compounds of stone, but that also contain veins or traces of metal. They are among the hardest forms of rock, and are difficult to work with, physically and alchemically.

4.1.2 Transmutations

Alchemists further hold that matter undergoes cyclical, natural transmutations. The seas evaporate and become clouds, the air condenses into stone, and the stone melts into the seas.

These are the natural cycles of the earth, but certain things can cause

the cycles to run backwards. Heavenly fire becomes trapped in matter as heat, and spurs on the volcanic reactions. Heat can cause the sky to condense into seas (such as rain), can cause the stones to sublime into the sky (such as the smoke that emerges from burning wood), and the seas to solidify into stone (such as the formation of ice). The skies block most of the heavenly fire from reaching the earth or the stones, so the rain is the most common manifestation of this phenomenon.

In darkness, these cycles are slowed sometimes halting altogether. Since living things depend on the alchemical cycles, plants cannot thrive in darkness.

4.1.3 Catalysts

Alchemy represents man's understanding and mastery of the world. Alchemists have learned a number of useful techniques for manipulating matter. Almost all alchemical attempts require the presence of a catalyst. A catalyst is a specialized set or piece of equipment, often imbued with arcane inscriptions, which facilitates a specialized transmutation. They are often made up of pots, glassware, magic circles, and special tools for handling substances.

Each alchemical catalyst has a power rating. They add automatic successes on an alchemy attempt equal to their power. An alchemist can, with a catalyst, transmute a number of kilograms of matter equal to five times the margin on a simple alchemy attempt. Note that catalysts can only facilitate one of the natural (sea to sky, sky to stone, stone to sea) or volcanic (sky to sea, sea to stone, stone to sky) reactions.

As powerful as catalysts are, they cannot transmute any metal, nor can they transmute anything into metal (that is not entirely true: minerals have metal trapped in the stone and transmuting the stone releases the metal, but no metal is actually created). No catalyst can produce more than one type of matter, although catalysts can split salts into their components or create new salts from relatively pure components, if they are so designed (though that must be the sole purpose of the catalyst). In addition, no alchemical substance or catalyst can cause glass to react. It is impossible to use alchemy to create any manufactured item: it produces only homogenous matter.

Alchemists are still baffled by how metal and glass escapes from the crucible of alchemy, and many learn metalurgy or glassblowing in an attempt to circumvent this limitation. Though rumors abound of isolated successes in these fields, they are as unfounded as rumors of panacea, universal solvent, or the creation of life. All of these fall outside the bounds of alchemy.

Using Catalysts

To create a temporary alchemical catalyst, one must make a sustained alchemy attempt, with a target number equal to twice the power of the catalyst. Temporary catalysts have their power degraded by one by each use. A permanent catalyst is created the same way, but it has a wealth rating equal to its potency plus one, and the target number on the sustained attempt is five times

the potency of the catalyst.

Distillates

Alchemists have learned to distill matter into pure forms, pure stone, pure sky, and pure sea. Pure stone is inert grey sand. Pure sky is invisible, sweet air. Pure sea is clean, clear water. Since pure sky is difficult to contain, it is frequently produced inside of sealed vessels of glass.

Distillation of pure matter requires source matter, heat, and the use of a catalyst. A simple alchemy attempt is made, and small amounts of purified matter is produced on a success, with potency equal to the margin on the attempt.

Purified matter is useful in the creation of alchemical devices and substances, as well as in the working of magic and in medicine. Pure stone repels undines, pure sea repels sylvesti, and pure sky repels gnomon. Any purified matter repels a vulcan, and no form of purified matter can repel an umbral.

Purified matter acts as an infusion if ingested. In addition, purified stone can stop bleeding and prevent undine infection. Purified sea can lower a fever and stop sylveste infection. Purified air can relieve pain and stop gnomon infection.

Reagents

Alchemists sometimes create alchemical reagents, substances that are eager to react. Each reagent contains half of one of the natural (sea to sky, sky to stone, stone to sea) or volcanic (sky to sea, sea to stone, stone to sky) reactions. When it is applied to the matter that it is intended to act upon, that matter rapidly undergoes change. Thus a phial of a reagent could, when poured on a stone, evaporate the stone into choking, acrid smoke. Another reagent could cause the air to condense into water.

Concoction of reagents requires source matter, heat, and the use of a catalyst. A simple alchemy attempt is made, and small amounts of reagent is produced on a success, with potency equal to the margin on the attempt. The reagent produced by such an attempt can transmute one kilogram of matter per point of potency.

Reagents are very dangerous to living beings, each acting as a poison of their potency if ingested. Reagents that act on air are poisonous if inhaled. Those that act on stone are dangerous to even touch.

4.2 Medicine

Medicine is the art and the science of dealing with spirits, particularly those who are causing diseases, concocting poisons and antidotes, mending injuries, and attracting, repelling, or binding spirits.

Disease is a fact of life in the pre-technological world. It is caused by malicious disease spirits who reside in filth and in the bodies of men and animals.

When brought into contact with an infected person, or a diseased place, or when wounded in combat, a hero must make a simple prowess attempt, at +1 if he has the healthy virtue and at -1 if he has the sickly flaw, with other circumstantial modifiers as the GM sees fit.

A simple medicine attempt, if the physician has access to the appropriate plants, will create a draught, infusion, or plaster of potency equal to the margin on the attempt. The hero may get a bonus of +1 to +3, depending on the strength and freshness of the herbs used. Particularly potent herbs can be located with a medicine attempt at a difficulty equal to the bonus that those herbs provide on the medicine attempt.

A medical infusion loses one point of potency every sunset or sundown. When administered, it adds automatic successes on the diseased's lore attempts to divest himself of a spirit. In addition, heroes trained in medicine can treat physical wounds. A medicine attempt may be made for each wound a patient has, at a difficulty equal to the severity of the wound. The margin on the attempt is subtracted from the severity of the wound.

A simple medicine attempt may prevent a wound from becoming infected.

Infusions can be concocted for other purposes, as well. An infusion can be concocted as a poison. Any hero who has the poison applied to him, or who ingests, inhales, or imbibes it (as appropriate), must make a prowess attempt at a difficulty equal to the poison's potency, or else suffer wounds equal to the potency.

The poison has its potency reduced by the hero's margin on every successful attempt made, but continues to require attempts until its potency is reduced to zero. If a medically concocted antidote infusion is applied, it subtracts its potency from the potency of the poison, and gives the poisoned hero a +1 bonus on his prowess attempts.

Medicine also covers methods of detecting and dealing with spirits who are not causing disease, as well as treating wounds in the field. A simple medicine attempt detects, identifies, and locates any spirit active in the hero's presence. Potent herbs and specially prepared medical instruments can give a +1 to +3 bonus on this attempt, or other attempts for dealing with spirits.

In addition, a simple medicine attempt can attract the attention of a spirit with virulence equal to or less than his margin on the attempt. To repel a spirit, the hero can engage it in a battle of wills as normal, but he may make medicine attempts instead of lore attempts. To bind a spirit into a specially prepared object or subject, the hero battles the spirit as normal, except when he is victorious over the spirit, he spends a point of willpower and makes a sustained medicine attempt with difficulty equal to the spirit's virulence and target number equal to the spirit's MN plus the integrity (or MN, if it has one) of the vessel.

The spirit is bound to the object on a success, meaning that it is entirely entrapped and can do nothing except for what the bearer of the object wishes. The bearer of the object may force the spirit to use any one of the spirit's powers. Perverse magicians may bind a spirit into a living vessel, in which case the spirit

destroys the vessel's soul and possesses the body, treating the vessel like it had an extra point of faith, but remaining bound to the magician. Furthermore, it is possible to bind a spirit (usually a ghost, but sometimes a lesser spirit) into a dead body or simulacra. In that case, the magician retains complete control over the spirit, and controls when the spirit uses any of its powers.

Medicine, for the purpose of dealing with spirits, may be amplified by ritual.

4.3 The Esoterica

Some types of magic were discovered, not by scientific study, but by casual experimentation, or by accident. More like lore than like academic subjects, the esoterica encompasses two main types of magical techniques. First is inscription, which uses the inherently magical features of writing and geometric figures. Second is figment, which uses various psychic techniques to create images and ephemera in the minds of others.

4.3.1 Inscription

The act of writing is, and always has been, magical. Writing takes fleeting, ephemeral thoughts and ideas and makes them eternal. Writing, particularly permanent writing, immortalizes pieces of the writer's soul.

The first people to produce writing or pictures understood this. They knew that they were creating places of power wherever they made a record. The art of using secret, primal writing to produce magical effects has not been lost in the world of MYTHIC. That art is known as inscription.

When a magician inscribes words onto something, some of his own magic is imbued into the object. Far from depleting his own magic, this strengthens it, makes both magician and charm potent. There are three broad categories of inscriptions.

Every time that a magician makes an esoterica attempt to create an inscription, he spends a point of willpower.

Charms

The first, and most common sort of inscription is a charm. Charms have been produced in every civilization, and range from ritual scarification to amulets to rune wands. A charm is a piece of active magic, something that channels strength out of the universe and places it in a physical receptacle.

To lay a charm, the magician creates the inscription, then makes a simple esoterica attempt. His margin on the attempt is the strength of the charm. If he is carving, chiseling, tattooing, or in some other way making permanent the physical writing of the inscription, he gains a +1 bonus on the attempt.

A magician knows a number of charms equal to his level in esoterica.

- Anchor — this charm reinforces a state. It produces a binding, preventing natural means from moving or changing until the charm is broken. A prowess attempt must be made against the charm's strength to change, mar, or move the subject.
- Binding — this charm makes a collection of parts a whole. To a certain extent, a weak form of this charm is used whenever an object is made, but this charm adds its strength to the running total of a craft attempt, and, when the process is finished, to the integrity of the object. In addition, any attempt to separate or break the pieces is at a difficulty equal to the strength of the charm.
- Edge — this charm imbues something, anything, with the potential for unexpected greatness. Its user may add its strength to any one type of attempt, designated at its creation.
- Finality — this charm effectively lays to rest any one thing. It lays to rest any ghost, breaks magical bindings, accelerates natural decays or transmutations. This charm will not begin the process of destruction or inflict wounds, but it may finish the job.
- Persistence — this charm reinforces the momentum of its subject. As long as the subject does not stop in his task willingly, this charm will keep him from being fatigued or stopped by normal means. Even a momentary break, however, ends the charm.
- Purity — this charm safeguards the purity of the subject. As long as the subject does not debase himself, nothing can sully it, physically or spiritually. This charm also protects from magical deceptions.
- Sympathy — this charm creates a bond between two similar things. Two things that are related, from the same stock, or were once one can be made to affect each other, if the charm is laid on one of them.
- Regnancy — this charm creates a dominance of one thing over a number that becomes natural. The charm of regnancy means that the subject is compelled to follow the magician's instructions, unless they make a lore or virulence attempt against a difficulty equal to the charm's strength.
- Resilience — this charm reinforces its subject. It adds its strength to the subject's soak, integrity, threshold, and prowess of its subject, as applicable.
- Turn Away — this charm grants a measure of power in any luck duel, adding its strength in automatic successes to the subject or bearer's attempts.
- Veil — this charm causes its subject to lie dormant, in some unassuming shape, unnoticed and unaware until the magician or the bearer of the

charm releases it. It is commonly used to disguise a weapon, or to produce an animal from seemingly thin air. Although the disguised subject is still present, it is in some unremarkable shape: a snake as a belt or stick, or a sword as a staff.

- Way — this charm leads the subject or the bearer along any way that the magician knows, or to any marker that the magician has made.

Markers

It is not only charms that magicians create, however. Magicians are a strange lot, and often suffer from paranoia and possessiveness, which may or may not be without grounding in reality. They seek to expand their senses and their domain. To this end, magicians have learned to create supernatural Markers.

A marker is frequently carved on a tree, a stone, a building, or some other landmark. A marker is an extension of the magician's metaphysical presence. A magician may create any number of markers, and makes each one with a simple inscribe attempt. The radius of a marker is the margin on that attempt.

A magician may inscribe a marker on a living being, but this requires a sustained inscribe attempt with a target number equal to twice the target's MN. This is commonly used to make an animal familiar. Most animals have a MN of 1 or 2. If a marker is on a living being, the magician is within the radius of the marker if he is within a number of leagues of the marker equal to the mark's MN plus the magician's lore.

If a magician encounters a marker whose creator has died, he may claim it as his own by making a simple inscribe attempt. On a success, he gains ownership of the marker and adds his margin to the radius of the marker.

If one magician's marker is within the radius of another magician's marker, he may engage the other magician in a sustained contest of inscribe, with a target equal to the opposing magician's resistance. The victorious magician can break his opponent's marker.

Whenever a magician is within a number of leagues equal to the radius of a marker that he has made, he may, by making a lore attempt of difficulty equal to the distance, in leagues, to the marker, or by making simple meditation attempt, perceive anything that is happening in the presence of the marker. A magician may make a similar attempt to speak to anyone in the presence of his marker, or to enter and perceive their dreams.

A magician or marked creature instinctively knows if any other markers are within the radius of his marker, and if any charms or wards are in the presence of his marker. Magician's rarely order any marked creatures they possess to enter the marker radii of other magicians.

A magician may use a marker to transmit magical energy. He may use a marker that is in the presence of a foe to engage that foe in a luck duel. He may make any lore attempts that he could make on behalf of himself on behalf of anyone touching one of his markers. He may also spend a point of willpower on behalf of anyone in the presence of his marker, if he so desires.

When touching one of his own marker, a magician may call up a spirit. He makes a simple esoterica attempt, and adds the radius of the marker. Within a number of minutes equal to the virulence of the spirit, a spirit of virulence equal to or less than the result of the attempt appears. The spirit is under no binding at all: wards or other devices must be used to bind the spirit. This attempt requires the expenditure of a point of willpower.

Wards

A ward is the ultimate and most permanent expression of inscription. A ward is a metaphysical barrier that protects the subject from malign magic and from hostile spirits or all varieties.

The simplest ward is a circle, which simply acts as a barrier for the supernatural. It must be drawn around its subject, blocking any magical forces from crossing the boundary. A circle has a barrier rating equal to the margin on the simple inscription attempt that created it. Any supernatural agency that seeks to operate across the circle adds the barrier rating of the circle to the difficulty on its attempt.

A spirit that seeks to cross the barrier must make a virulence attempt with difficulty equal to the barrier rating of the circle plus one. A spirit may not use any of its powers across the boundary without crossing the circle.

A more sophisticated ward is worn as an amulet or blazoned onto a surface. It has a barrier rating equal to the margin on the simple esoterica attempt that created it. It adds its barrier rating in dice to any attempt in a luck duel, struggle with spirit, or bout of resistance combat. In addition, any malign magic that affects the bearer of the ward has its difficulty increased by the barrier of the ward.

The ward may be used to fend off a spirit. A simple lore attempt by the bearer of the ward will inflict shock wounds equal to the barrier of the ward on any spirit in his presence. Note that the spirit may choose to recede from the bearer's immediate presence rather than suffer wounds. Should a spirit ever suffer more shock wounds than its resistance, it is dispersed or driven away.

4.3.2 Figment

Magicians are very forceful, strong-minded people. This is an effect of their souls, which, in addition to giving life to their bodies and powering their magic, impress themselves on the bodies and minds of those around the magicians.

For this reason, a hero's mentality is used whenever he makes any interpersonal interaction. But this effect transcends the social and extends into the magical. Magicians fight psychic duels with each other and with ordinary people. They use their force of personality to break into the minds of those around them, and attempt to overwhelm them.

This combat spills into the mind of the target and the minds of onlookers as hallucinatory lights and images, which are called ephemera. The training of creating the ephemera and breaking minds is known as figment.

Every bout of resistance combat drains a point of willpower from the magician. If he has no more points of willpower, it fatigues him one level.

4.3.3 Ephemera

In resistance combat, ephemera can be created by prioritizing points of resistance. Each is created with a simple esoterica attempt, where automatic successes equal to the number of points of resistance prioritized. The strength of the ephemeron is equal to the margin on the attempt.

The magician chooses a type of ephemeron that he knows, and manifests the ephemeron, or else chooses to manifest a general illusion of some object, animal, or phenomenon.

Ephemera appear as ghostly images, phantom thoughts and ideas waiting to be weaponized and thrown into battle by the magician. They are visible only to those actively looking for them, and appear as metaphysical skeletons of their intended shape, frameworks on which to hang magical power.

To make ephemera visible to others, and to employ them in resistance combat, they must be empowered. He does this by simply prioritizing points of resistance to it. When empowering an ephemeron, the magician must describe what exactly it is, within the bounds of the ephemeron's description.

Nonmagicians must make a simple lore attempt at a difficulty equal to the ephemeron's strength to disbelieve the reality of the ephemeron. Ordinary attempts to defeat an ephemeron with brute force may only inflict shock wounds on the ephemeron, and if the nonmagician has failed his disbelief attempt, the ephemeron can stop him just as if it were real.

Note that magicians cannot voluntarily choose to believe ephemera. They cannot benefit themselves by conjuring up pleasant or useful illusions.

Any charmed weapon, or being repelled by a ward inflicts wounds on ephemera. If they ever take more wounds than they have strength, they are dispelled.

There are five types of ephemera, each with different shapes and purposes. Each has an effect that is entirely unrelated to its role in resistance combat. For every level that he has in esoterica, a magician knows how to create one type of ephemeron. The types of ephemera are:

- **Forces** — the ephemeron manifests as a force of nature, such as a wave, sharp breeze, or rock slide. The only condition is that it must be composed of matter and in motion. It may be used to make a quick contest of figment versus prowess to sweep a foe off his feet or back a number of paces equal to the ephemeron's strength. Forces is countermagic against Subordinate and Gate.
- **Mien** — the ephemeron manifests as some fearsome mask or display around the magician himself. Any attempts he makes to debate, impress, lead, lie, or inspire is at a bonus equal to the ephemeron's strength. The display may or may not be obviously magical, but it must be disbelieved as normal

or else it takes effect on those around the magician. Mien is countermagic against Forces and Gate.

- Subordinate — the ephemeron manifests as a creature or person, but usually some sort of mundane or fantastic animal. The ephemeron has a vitality equal to its strength and a agility equal to its magician's wit. Once disbelieved, the subordinate can be slain as normal. Subordinate is countermagic against Mien and Gate.
- Anima — anima are a broad class of ephemeron, with six distinct subdivisions. A magician who "knows" anima only knows two forms of anima ephemera. He may learn anima up to three times, each time learning two of the forms. Anima is countermagic against Forces, Mien, and Subordinate.
 - Rast: the ephemeron manifests as short blunt spines on the magician's forearms and calves, allowing him to use his arms, feet, hands, and legs as weapons knives with integrity equal to the strength of the ephemeron.
 - Wings: the ephemeron manifests as large wings on the magician's back, enabling him to leap and jump as though his vitality was increased by an amount equal to twice the strength of the ephemeron. He may leap through they are to travel great distances quickly, and by leaping may run flat out, for a number of hours equal to the strength of the ephemeron, incurring fatigue as though he was walking.
 - Chaos: the ephemeron manifests as a chaotic phenomenon surrounding the magician, engage in a quick contest of figment versus resilience to deal shock wounds equal to the strength of the ephemeron to anyone approaching within a number of paces equal to his the ephemeron's strength.
 - Lens: the ephemeron manifests as a disk, standing before the magician, through which he can project his dreams. If anyone looks into the disk, the magician may show them whatever vision he cares to, and they must make a lore attempt at a difficulty equal to the strength of the ephemeron to look away or do anything but watch the display. The magician must prioritize at a number of points of resistance equal to the strength of the ephemeron to maintain this effect every tick that he wishes to deprive his target of action.
 - Pattern: the ephemeron takes the shape of a intricate mandala or pattern surrounding the magician and spilling on the area around him. By concentrating, he may imprint this pattern on anyone or anything within a number of paces of him equal to the strength of the ephemeron. The imprint is always visible and is indelible, and has a radius equal to the number of points of resistance that the magician chooses to prioritize to that action. As long as the mark is within a number of leagues equal to that radius, the magician knows

the direction he must travel to reach the mark. It is impossible to use this direction to triangulate the targets position.

- Compass: the ephemeron takes the shape of an instrument in the magician’s hand, often a geometrical compass or needle. He can trace out of shapes in the air, causing them to take on fiery outlines that hang, moving only slightly. By prioritizing a number of points of resistance, the magician may produce that number times the strength of the ephemeron in paces of supernaturally strong fiber. The fiber is created attached to any physical object it touches, and can be used to create a web, tripwire, or simple snare in a single tick.
- Gate — the ephemeron takes the form of a door, gate, or window, through which the magician can call up a spirit. He makes a simple figment attempt, adding the strength of the gate in dice, and is able to call up a spirit with virulence equal to his margin on the attempt, and may then proceed just as though the magician was using a ritual or marker. The spirit is under no binding at all: wards or other devices must be used to bind the spirit. Gate is countermagic against Anima.

4.4 The Power of Faith

Most humans have a faith score of 1 or 2. They acquire this through a lifetime of relatively pious behavior and obeying the letter of the religious law, and relative humility at prayer. People who willfully sin against their religion without atoning in an acceptable manner may have faith of 0, and are not capable of producing powerful prayers.

Whenever a hero prays sincerely, the GM should make a roll that character’s faith. On a success, the prayer becomes potent. A hero aided, guided, or protected by such a prayer gains a 1-die bonus on any attempts for which a potent prayer had been made. These prayers last only for a number of days equal to the penitent’s faith, and do not stack.

In addition, if a penitent asks for protection or safe travel and his prayer achieves potency, any supernatural attempts to harm him become difficult attempts. He gains a 1-die bonus on any contests that involve his safety or survival.

4.4.1 Prayer

The rules for prayers presented above assume that the ordinary person has not been trained in the giving of prayers (the prayer training). A person who has training in prayer may ask for the favor of their patron in a more direct intercession.

In addition, a hero who has the favored virtue has a chance of acquiring intercession any time that he prays.

The penitent must spend at least a day in devout prayer. He makes a simple prayer attempt, adding his faith and getting a one-die bonus if he has the

favored virtue. On a success, he reduces his faith by one until he spends at least a month of pious service to his patron. If the GM determines that the cause for which the penitent is asking intervention is just, the patron or an agent of the patron intercedes with one of the miraculous effects listed below.

Miracles

The powers of divine agencies are infinite, but the true strength of miracles is drawn from the penitent's own faith. In addition to the miracles listed here, anything listed as a power by an appropriate type of spirit may be employed, but the spirit performing the miracle cannot have a virulence of greater than the penitent's faith.

- Anointment — water is blessed with divine favor. When anointed with water so blessed, or when drinking it, divine favor fills the subject. Until the sun next sets or rises, he may add this prayer's margin to any attempts he makes.
- Benediction — the faculties of reason dispel ill will and illusion. This prayer adds its margin in automatic successes to any attempt to resist deception or being hexed. In addition, if the subject succeeds in a contest against being hexed, this prayer gives him a vague idea of who attempted to lay a hex on him.
- Bless — at its beginning, a life or thing is provided with divine power. This prayer adds the margin added to an attribute of an unborn child, or to the integrity of an object being created. The object or person is now permanently treated as protected by a prayer or charmed, as the case may be.
- God's Breath — miraculous power is given to protect the innocent. A natural force of hazard rating equal to the margin on the attempt intercedes to protect the innocent.
- Incensure — auspice is granted in exchange for a sacrifice. The hero makes a meaningful sacrifice as part of the prayer and he, or the party he is praying for, gains a boon (see appendix). The GM determines what constitutes a meaningful sacrifice.
- Passage — safe journey is vouchsafed through the very heart of darkness. The subject may add this prayer's margin to any attempts he makes to make a journey safely. This doesn't protect him from harm that is not a natural consequence of the journey; it will help him avoid highwaymen but not a hunting party searching for him.
- Lay on Hands — the suffering of the ill is abated. The penitent lays his hands on a man and prays. On a success, the miracle reduces any wounds the subject is suffering by its margin, and drives off any spirits of virulence

less than the margin. The penitent incurs fatigue equal to the margin. No one may benefit from this prayer more than once per wound.

- **Raiment** — creation itself is woven into a protective garment. The subject adds this prayer's margin to his defense or resistance until the next sunset or sunrise (chosen when the prayer is made).
- **Vigor** — failing fresh is renewed with holy wind. This prayer removes a number of fatigue levels equal to this prayer's margin, or a number of physical wounds equal to half this prayer's margin. If he further exerts himself during his recuperation, these wounds and fatigue levels return, along with an extra wound and fatigue level.

4.5 Ritual

Ritual magic is one of the oldest kinds of magic. Wherever people gather, their souls work together, even if they are unaware of it. When people gather for religious festivals, or for the express purpose of conducting magic, their powers resonate together to produce otherwise impossible magical feats.

People gathered to work magic using rituals all make a simple lore attempt. The total of the margins on these attempts equals the resonance of the ritual, the power available to be tapped. Conducting a ritual in a place of power, such as an ancient temple, or anything else approved by the GM, adds a 5–10 points to the resonance of the ritual.

To participate in a ritual, every participant must spend one point of willpower. If they do not, they are unable to contribute.

If a hero chooses, he may step forward during the ritual and lead the congregants in some magical practice that he knows, adding their power to his own. He, and the entire assembly make a simple ritual attempt. The total of the ritual attempts' margins is the number of points of the ritual's resonance that the leader may add as automatic successes to a lore, esoterica, or prayer attempt that he makes.

This amount of power makes many effects possible. First, the ritual can call up a spirit with a lore attempt of difficulty equal to the virulence of the spirit. The spirit is bound and unable to do anything other than converse with the leader of the ritual until he is released, and is then bound by the terms of any oath that he swears. The leader of the ritual can choose to banish the spirit instead of releasing it.

If an esoterica attempt is made, extraordinarily potent inscriptions may be made, including complicated effects not normally possible. This is up to the GM's discretion, but he should remember that the effects of inscriptions are generally subtle and not flashy.

If a prayer attempt is made, the congregants themselves can cause a divine intervention on a successful attempt, just as described under The Power of Faith.

Chapter 5

Lesser Mortal and Heroic Challenges

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A hero is nothing without foes to defeat and challenges to overcome. This chapter details the process for creating mortals to use as allies, foes, or foils for the heroes. It also details a number of natural hazards which may cross the heroes' paths.

5.1 Mortal Spirit

Heroes are, by nature endowed with the heroic spirit. They are capable of bigger and better things than any ordinary mortal could hope to be. Mortals have definite limits far below what heroes can hope to achieve.

However, the GM may see fit to create mortals to fill out the other roles of the story. These are created just as heroes, except they take the following virtue instead of the heroic spirit virtue:

- Mortal Spirit (+9 virtue)

You possess the reserves of spirit typical of most mortal humans. This virtue does not make you weak, it just places your limits lower than a similar hero's limits. Mortals have no resistance to fear or any other strong emotions.

This trait confers on the hero an ordinary mortal spirit, capable of driving the body and mind. It gives the hero a default Mentality of 3.

You have the ordinary human ability to learn and perform magic. It does not come naturally to you, but the ability is there, nascent, and generally stronger in you than in ordinary mortals. Prayers and simple rituals that you make will occasionally take effect, although formal training is required to make this less of a hit-or-miss proposition.

First and foremost, the mortal spirit is only barely powerful enough to motivate the mortal's body. It clings to life less strongly, and its magic is weaker. The ordinary mortal resistance is $5 - VT$.

Mortals may not have a vitality that is so high their resistance is zero or below. As a result, they may not have vitality traits totaling +2 or higher.

Also, note that mortals need not be worth +40–45. Mortals are by default worth +25, and they may take traits and trainings worth anywhere from +5 to +15. Mortals fluctuate wildly in capability. Mortals are far more likely to have crippling flaws, or flaws not included in the Flaws section of the Heroes chapter.

Also, mortals tend not to have many hidden traits, and do not necessarily have a mastery trait (although they may).

Because of their lesser MN and resistances, mortals are considerably less magically potent than heroes. A physically frail mortal magician might have resistance 3, faith 1, willpower 3, whereas even a physically capable heroic magician would have resistance 4, faith 2, willpower 4 or higher.

As a consequence of this, most magicians have heroic spirits, and as such naturally rise to become persons of some note. This is one of the reasons for the relative rarity of magicians. Generally, only one man in a community will be a magician, and few cities will have more than a handful. A lord is unlikely to have more than a single magician in his retinue, and lesser nobles may have to depend on their town's magician for magical services.

5.1.1 Some example mortals

- **A thug** (+29)
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Low birth, criminal upbringing, infamy (-3 total)
 3. Big, Fleet of Foot (+2 total)
 4. VT 4 AG 3 MN 3 WT 3
 5. Wealth 0, Contacts 1

6. Path: Lie 1, Lore 1, Presence 2, Prowess 2, Sleight 1, Survive. (+5 total)
 7. Threshold 2, Defense 2, Resistance 1, Faith 1, Willpower 3
- **A witch (+34)**
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Common birth, wild upbringing, savant, female, outcaste (-2 total)
 3. Bright, Magical Knack (minor +1), Well-spoken; Slight (+2 total)
 4. VT 2 AG 3 MN 4 WT 5
 5. Wealth 0, Contacts 1
 6. Path: Animal 2, Lore 3, Presence 1, Prowess 1, Resilience, Esoterica 3 (outcaste mastery), Survive 1. (+9 total)
 7. Threshold 1, Defense 1, Resistance 4, Faith 2, Willpower 4
 - **A serf (+32)**
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Common birth, professional upbringing, heir (+1 total)
 3. Healthy (+1 total)
 4. VT 4 AG 2 MN 3 WT 3
 5. Wealth 0, Contacts 1
 6. Path: Craft 2 (farming), Impress 1, Lead 1, Lie, Lore 1, Prowess 1, Resilience 1 (+5 total)
 7. Threshold 2, Defense 1, Resistance 1, Faith 1, Willpower 3
 - **A landless knight (+40)**
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Free birth, military upbringing, soldier (+3 total)
 3. Charismatic +1, coordinated, deep breaths (+3 total)
 4. VT 4 AG 3 MN 4 WT 3
 5. Wealth 1, Contacts 2
 6. Path: Inspire 2, Lead 1, Lore 1, Presence 2, Prowess 1, Resilience 1, Survive, Skill-at-arms 3 (+9 total)
 7. Threshold 2, Defense 5, Resistance 1, Faith 2, Willpower 3
 - **A magician (+41)**
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Free birth, scholastic upbringing, savant, master (+4 total)
 3. Brilliant, Magical Knack (minor +2); Sickly (+3 total)

4. VT 2 AG 3 MN 5 WT 5
 5. Wealth 2, Contacts 2
 6. Path: Debate 2, Impress, Lore 3, Presence 1, Prowess 1, Esoterica 3 (mastery), Survive 1. (+9 total)
 7. Threshold 1, Defense 1, Resistance 5, Faith 1, Willpower 4
- **A minor noble** (+40)
 1. Mortal spirit, human body, human mind, human training (+25 total)
 2. Noble birth, military upbringing, heir (+4 total)
 3. Bright, Charismatic +1; (+3 total)
 4. VT 3 AG 3 MN 4 WT 4
 5. Wealth 3, Contacts 1
 6. Path: Inspire 2, Lead 1, Lore 1, Presence 2, Prowess 1, Resilience, Skill-at-arms 2, Warfare 1 (+8 total)
 7. Threshold 2, Defense 4, Resistance 2, Faith 1, Willpower 4

5.2 Hazards

Every hero needs a test. Before you can become a hero, you must prove yourself by accomplishing heroic tasks, defeating despicable villains, and succeeding where no one could before. This section is all about the things that heroes must face. While adventuring, not every adversary will be a foe. The impossible conditions that you must endure to reach your goal are almost as heroic as a mountain of enemies. Here are some of the things you may face. Every hazard described here has a hazard rating. Each may be circumvented with an attempt of an appropriate type (almost always prowess), of difficulty equal to the hazard's rating. Wounds from hazards can generally not be soaked by armour.

5.2.1 Falling from great heights

Falling is one of mankind's favorite dangers, and is dangerous even to heroes. A hero who falls more than a number of paces equal to his VT treats the fall as if it had a hazard rating of its height, in paces, minus his VT. He suffers a wound of severity equal to the hazard rating minus his margin on the attempt, and one level of shock.

5.2.2 Falling objects

Falling things are just as much of a hazard as falling, if a heavy object strikes you from a long drop. The hazard rating of a falling object corresponds to its weight and the distance it falls. The hazard rating is equal to 1 (for normal-sized

objects like bricks, stones, and logs) to 3 (for avalanches, boulders, or similarly large objects), and a failed prowess attempt wounds the hero with a severity equal to the hazard rating times half the length of the fall, in paces.

5.2.3 Fire

Fire is one of the most iconic dangers that face adventurers. Possibly the most urgent danger from fire is the possibility of catching on fire. Also, fire creates smoke, which is a weak poison and obstructs sight. A torch has hazard rating 1, a campfire rating 2, a forge rating 3, and a burning building rating 4. A hero subtracts the margin of his attempt from the hazard rating and takes the result as a wound. A hero who fails his roll has a 50 per cent chance to catch on fire, becoming a hazard rating 1 source until extinguished.

5.2.4 Cold

Exposure to extreme cold can be almost as dangerous as the extreme heat of fire. Extreme cold generally takes longer to work its effect on someone. Being exposed to the cold, without appropriate clothing, for a number of hours equal to the hazard rating of the cold minus the hero's threshold is a hazard of rating equal to the difference. In addition, after being wounded by the cold, the hero automatically takes a level of shock that does not heal until the hero is warmed up.

5.2.5 Transmutation

Alchemy is an oft-underestimated destructive force. Whenever an alchemical catalyst is applied to a living thing, the results are invariably nasty. The hazard rating of being caught in an active catalyst or natural transmutation is equal to the power of the catalyst. Many natural phenomena demonstrate the transmutative power of a catalyst. A bolt of lightning, a squall, an earthquake, or the like should have a hazard rating of 3 or higher. Alchemical reagents are very dangerous to living beings, each acting as a poison of their potency if ingested. Reagents that act on air are poisonous if inhaled. Those that act on stone are dangerous to even touch.

5.2.6 Poison

Any hero who has the poison applied to him, or who ingests, inhales, or imbibes it (as appropriate), must make a prowess attempt at a difficulty equal to the poison's potency, or else suffer wounds equal to the potency. The poison has its potency reduced by the hero's margin on every successful attempt made, but continues to require attempts until its potency is reduced to zero. If a medically concocted antidote infusion is applied, it subtracts its potency from the potency of the poison, and gives the poisoned hero a +1 bonus on his prowess attempts.

5.2.7 Disease

Disease is a fact of life in the pre-technological world. It is caused by malicious disease spirits who reside in filth and in the bodies of men and animals. When brought into contact with an infected person, or a diseased place, or when wounded in combat, a hero is faced with a hazard of rating equal to the virulence of the disease-causing spirit, or else equal to the severity of his wounds. He gets a +1 bonus on this attempt if he has the healthy virtue or made a successful lore attempt to shield himself from the unclean, and takes a -1 penalty if he has any points of bad luck or if he has the sickly flaw.

Chapter 6

Spirits

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In MYTHIC, the world is home to a plethora of magical spirits who are capable of influencing the realities of life.

6.1 Lower Spirits

There are a myriad of lower spirits, who are the embodiments of the terrestrial elements, given cunning intellect by life. There are five elements, three base elements and two luminary elements. The three base elements are sky, sea, and stone. Sky defeats stone, stone defeats sea, and sea defeats sky. (Note that these are the same relations as the natural transmutations).

The luminary elements are shadow and fire. Shadow defeats all the base elements, and the base elements defeat fire. Fire defeats shadow. Magicians and alchemists consider the elements as two intertwined circles.

6.1.1 General Powers

The lower spirits can do a number of things once they awaken in the world. These spirits generally have virulence 1-2, MN 3-4, WT 2-3, resistance 2-6. They can make a simple virulence attempt to manifest themselves, and to make their presence known.

If the spirit achieves a margin of 0 on the attempt, he makes a vague impression on the people in his presence, who understand that something is strange. If he achieves a margin of 1, he may manifest as a fleeting apparition and may and may divide a number of points equal to his half his resistance between vitality and agility scores, or else converse briefly with someone in his presence. If he achieves a margin of 2 or more, he may manifest any of the previous effects, or else generate a body from his element, with and may divide a number of points equal to his resistance between vitality and agility scores, and gains +4 worth of physical trainings.

Spirits have a supernatural knowledge of all natural and alchemical phenomena involving their element for a number of paces around them equal to ten times their mentality. They are also aware of any active wards, markers, or charms in that area.

All lower spirits are capable of attacking and causing illness in mortals, especially seeking out those who have been wounded. Sylvesti generally attack those who go out in the cold and the wind, and cause congestion of the nose, throat, and lungs, as well as (in severe cases) pneumonia and fever. Undines attack those who live in filth or in damp conditions, and attack the eyes, ears, stomach, and bowells of their victims, causing (in severe cases) dysentary and chills. Gnomon attack those who go out into extreme heat or sunlight, or who come into contact with strange plants and animals, and inflict rash, and attacking the liver and muscles, cause rash, fatigue, and (in severe cases) cholera and sometimes leprosy.

Umbrals attack mortals without compunction, mainly those who spend more of their waking hours at night than during the day. Umbrals cause all sort of ailments, but chiefly produce bone aches and joint stiffness, as well as insomnia and rheumatism. Vulcans rarely attack mortals, but when they do inflict blindness, high fever, vomiting, and bleeding from the mouth and excretory organs.

A spirit can manipulate the fabric of its element, as described under each individual spirit.

6.1.2 Sylvesti

The sylvest is a spirit born by and master of the air, sky, and winds. Sylvesti embody the ephemeral nature of the mind, and think unimaginably quickly, but flit from idea to idea with staggering speed. The sylvest outthinks the gnomon and the vulcan. Sylvesti are commonly called upon by magicians as they are invariably spirits of great knowledge, but it is difficult to focus their knowledge to one subject.

Powers

A sylvest can, with a simple virulence attempt, conjure up a stiff wind, or may calm the air. Many sylvesti working together, or a single sylvest making a sustained attempt may, by accumulating a target number of 10 for small showers and 15 to 20 for storms, brew up any type of weather that it would be possible to produce in the given climate and season. It could produce rain in the desert, but the target number would be 25. Sylvesti are loathe to attempt to brew storms unless they are particularly angry, and if they are forced to make more virulence attempts than twice their mentality, they break free of a magician's command.

A sylvest has a chance to know any given fact related to the local area or to larger happenings in the land. For every question, make an attempt of the sylvest's wit. A success indicates that the fact is known. Sylvests will not answer more questions than their mentality.

6.1.3 Undines

The undine is a spirit born by and master of the lakes, rivers, seas, and streams. Undines give face to the transient, emotional nature of the mind, and are prone to rapid and drastic mood swings, just as the seas that they represent are prone to sudden changes in temperament. The undine overwhelms the sylvest and the vulcan. Undines are often called upon by magicians as they, more than any other kind of spirit, are capable of healing and mending broken bodies and minds.

Powers

An undine can, with a simple virulence attempt, create a wave or disturbance in any body of water, or calm the water as he wishes. By making a sustained attempt, or by working with other undines, bring up groundwater to create a natural spring or well, or change the course of a river. Rerouting a creek or stream, or producing a spring in a forest, jungle, or lowland is target number 10. Changing the course of a river or creating a spring in highlands, rocky soil, or a desert is target number 15 to 20. If an undine or group of undines can generate 5 points of margin in a single attempt per hour, they may hold back the tide for one hour. Undines are loathe to bring up wells, but they love to move rivers or hold the tide. They frequently lose interest, however, and if they are forced to make more virulence attempts than twice their mentality, they break free of any magician's command.

An undine can, from its own body, produce a number of elixirs and unguents which can mend bodies and alleviate pain. If they are so compelled, they may make a simple virulence attempt, mending a number of points of wounds equal to the margin on the attempt.

6.1.4 Gnomon

The gnomon is a spirit born by and master of the dirt, earth, sands, and stones. Gnomon incarnate the instinctual, reflexive nature of the mind, and behave very sensibly and predictably. The gnomon withstands the undine and the vulcan. They are also the most adept at dealing with physical matter of any of the lower spirits. Gnomon are frequently called upon by magicians because they are dependable and capable, if not imaginative.

Powers

A gnomon can, with a simple virulence attempt, cause a slide of any loosely packed earth (like dirt, mud, or sand), or raise a small hillock out of loose earth. By working with other gnomon or by making a sustained attempt, a gnomon can raise out of the ground a large hillock or boulder, or smash down an offending hillock or boulder. The target number is 10 for boulders up to 7 or 8 paces across, and 15 to 20 for boulders up to 12 or 13 paces across. At a target number of 15, gnomon can destroy any masonry foundation or wall.

Gnomon hate moving, leveling, or raising landforms, and if they are forced to make more virulence attempts than twice their mentality, they break free of any magician's command.

A gnomon can, if commanded, travel through any obstacle without trace, or lie in wait in such a way that it is impossible to notice their presence through any natural method. If lying beneath the surface of the earth, a gnomon's awareness is limited to a number of paces around the spot directly above him equal to his virulence.

6.1.5 Umbrals

The umbral is born by and master of darkness and shadow, and is the most potent of all the lower spirits. The umbral casts its shadow over the sylvest, undine, and gnomon all. Umbrals are the representation of the darker nature of the mind, the unconscious that lurks beneath the surface, ready to subvert the other natures. Umbrals are called upon by magicians rarely, as they are unpredictable and capricious, as well as capable and intelligent.

Powers

An umbral can, with a simple virulence attempt, cause any shadow to take on a menacing and frightening shape, snuff out a candle, cause a torch or fire to dim, or darken any room not lit by sunlight or moonlight. Anyone present for such a display must make a quick contest of lore versus virulence or else be gripped with supernatural fear, limiting his wits by one. If the mortal wins, he becomes aware of the umbral.

If an undine ever limits the wits of a mortal to zero, that mortal become paralyzed or otherwise overwhelmed by fear, and panics, fleeing to the most familiar place or else the best-lit place available to him.

6.1.6 Vulcans

The vulcan is born by and master of the flames, heavens, and lights. They represent the truer, divine nature of the mind, and seek to spread their fire over the entire world. Though they are the weakest of the lower spirits, the vulcan banishes the umbral. The vulcan's fire is a double-edged sword, for as much as it can be used to give warmth and comfort, it can bring distress and destruction as well. Vulcans are drawn out by the skilled magicians, who value their fire as well as their vigor.

Powers

A vulcan can, with a simple virulence attempt, cause any open flame or lantern to glow with supernatural brightness, making a candle into a torch or lantern, a torch or lantern into a bonfire, or a bonfire into a blaze as bright as day. The flame consumes fuel twice as fast, and burns nearly twice as hot. A vulcan can,

working with other vulcans or making a sustained attempt, cause flammable materials to catch fire or call down a bolt of lightning during a rainstorm, by accumulating target number 10 for dry, prepared tinder, or a bolt in a raging storm, or 15 to 20 for ordinary, damp wood, or a bolt during a light rain. Though vulcans love to kindle flame and call lightning, they have no intention of being bound into servitude. If they are forced to make more virulence attempts than twice their mentality, they break free of any magician's command.

A vulcan can, with a simple virulence attempt, drive away any umbral and add its margin on the attempt to any inspire attempt made in the vulcan's presence.

6.2 Angelic spirits

The angelic spirits normally go entirely unnoticed in the world. Heroes may not identify their presence with a simple lore or medicine attempt unless the spirit chooses to make itself known. In addition, anything that the angels do with the Arts cannot be identified as the work of a spirit unless the angel chooses to allow it to appear supernatural, in which case it is obviously divine.

Angels are the spiritual emanations of the sphere of Daath, the highest sphere, where the highest power of the Tree sits. Daath maintains ten thousand legions of angels, from the malakim who bring inspiration to humans, to krivism who shape the fabric of the worlds, to the seraphim who maintain fate itself.

6.2.1 General Powers

There are seven Arts possessed by angels, in addition to the three Arts of the Choirs. All Arts may be activated with a simple virulence attempt.

- The Art of Illumination — the angel produces supernatural, brilliant white light that both illuminates and warms. The light fills any space, lighting it as though the sun was shining.
- The Art of Firmament — the angel spins threads of heavenly matter from the thoughts of mortals, providing any mortal with an object of his desire. This Art cannot create anything living.
- The Art of Division — the angel perfectly separates any non-living thing into components, opening a way through an impassable barrier or completely unmaking any manufactured item.
- The Art of Discernment — the angel sets lights in the firmament of a mortal's mind, laying his soul bare and allowing the angel to perfectly determine the veracity of his words.
- The Art of Fertility — the angel makes any stretch of land or individual supernaturally fertile, capable of taking and growing any seed.

- The Art of Command — the angel gives a single, simple command that is obeyed without question by any animal.
- The Art of Repose — the angel places any one individual or thing in a state of complete relaxation and rest. Any movement is brought to a halt, and the individual wants nothing more than to enter a supernatural sleep which lasts for a number of days equal to the angel's virulence.

6.2.2 Malakim

Malakim are the heavenly messengers, the muses, who visit mortals and fill them with inspiring light. They are angels of the mind. It is the oldest art of the malakim to illuminate the truth or produce visions in mortals. The holiest of sages are served by a host of malakim, who provide them with wisdom and allow them to spread the light of truth to others.

Debased and demonic malakim use their craft to confuse and bewilder, or to produce false visions. Most demons were once malakim, and retain some of their art, although it invariably lacks the light of truth, and can be defeated with mortal faith.

Upon receiving a vision from a Malak, a hero permanently gains a point of faith, even if he does not follow any of the monotheisms. Fallen malakim do not possess this ability, and no hero may gain this benefit twice.

Powers

A malak can, by making a simple virulence attempt, activate the Art of Vision which is innate to its choir. The Art of Vision provokes a inspirational ecstatic fit in any one mortal, who experiences divine inspiration and guidance for their actions.

The lowest malakim have virulence 2, MN 5, WT 4, resistance 4. More powerful malakim can have virulence up to 4, MN up to 8, WT up to and resistance up to 8 or 9. Malakim can produce ephemera at will, and may maintain a number of ephemera equal to their resistance. They may empower one ephemera per turn, and may work countermagic as though they had figment 2.

6.2.3 Kruvim

Kruvim are the heavenly soldiers and artists. They are angels of the body, and they have learned a number of arts to shape and command the physical, fundamental world. It is the kruvim who intercede on behalf of the worthiest of mortals. In the rarest of cases, a kruv may actually appear in all his splendor before a mortal.

Demonic kruvim have become tainted with the matter that they shape, and use their power to coerce and terrify mortals. Kruvim are the least numerous, but the most powerful of the demons, and several fallen arch-kruvim

are powerful demon princes. Kruvim frequently tempt mortals with promises of power.

Upon being visited by a Kruv, a hero is blessed with superb capability, permanently increasing his Vitality and Agility by one. His threshold increases, but his resistance remains the same. No hero may gain this benefit twice. Fallen kruvim frequently offer this or other powers as part of a pact.

Powers

A kruv can, by making a simple virulence attempt, activate the Art of Shaping which is innate to its choir. The Art of Shaping causes solid stone to flow to whatever shape the malak wishes, or turns the air solid, or whips the sea into steel-hard glass. In short, the Art of Shaping allows the malak to produce miraculous rearrangement of matter.

The lowest kruvim have virulence 3, MN 4, WT 2 resistance 3. More powerful malakim can have virulence up to 5, MN up to 8, WT up to 5, and resistance up to 7 or 8. Kruvim can take on physical form, dividing 9–22 points between their VT and AG, and have any one training at master level, and +4–8 worth of any other trainings.

6.2.4 Seraphim

Seraphim are the heavenly rulers and planners. They are the angels of the soul, and it is their ancient art to read and shape the future. It is the seraphim who command the angels, and from their ranks are drawn most of the archangels. A seraph who appears to a mortal invariably gives the advantage of fortune, as well as the gift of prophecy.

Those seraphim who have fallen are the most sad of the demons, because they were closest to heavenly truth when they threw it away. Demonic seraphim command fate itself, and tempt mortals with knowledge of, or promise of dominion over, the future.

Upon receiving a visit from a Seraph, a hero permanently gains the mastery virtue for the Lore or Prayer trainings, representing the supernatural aid and wisdom that was passed on. No hero may gain this benefit twice. Fallen seraphim can bestow this a benefit on a hero by confirming a pact with him, although this is almost never worth it.

Powers

A seraph can, by making a simple virulence attempt, activate the Art of Fate which is innate to its choir. The Art of Fate reveals the future of any one individual mortal, revealing if he is destined for greatness or folly, in general terms.

The lowest seraph has virulence 2, MN 6, WT 4, resistance 6. More powerful seraphim can have virulence up to 6, MN up to 10, WT up to 8, and resistance up to 12. Seraphim can perform miracles.

6.3 Ghosts

Not every spirit that sheds the mortal coil is truly ready to pass on out of the world. Some simply lack the energy to break all their psychic ties to the world, or are too filled with emotion at the time of death.

6.3.1 General Powers

Ghosts are generally invisible and intangible, although their emotional presence is often felt subconsciously by any heroes in the vicinity. Ghosts have no general powers other than those germane to their type.

6.3.2 Restful ghosts

Sometimes, a departed ghost does not have enough strength, or is too concerned with earthly things to make the journey out of the world. If this happens, but the soul is not filled with a powerful emotion, the spirit generally falls into a slumber near the place of its death.

To anyone with appropriate sensitivity of mind, they can make a simple presence attempt to see the ghost. They generally appear as faint human forms standing with blank expressions, or els in positions of repose, with absent or inconspicuous marks of their death. A simple lore attempt can rouse a relatively young restful ghost, who will and will answer a few questions to the bet of its knowledge.

Restful ghosts are very common, and can be found tied to any place that is old enough. If a man can rouse a restful ghost and convince it of the worthiness of his cause, they frequently offer their help. With the assistance of a place's restful ghosts, a magician can create powerful works of magic, usually wards.

Powers

A restful ghost is was a mortal, and has the stats it had in life, though it may no longer make vitality, agility, or wit-based attempts. Keep in mind that the default mortal MN is 3, and mortal resistance is $5 - VT$, not $8 - VT$. Restful ghosts have a virulence equal to their previous level with the lore training.

A willing restful ghost may be used in any sustained inscribe attempt. He may add the resistance of the ghost to the strength, radius, or barrier of any static charm, marker, or ward, respectively, that he creates. That ghost becomes inexorably linked with the magic, and the two cannot be separated until the inscription is broken. Once the magic is broken, the ghost is laid to rest.

6.3.3 Noisy ghosts

Not all departed spirits are as peaceful and generally agreeable as restful ghosts. Those who die ruled by strong passions frequently birth noisy ghosts. These

spirits are not only usually aware of the physical world, but they have a definite and usually malicious interest in it.

A noisy ghost will either haunt a specific place (usually, but not always where it died), or else follow a specific individual, often the one responsible for its death. Noisy ghosts are not common.

Powers

A noisy ghost is was a mortal, and has the stats it had in life, though it may no longer make vitality, agility, or wit-based attempts. Keep in mind that the default mortal MN is 3, and mortal resistance is 5 – VT, not 8 - VT. Restful ghosts have a virulence equal to their previous level with the lore training.

A noisy ghost may generate attributes in order to interact with the environment if it becomes particularly excited, and may engage mortals in resistance combat, using its virulence its level in esoterica.

To manifest, it makes a simple virulence attempt, and adds the margin to their resistance. They then divide these points among vitality and agility, and take on a semi-tangible form capable of short, violent spells of motion. Physical attacks cannot destroy this form, only exorcism or ephemeral attacks. Charmed items intended for this purpose or wards may harm and drive away noisy ghosts.

6.4 Supernal spirits

Supernal spirits are the lesser divinities and servants of the lesser divinities, who are wholly concerned with world and with humans. This is to be contrasted with the alien inattention of the angelic spirits, the insane divided focus of astral spirits, and the elemental ferocity of lower spirits.

There are a number of true supernal divinities in each sphere, and all are of completely unmatched power, save for the entire might of Daat. Each supernal divinity has its own order of spirits that serve it. The ones described here are common to all spheres, and other varieties of supernal spirits will be introduced in further supplements.

The supernal spirits are second only to the powers of Daat, and the two often compete for the worship of man, as well as arguing over jurisdiction. Powerful supernal spirits, as well as the true supernal divinities, are often worshipped by humans, and they are what the Daathan faiths call pagan.

6.4.1 General Powers

Supernal spirits have a truly bewildering variety of powers, each variety wholly unlike the next. The one defining feature of all supernal spirits is that, after their spiritual birth, they invariably incarnate a physical body, which they possess as though it had faith 1.

A supernal creature's body will not age or decay over time. If wounded, it will heal. Any supernal spirit which has been slain physically will reform its

body at a rate of one point of vitality or agility per year. A simple medicine attempt will allow brief contact with the spirit as it reforms, but it is unable to use any of its powers.

Supernal spirits often have powers specific to the shape of their bodies. Many have natural weapons that count as knives or clubs with integrity equal to the spirit's virulence.

6.4.2 Children of the Earth

These are the lowest and most common spirits of the Supernal Divinities. They take the forms of slight or diminutive humans who are surprisingly hardy and skilled at woodcraft, or else as various animals with the gift of speech. Children of the earth abhor metal, and are slain permanently if they are slain with any metal weapon.

Children of the earth can be found wherever human presence is felt only lightly. They are peaceful, albeit mischievous and sometimes troublesome. When dealt with correctly, children of the earth are the best guides that can be found, and can deal well with any troublesome lower spirits.

Powers

Children of the earth are generally prowess 1, virulence 1-2, VT 2-3, AG 4-5, MN 3-4, WT 2-3, resistance 4-6. They may speak to and understand the language of the humans in their region as well as the native tongue of supernal spirits, lower spirits, and may converse with any animal or plant. Animals and plants have only a limited understanding of the world, however, and such conversations only reveal vague impressions, not concrete facts.

Particularly old children of the earth have advanced to virulence 2-3, MN 4-6, WT 3-4, and resistance up to 8. These old ones have learned more tongues and are naturally accepted as superiors by younger children of the earth.

Any child of the earth may make a simple virulence attempt to command any living thing without free will. In addition, a child of the earth can engage a lower spirit in a sustained contest of virulence, to a target number of the other spirit's resistance. The losing spirit is driven off.

6.4.3 Neria

A neri is an aquatic spirit, possessing a body that is half human and half fish. All their skin is particularly tough, like a dolphin, particularly on the single finned tail they possess instead of legs. Neria have gills on their backs, on either side of their spine. Their hands are not webbed, but their arms are powerful and finned.

Neri are fundamentally estranged from human society, living in vast undersea kingdoms and rarely interacting with humans at all. There are several methods through which humans can attract their attention, however, and their patronage is without exception useful.

Powers

Neri generally have advanced to prowess 1-3, virulence 2-3, VT 4-5, AG 2-3, MN 4-5, WT 3-4, and resistance up to 6-7 over their incredibly long lifespans. They can speak fluently to any creature of the sea or any supernal spirit, but know no human languages. They must learn human languages, or else humans must learn the supernal tongue to speak with them.

Neria can change their shape into a human shape, to walk on land, appearing as invariably beautiful humans. However, neria in human form are infertile and unable to breed with humans.

Neri can, with a simple virulence attempt, shape any piece of bone or coral into whatever shape they wish, so their arms, armour, and tools are invariably coral in whole or in part. A neri can sing with its virulence, replicating the functions of any social skill even if the neri has no common language with the listener.

6.4.4 Norns

A norn is a divinatory, magical, and oracular spirit, always female. Norns are always encountered either alone or in a group of three. When alone, they tend to be completely unstable and sometimes unwilling to prophesy. When in a group, one always appears young, one middle aged, and one ancient.

Powers

Norns have a baffling array of powers, and should simply be ascribed whatever statistics and abilities the GM feels is appropriate. If any violence is made against them, they simply vanish or else engage the heroes in resistance combat. All norns have master-level lore and esoterica, and resistances up to 10.

6.5 Astral spirits

Astral spirits hail from the heavens, literally. They dwell in one of the twelve astrological Houses in the Etherial Sphere, where they maintain the stars, record the movement of the spheres, and worship the Sun, which never sets.

Astral spirits have a number of agendas in the Spheres of Man, none the least of which is the propagation of sun worship among humans. Astral spirits therefore grant boons to those who worship the sun, and help those faiths who revere the sun appropriately, preserving their empires and extending their reach.

6.5.1 General Powers

All astral spirits may make themselves visible with a simple virulence attempt, appearing as shimmering humans who visibly radiate with power. All may make a simple virulence attempt to light its entire presence as brightly as a bonfire.

Any astral spirit instantly identifies the presence and specifics of any charm, marker, or ward in its presence, as inscription draws its power from the heavens. In addition, an astral spirit is aware of any attempt to divine astrologically within a number of leagues equal to its virulence.

6.5.2 Astra

An aster is a manlike spirit of Etheris. They are the single most common variety of astral spirit, and frequently come to the spheres of man when they are invoked by mortal ritual. They are well known for fighting in the armies of those who have Astral blessing, and have even been employed by the hosts of the Angelic spirits at times.

Aster appear, when they manifest, as inhumanly beautiful humans with the sign of their House clearly emblazoned upon their chest and forehead.

Powers

An aster generally has virulence 2, MN 5, WT 4, resistance 4. More powerful astra can have virulence up to 4, MN up to 8, WT up to and resistance up to 8. In addition, anyone or anything who is marked with the sign of the zodiac to whose house the aster belongs may channel the aster's power, adding a number of points equal to the aster's virulence to the channeler's attributes or trainings as long as the aster remains present to offer this. No one may channel more than one spirit at once.

An aster may possess a suit of armor or a simulacrum that is marked with its zodaical sign. They take this body as though it had faith 1, vitality equal to its integrity, and agility equal to their virulence. An aster may shuck this body at any time.

Mythic, A ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Appendix A

Songs of Heroes

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Heroes are nothing without the tales which are told about them. It is meaningless to say that Odysseus was the strongest or the wisest man in his kingdom, or simply to say that he was cursed and it took him many years to return home. If that were all that needed to be said, the Odyssey would be considerably shorter and less interesting.

Neither, in MYTHIC, is it enough to simply create heroes and compare the numbers that the system gives you about them. It is the responsibility of the GM to tell a story, to provide the heroes with obstacles to overcome, villains to defeat, and boons to gain.

This appendix provides most everything you need to know to tell a MYTHIC story. The Hero's Journey section covers our version of the structure

of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, which describes the structure common to most hero myths that supplied the thematic inspiration for MYTHIC.

The Metaphysics section provides details on what makes the world of MYTHIC tick, from what matter is made of to why it does the things it does, to what separates spirits and souls. Finally, the Metaphysics section discusses the World Tree, Yggdrasil, upon which the worlds of

A.1 The Hero's Journey

The monomyth, or Hero's Journey is an idea originated by Joseph Campbell, and holds that hero myths tend to follow a specific structure. He states that, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

While there should be plenty of room for originality in your own MYTHIC stories, we present here the general structure of the monomyth for inspiration and variation.

A.1.1 General Breakdown

A MYTHIC story is told made up of scenes, one or more of which is completed in a session of play. A single scene represents an individual leg of a journey, an interaction, a fight, or any other block of narrative that can be easily separated from other scenes by a change of cast or setting.

Each of the elements of a MYTHIC story should take several scenes, although some of them culminate in single, highly charged scenes. The bulk of the heroic story is taken up by the Trial and Error section, in which the heroes encounter numerous challenges before reaching the heart of the story.

When creating a story, it is first important to consider what the overarching story is going to be. What is the evil that needs to be vanquished, the wrong that must be righted, or the trial that must be completed.

Once this is decided, create a flowchart-style diagram, of all the ways that your players could take the story, and all the ways that you can sensibly keep them to the intended purpose of the story. If you are staging your story in a world of your own devising, create maps of the places and lists of the people that will play important roles in the story. If you are using one of the forthcoming MYTHIC worldbooks, make sure you and your players are familiar with the area where you are setting your game, and with the world in general. It is recommended, in all games, to have players work on creating their heroes as a group, so they can connect them to each other and to the story.

A.1.2 Departure

Heroes, before they rose to legendary status, were great, if ordinary men and women. They lived their lives, and while people around them might suspect that they were destined for greater things, they did the things that people did. They played, they laughed, they loved, they lost, but most of all they worked.

People destined for heroism were always a little bit different. They always stood out a little. They may have blended in fine, but people around them invariably sensed something about them. Like they were a little bit more *real*. Think of heroes as sleeper cells so deep asleep that they don't even know they're sleeper cells until they here The Call.

The Call

Then, something happens to the hero. Something changes, and the hero is called to action for the good of the people around them, or perhaps simply to save themselves from destruction. They are heroes because, upon hearing the call, they may turn away at first, but they are drawn into the journey, inevitably.

Refusing the call may be a very sensible response. It's what any sane person would do. But bravery requires a bit of insanity.

Those unwilling to head the call, or who shrink from it at first, often return to their lives to realize that *they can't go back*. Their loved ones, their homes, their very homelands may suffer for their lack of action. They may themselves be threatened by someone who doesn't think they'll stay out of it. Eventually, however, the heroes cross the Threshold.

The Threshold

By stepping across the threshold, the heroes give up everything that is known and familiar to them. They leave their world, their homeland, or at least their homes. There should be at least a scene of journey, culminating in one single moment where the heroes realize that they have crossed a boundary. They have stepped over a line, have broken a seal, have descended through a gate, or whatever.

Often there is some sort of guardian at the threshold, who must be tricked, defeated, or otherwise negotiated before it is possible to cross. This is the first real challenge, beyond merely resolving to embark, that the heroes face. The guardian is often some sort of supernatural entity, perhaps a spirit, who may not have anything personally against the heroes or their cause. It is simply there to delineate a boundary. Once crossed, the hero slips Into the Night.

Into the Night

Once past the threshold, the heroes are in unfamiliar territory. Make this evident. Things have changed, even if they are minor, they should be unsettling. For a few scenes before the heroes reach the nadir of their unfamiliarity, the

players should be feeling more and more unsettled. Something is *wrong*, and it's going to get worse before it gets better.

The scenes of this phase shouldn't be dangerous obstacles. They should instead introduce the heroes into the specifics of their quest, and should catch glimpses of something dark and dangerous beyond. At the last scene of this phase, the heroes should understand how utterly alone they will be in the fulfillment of their journey, and how they have only each other to count on.

A.1.3 Initiation

During this stage of their quest, the heroes are already far enough from their home (in spirit, if not in physical distance), that it is meaningless to emphasize the separation.

Instead, the unfamiliar should gradually become familiar. You should continue to introduce new things to the heroes throughout the Initiation, but you should stick to a pattern that the heroes are beginning to grasp.

The ultimate goal of the Initiation arc of the story is the Rebirth segment. After fighting their way through the Trials, having the secret Revealed to them, and vanquishing the Ultimate Test, while all they expected was the Reward, the heroes are forever changed. They are Reborn, and take a bit of the Night into them.

But after taking the Night into their beings, they also take a bit of the light that they're bringing into the Night and back to civilization. While they will never be the same, they are made into something that is better.

Trial and Error

This is the main portion of any MYTHIC story. The heroes are faced with Trial after Trial on their journey, each its own scene, and often set apart by scenes of rest, travel, or recuperation. Note that these Trials are not always fights. In fact, fights should be relatively rare, as even though heroes are skilled in combat, there is a real possibility that they can die in any given fight.

Trials should be mechanical challenges as well as roleplaying and narrative challenges. Use the mechanics and the number of the Trials to emphasize the difficulty of the road. The Trials continue, with possibilities for loss of hope or crises of faith. At the moment when it seems bleakest, the final Trial in a journey that by now seems littered with Trials, the actual obstacle is overcome or swept away and the Revelation takes place.

Revelation

Suddenly, all becomes clear. Revelation ends the road of Trials, and (although Trials certainly remain), the heroes have an encounter that permanently alters their view of the heroes. The Revelation may be sought, like an audience with a king, sorcerer, or an oracle, or it may be a moment of miraculous supernatural inspiration. The revelation takes place in a single charged scene of information

and interaction.

Often, the agency providing the Revelation is supernatural. Whatever its nature, however, it does at least one of two things: a) the nature of the Night is revealed, as are the steps required to overcome it b) a figure of power, trust, and authority accepts the heroes and is willing to offer reconciliation and aid.

Whatever the Revelation, it is clear that the quest is only half done. The nature and difficulty of the Ultimate Test is revealed, if it was not already known. The heroes are often given a chance to turn back, but the moment that they choose not to, they are ready to face the Ultimate Test.

Ultimate Test

The Ultimate Test is the ultimate heart of the Night. Nothing that the heroes have seen compares. They enter a multi-scene confrontation with the dark. Not only are the heroes' individual resolves and mettle tested, but their cohesion as a group is put to the test.

The price of failure is unthinkable, and the heroes must pull through. If, for whatever reason, the heroes fail, a quirk of fate, innate ability, or outside aid causes them to be merely rebuffed to struggle with more Trials until they eventually face the Ultimate Test.

Be wary of accidentally killing heroes with the Ultimate Test. If you fear that this is an inevitable possibility, either have some way that they can make a sacrifice that merits resurrection as a part of Rebirth, or else have some way for them to return to the Ultimate Test once slain.

Rebirth

As mentioned above, Rebirth is the most important moment in the Initiation arc. Having overcome the Ultimate Test and the Night itself, the heroes now find themselves are the epicenter of what was once the Night, having brought light into the darkness. They take something of both the Night and the light into themselves and become irreversibly changed.

The heroes are altered, made into something new. Perhaps they gain some new perspective, or some boon, but it is important to differentiate this from the Reward. Perhaps the rebirth is nothing more than a symbol, but it remains something that the heroes have encountered together. Having been Reborn together, the heroes are Rewarded together.

Reward

The Reward covers not only whatever spoils gained from the plundering of the Night and the Ultimate Test, but also whatever the supernatural or mortal agencies that charged the heroes with the quest promised as a reward.

The heroes gain whatever boon they sought (or did not, as the case may be), and begin the Return arc of their journey.

A.1.4 Return

The Return is a sort of an epilogue to the story, the winding-down of the story. This does not mean that the story has to stop, or that the Return is uninteresting. It is just that the journey has peaked. It reached its darkest hour and it reached its highest point. Now all that remains is to Return home, and to share whatever Reward was gained with the rest of the world.

Refusal, Flight, or Rescue

It is entirely possible for the heroes to Refuse to Return. They may remain in the place where the Night was, and build a new kingdom or home. Upon vanquishing the Ultimate Test, they have proven their worth and may now dig in and enjoy their Reward. If they choose to do this, their place of battle becomes their new home, and further adventures may occur.

If the heroes choose to Return, there are generally two ways that this can happen. First, they can return the way that they have come, often facing the same Trials, but now easily overcoming them or finding them defeated. Second, they can be Rescued by some outside agency, just when it appeared that they would become martyrs in the fulfillment of their quest.

If the heroes are Rescued, this should probably happen before the Reward.

The Threshold

The heroes cross the Threshold in reverse possibly dealing with the Guardian or something. This signifies that their Return has been completed, and that they are again at home.

The End

The heroes, upon reaching their home or choosing to Refuse Return, are now free to live. They may now be able to do whatever it is seemed impossible before. Perhaps they can now cross between the Night and the rest of the world effortlessly, or perhaps they no longer need to. The heroes' victory is complete, for now at least.

Further adventures for a group of heroes may now take the form of facing a new evil attempting to take the place of the Night, where the same heroes rise up against it. In another case, the original heroes have left, died, or hung up their swords. A new generation of heroes rises up against a threat inspired by the original heroes.

In any case, the next adventure need not follow the hero's journey exactly. The story told, variations should be explored, and the story in general should be used as a seed from which to naturally grow new stories, with the same heroes and characters or new ones.

Appendix B

Metaphysics

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First, understand, that *This is not Physics*. This is not chemistry, biology, geology, or anything of the sort. The natural laws of the world of MYTHIC are a rough approximation of those described by science, not an actual copy.

Back in the introduction to MYTHIC, we especially mentioned that the game world has its own natural laws. This section details them, in all their systemic and imaginary glory. This section isn't strictly necessary to run a game of MYTHIC, but it helps. it also exists to give a brief introduction of Yggdrasil, the world tree on which all of the MYTHIC game worlds are arranged.

B.1 Matter and Mind

The picture of the world formed by alchemists is not entirely inaccurate. The cosmos of MYTHIC is composed, on the primordial level, by three elements whose true nature is entirely beyond human comprehension.

Primordial matter is the easiest to understand. Matter is stuff. Physical, solid, featureless, inert stuff. Primordial matter forms the lower layer of the cosmos, expanding infinitely in all directions.

Primordial metal is much like primordial matter, and runs in veins through all matter. These veins conduct mind but are not changed by it, and are the reasons for the incongruities and tiny asymmetries that give rise to diversity in the cosmos.

Primordial mind, on the other hand, is thought, emotion, and entire consciousnesses. The difficult part to imagine is that primordial mind is also entirely homogenous and without property. Primordial mind composes the upper half of the cosmos, expanding infinitely in all directions.

The only property of primordial mind is that it motivates and shapes primordial matter, and the only property of primordial matter is that it conducts and is motivated by primordial mind. Primordial mind flows through metal, but does not shape it.

B.1.1 Division and diversity

Just as mind is conducted by matter, the two become hopelessly intertwined into a number of hybrid states, some of which are primarily mind, some of which are primarily matter. These hybrids further hybridize, and the result is a murky and turbulent and not entirely homogenous division between mind and matter.

This border is, at its division, an ocean of a substance called fluida, extending infinitely in all directions, but contained between the two infinities of mind and matter. Fluida is charged matter, or else is subdued mind. Fluida which flows down, as it randomly does sometimes, into the matter, causes the matter to become informed into an incredible array of forms. Fluida that flows up, however, causes the mind to take on its own spectrum of colorful, different thoughts and ideas. This colored mind is known as jiva.

Mind naturally flows faster than matter, so the changes on the mind were more pronounced. Jiva began forming elaborate conduits in the mind, throwing off an infinity of shadows into the primordial mind, and forming an increasingly complex and resonant landscape of minds. These minds gradually congregated into loose aggregates where rough approximate categories of minds gathered.

One of these aggregates broke apart for no well-understood reason, sending mental shrapnel in all directions. These highly charged streams of jiva poured down on the ocean of fluida, and covering a stretch of the infinite border, encountered numerous surfacing veins of metal. The jiva was conducted up and down through these veins, becoming slightly changed by the matter in the jiva, until the veins became an almost living organism, nourished by the cyclical

currents of jiva between the two infinities.

That organism is one of the many World Trees that dot the interface between the mind and the matter, the daughters of similar mental catastrophes. That World Tree is Yggdrasil

B.1.2 Yggdrasil

Yggdrasil is a tree for taking in jiva, also called essence, from the mental realms, and conducting it down through its many metallic and material parts, into the material realms, where it returns to the interface and is taken into Yggdrasil's roots from the ocean.

While flowing down through Yggdrasil, the jiva influences the matter that makes up the spheres of Yggdrasil, pocket worlds enclosed in the flesh of the Tree. The different kinds of matter in the spheres are all accounted for by the varying amounts of mind included in them. The biggest point of jiva collection within the tree is the sphere of Etheris, where all the veins experience a confluence and the jiva burns brightly in one Great Light (the sun, as seen by all the other spheres), and a thousand Lesser Lights (the stars, common to the skies of all other spheres).

The tree's own immune system is formed out of patterns of jiva throughout the gross body of the tree, the "eleventh sphere" known as Daat. The power of Daat is disseminated into thousands of angelic spirits who perform upkeep and maintenance on the tree and its spheres.

Glass

Glass does not behave the way it does in reality. Glass is invisible to jiva, and impermeable as well. As a result, glass cannot be affected by alchemy or magic, and a spirit contained in a glass vessel is incapable of escape.

Metal

Metal is similar to, but fundamentally unlike matter. It conducts mind, but is not changed by it. For this reason, metal is useful in alchemy for conducting currents of jiva and making catalysts. Metal is useful in the working of magic, and also in the entrapment of spirits.

Metal can be shaped by physical collision with matter. For this reason, metal becomes soft and malleable when it conducts enormous amounts of heat, which consists of a small amount of matter as well as a large amount of mind.

B.1.3 Living things

Wherever a large enough quantity of jiva gathers in matter, some of that jiva reaches a critical mass and becomes a soul. Souls act as metaphysical bridges between material bodies and minds, which are drawn in along with jiva from the mental realms.

Souls have manifold tendrils that extend from them invisibly, gathering small amounts of jiva from the matter around them and using it to fortify their bodies. Eventually, however the bodies fail and the souls are swept up in the tide of jiva and progress down the tree.

Souls that form without bodies are called spirits, and are influenced by the matter in which they were born. Those most closely tied to the matter are called Lower Spirits. Those that were born in the protective barriers of the spheres and are dedicated to the upkeep and maintenance of a sphere are known as Supernal spirits, and those who were born in the essence blaze that is Etheris are known as Astral spirits.

B.1.4 Celestial Elements

The sphere of Etheris houses the heavens for all the spheres of Yggdrasil. It is fed massive streams of essenc by metallic conduits running the length of the Tree, and these streams of jiva all cross at a single point, where they blaze strongly enough to be visible in the skies of all the spheres.

All of the elements in the sphere of Etheris contain a little more mind than usual, and as a result, are more spiritual and ephemeral.

B.2 Transmutation

The process of mixing mind and matter is not a continuous one. There are only a few stable mixtions, and only three primarily material ones: sky, sea, and stone. The constant movement of small amounts of jiva throughout the spheres of Yggdrasil means that even these mixtions are unstable, and naturally undergo transmutation into different forms of matter. In addition, these processes can be accelerated by the gentle addition of jiva, or else reversed entirely by the rapid addition, giving the six transmutations used by alchemists.

B.3 The Spheres of Yggdrasil

The Ten Spheres of Yggdrasil are the worlds for MYTHIC. They will be released in the five planned worldbooks for MYTHIC, *Mothers Nature* (Arcadia and Teleris), *Celestial Fathers* (Hatha and Lumen), *Children of the Gods* (Tethys and Marmaron), *The Soul gates* (Jotunheim and Deled), and *Realms of Power* (Daat, Etheris, and Abyssa). The Ten Spheres is a cosmology consisting of ten complete worlds arranged on Yggdrasil, the World Tree, whose shape comes from the Tree of Life of the kabalah.

As a cosmology, the Ten Spheres borrow heavily from astrology and from kabalah. In their creation, we used a combination of mystical and textural schema to determine how I wanted each world to feel, and a significant amount of scientific and semi-scientific modeling of landforms and climates. The rest is just an infusion of MYTHIC's magical, heroic nature to make each setting right for the game.

B.3.1 Jotunheim

The Ten Sepherot lie on the world tree, Yggdrasil. Of these, the first sephira, which gives rise to the rest of the tree, is Keter, the Crown. The highest branches of Yggdrasil serve to bring in the nourishment for the rest of Yggdrasil.

What is that nourishment? It is the very essence of life. The forges of creation, whence spring all the shades of the Ten Spheres, lie in the highest branches: The highest sephira, Keter, which houses the sphere of Jotunheim.

Jotunheim is the land of giants, of fire and ice, and is a place of raw power and godlike might. The Jotun, the giants, live here. They tend the mighty smelting pits and forges that birth thousands of millions of shades.

Mercury is the planet associated with Jotunheim, and quicksilver is its metal.

B.3.2 Arcadia

Jotunheim is bound to Arcadia by might.

Though not as high as Keter, the sephira of Hochmah is in the high boughs of Yggdrasil. Here still, the creative impulse is strong. The leaves of this sphere draw in power from the pure sky, but the tempered power of Jotunheim also flows down into it.

Hochmah is the sephir of the bountiful paradise of Arcadia. Arcadia is a place of power, and though it is peopled by men, its men are fae and possessed of great magic. The faelings and fae beasts alike of Arcadia are enchanted, and possess such glamour that they can lie reality itself.

The metal associated with Arcadia is copper, and its planet is Venus.

B.3.3 Telluris

Arcadia is bound to Telluris by Mother Nature.

Though it is just as high as the branches of Hochmah, the sephira of Binah is cut off from the might and creative impulses of Keter and Hochmah. In Binah sits the throne of reason, capable of reducing all things.

While the crafting of Jiva is the path to power in Jotunheim, and cultivation is the path of Arcadia, in this sphere it is Study which makes a man great.

Telluris sits opposed to and bound to Arcadia. Telluris is much like the Earth, but not as it is known to you. Wisdom flows into Telluris wisdom from Arcadia's purity, creativity, and nature.

It is associated with the metal iron, and with the planet Earth.

Telluris has the Silver Moon of Luna.

B.3.4 Hatha

Telluris is bound to Hatha by Iron.

The sephira of Chesed lies upon Yggdrasil's middle branches, shaded

somewhat from the sun by the higher boughs. But these branches are nourished by the sap of Reason from Binah.

Chesed houses the sphere of Hatha. Hatha is the home of the initiative and the motive principle, incarnated in the fearsome Dragon King. The men of Hatha learn reason and study from Telluris. The fierce daegs of Hatha learn ferocity and strength from the Dragon King.

Hatha is associated with the planet Mars, and like Telluris, with the metal iron.

Hatha has the Golden Moons of Phobos and Diemos by Arcadia, inside which are imprisoned Great Powers which ran amok before the Dragon King bound them.

B.3.5 Lumen

Hatha is bound to Lumen by the Divine Father.

Gevurah, the heart, sits across from Chesed. Though Gevurah is might, might is nothing without direction. The motive principle of the Dragon King, as he sleeps in Hatha, is the direction behind the strength of this sphere.

In the sphere of Lumen, four races of man walk. Lumen is the king of spheres, from here all things are ruled. From Hatha, the many men of Lumen learn strength.

Tin is the metal of Lumen, and Jupiter is its planet.

Lumen is Lord of the Four Great Moons that lead its men.

Bright Io, the Sulfurous Moon, leads the hard-skinned Sora across Lumen's deserts. Poor Europa, the Alumite Moon, guides the Men of Lumen in their great cities. Great Ganymede, the Zinc Moon, teaches the Tesks who haunt the lowlands of Lumen. Errant Callisto, the Stimous Moon watches over the Gaunts who swarm through Lumen's jungles.

B.3.6 Etheris

The Rising Sun binds Lumen to Etheris.

The sephira tiferet is at the heart of the World Tree, its rays stretching to all of the sephiroth, save Malkhut. Tiferet houses the sun and stars, and adorns the skies of all other spheres.

It is the sphere of Etheris, where the raw power of Ether is too great for Men to live. To the Six Spheres of Man, the sun and stars shine Etheric Power. Magicians in all of the Six Spheres of Man perform magic with Etheric Signs and Devices.

Etheris is the confluence of all jiva-bearing veins in Yggdrasil, and the focal point of the sphere is the Sun, which, together with the stars, is visible in the skies of every sphere.

Etheric power is changed and reflected by the moons of all spheres, shining into the nights. Lunar magic is ultimately taken from Etheris, but it remains altered by the moon that intercepted it.

B.3.7 Tethys

Tethys is bound to Etheris by the Setting Sun.

Netzach, the sephira of Tethys, is the sephirah of victory and eternity. Tethys is a land of eternal kingdoms and vast oceans, on which its men sail. The setting sun's power flows into Tethys, the power of Etheris stronger here than in any other sphere.

Tethys and Marmaron are the last of the spheres of Men, and the last Primal spheres. They are the Children of the Tree as much as they are its roots. Through Tethys, Yggdrasil is nourished with life-giving waters, and through Marmaron it is fed with form-giving stone.

Lead is the metal of Tethys, and Saturn is its planet.

The night skies of Tethys are dominated by the Great Nickel Moon Titan, and its court of Lesser Moons.

B.3.8 Marmaron

Marmaron is bound to Tethys by the Children of the Gods.

The penultimate root of Yggdrasil is the sephira of Hod, and it spreads out over the ground, absorbing substance to nourish the Tree. In this sephira is the sphere of Marmaron. Marmaron is a word tilted on its side, whose seasons are intense and whose oceans are small and landlocked.

Marmaron is the base of the Pillar of Reason. It is here that the magic of Study is strongest, most able to reduce the world, and most plentiful.

Telluris sits opposed to and bound to Tethys. Patience and victory flows out of Netzach and into Hod, where it becomes submission and resplendent majesty. Marmaron feels old, and it is a place where time marches on unheeded by the people.

It is associated with the metal cobalt, and with the planet Uranus.

B.3.9 Dolmus

Domus is bound to Marmaron by the sign of Poles.

The highest branch of the taproot of Yggdrasil holds the sephira of Yesod, within which resides the sphere of Dolmus, where there are the two Polar Gates, each thousands of miles in diameter. It is through these gates that the torrents of jiva and souls travel to reach Abyssa. It is the dictate of the Most High that the gates must be kept open, but also that nothing must be allowed to reverse through the gate and return to the spheres.

To secure this, a race of winged deva exist to patrol the gates. They are more than capable of preventing any strong-willed soul from returning to the spheres, and no demon can hope to pass their barriers. However, if a mortal in the spheres willingly calls a demon, the deva are unable to prevent its return, and it breaks free.

Dolmus is associated with the metal sulfur, and with the planet Neptune.

B.3.10 Abyssa

Abyssa is bound to Dolmus by the Gates.

At the tip of the taproot of Yggdrasil, the deepest it penetrates into the hard, unyielding ground that surrounds it, lies the sephira of Malchut, the sphere of Abyssa, the land of the Dead. It is the place that the cascade of Jiva that flows from the highest sephirah of Keter ends, bearing with it a torrent of mortal souls, swept up from their spheres.

Abyssa is also the prison of the renegade angels from the sphere of Daath. Those that rebelled were changed and exiled to live in Abyssa until they are eventually reconciled with the Power. These demons, sorrowful and for the most part angry, content themselves with building massive kingdoms of souls, out of the decaying stuff of souls.

Demons seek, more than anything, to return to the spheres and cause havoc. Due to the vigilance of the deva in Dolmus, it is impossible for any demon to return from Abyssa into the spheres unless a mortal willingly chooses to allow the demon in.

It is associated with the planet Pluto.