

Crusade Lore

The Storytellers Screen and Book



A Storyteller Supplement for
Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade.

CRUSADE
LORE

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A Storyteller Supplement for
Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade™

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ntroduction: Cuts & Cluttery

*Now King Pride parched the countryside
And sent corbies on the wing
Till the rivers did o'erflow their banks
And stilled the thirsty land.
— Edward Hotspur, King Midas and Lady Venus*



Like a bountiful crop from a fertile field, the following harvest has been carefully cut, bundled and set aside for the table. While **Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade** is a full dish by any standards, a few morsels had to be left aside for later meals. There is a limit to how much one table (or stomach) can contain!

Enough metaphors — this book compiles various tidbits from the main rulebook. **Chapter I** features some tidbits

about the setting, including Renaissance “backgrounds” and heavy artillery.

Chapter II is geared toward the player, with Merits & Flaws, new Abilities, character concepts and information about period dress and perspective.

Chapter III dances across the fringes of the world, exposing the intrigues of vampyrs, werebeasts, ghosts and faeries, and presenting a handful of Scourge spirits for your... entertainment.

A short menu, perhaps, but a full one! Enjoy!



LEIF JONES
19 98



Chapter 1:

A World of Shadows



The Dark Fantastic world of **The Sorcerers Crusade** is full of mysteries and secrets, hidden places and unknown lands. However, there is also a vast world before the characters that they deal with every day, whether it's the local village in which magi have lived all of their lives or the road that leads to other countries. The following travelogue offers glimpses and insights into the regions of the Renaissance universe. Storytellers can use this information to paint tableaux for players as characters live out their days at home or travel vast distances.

The Ship

Impressions: Ships are cramped places. Even the best rooms on the richest carracks are Spartan compared to the luxuries available ashore. Coming aboard, everything seems chaotic — crewmen rushing back and forth; cargo being raised, lowered and stored; orders being shouted and the wary dodging rigging, beams and tools. Gear, ropes, cannons, barrels and spars seem to be lashed down randomly and obtrusively. Rude hands pile cargo on deck, and straining backs swing more below.

The trained eye recognizes an ordered routine, though. Experience dictates what needs to be done, when and by whom, whether it's the first mate or the lowliest oarsman. Limited cargo room demands that provisions be secured

wherever space permits. Every crewman understands this and moves with an eye to his surroundings.

Landlubbers can find space (i.e., get out of the way) a few feet from the rail and there look onto the limitless expanse of the sea. The tide moves everything in a most disconcerting way; only the briny tang of the air allows one to hold off a rising sense of nausea as the creaking vessel rocks and sways, far from the comfort of solid earth.

Description: The most common ship of the Renaissance is the small (50- to 70-foot-long), light (60-ton) Arab sambuc, which plies the Indian Ocean, the eastern Mediterranean and the south China seas. A sambuc can be turned on the lightest breeze and, may skirt nimbly away from rocks, pirates or patrols by maneuvering its two triangular, or lateen, sails.

The caravel, the European equivalent of the sambuc, carries explorers, merchants and messages to or from the kings of Portugal, Spain and England, throughout the Mediterranean and Atlantic. Some caravels bear a third mast with a rectangular sail, a northern innovation. In the north seas, great square-sailed carracks shudder through the icy waves, carrying hundreds of tons of cargo between the Hansetowns of Germany and the markets of England and France.

By 1492, the blend of caravel and carrack produces any number of ship designs; expert seamen can tell a ship's home port, crew and even cargo from the designs of its mast

and rigging. Columbus' flagship the *Santa Maria* is such a hybrid, a modified Portuguese merchant ship called a nao. Three masts (two rigged for powerful square sails and one, the mizzen, for lateen) and a bowsprit mark it as an Atlantic ship. The ship's cannons sit on the main deck. The roomy hold below contains the ballast and cargo. A raised poop and forecastle complete the plan.

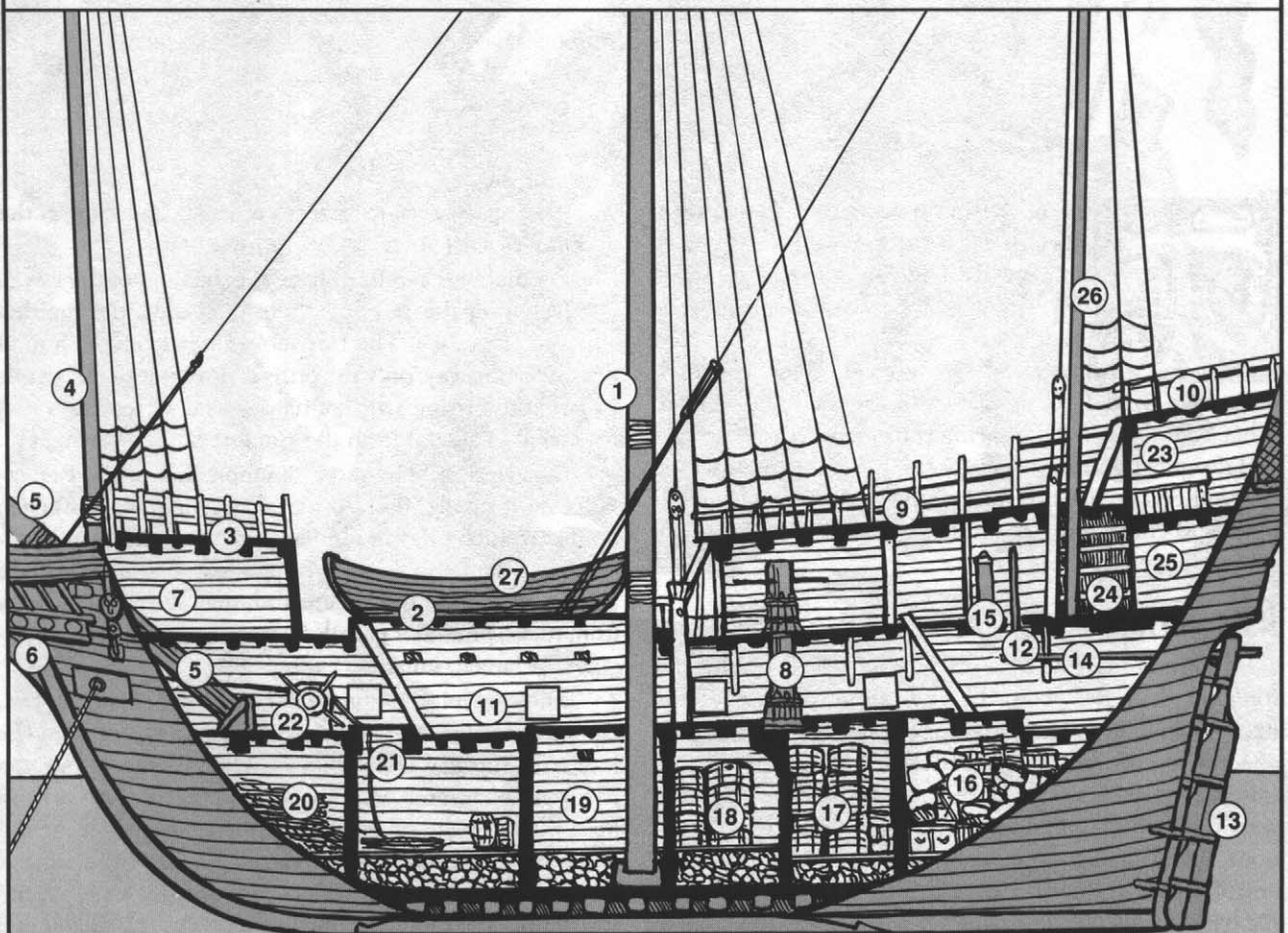
In contrast to the evolution of oceangoing craft, the oared galley still rules the Mediterranean, almost unchanged from its Byzantine and Roman days. The sleek (120-foot-long, 15-foot-beamed) war or merchant galley cruises the relatively calm and tideless sea powered by sweating ranks of oarsmen (mostly slaves and criminals) and a single,

rectangular sail. Such galleys carry all cargoes (about a ton of gear per oarsman).

The great galley, or galleass, is longer and wider, with cannons mounted on the fore and stern "castles." It is large enough, at 250 tons, to require three masts of lateen sail (and 50 men to work them). The ship is also tough enough to withstand the pounding waves of the Atlantic coast (at least in summertime). The ship's oars are used only when the galleass makes or leaves port, or during sea battles. The rowers of galleasses are often well-paid free men who are needed to fight off boarding parties.

Any passenger cabin inhabited by a noble or well-paying mage is small. It typically contains a hammock (or

SHIP



- | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mainmast | 7. Sailstore | 13. Rudder | 19. Ship's Galley | 25. Captain's Cabin |
| 2. Main Deck | 8. Capstan | 14. Tiller | 20. Boatswain's Stores | 26. Mizzenmast |
| 3. Forecastle | 9. Half Deck | 15. Binnacle | 21. Anchor Lines | 27. Longboat |
| 4. Foresprit | 10. Poop Deck | 16. Ship's Stores | 22. Anchor Windlass | |
| 5. Bowsprit | 11. Gun Deck | 17. Cargo Hold | 23. Pilot's Cabin | |
| 6. Beak | 12. Whipstaff | 18. Water Casks | 24. Officer's Bunks | |



perhaps a proper bunk built into a bulkhead); a sea chest for immediate necessities such as cloaks, daggers and spyglasses; and perhaps a small writing desk. A lantern hangs from a hook in a low beam overhead. The door might latch, but does not lock unless the traveler brings his own mechanism.

Rations are plentiful at the beginning of a voyage. Travelers and sailors are given figs and almonds for breakfast. The cook serves a hot meal of salted or smoked meat at midday. The salt air does wonders for any appetite, except for that of the seasick, and creates a powerful thirst. Wine (or, less commonly, beer) is served at meals and at sundown. However, rations decline slowly in both quantity and quality as a ship travels further from port. Even high-paying passengers may eat weevily biscuits and drink harsh, sour wine at the end of a voyage.

The Dockyard

Impressions: The dockyard is where the action is in any important city, from Zempoala in New Spain to Tidore in the Indies. Sailors, travelers, slaves and merchants from all corners of the world swarm into or out of the city in rhythm with the tides to mingle with and jostle local citizens. Cries of gulls and polyglot profanity fill the air, along with the scents of exotic cargoes, saltwater and

sweating longshoremen. The dockyard is a riot of color and noise, even in one of the gray Baltic cities of the Hanseatic League. Almost anything can happen along the sea shore without attracting too much attention — if it happens quickly.

Description: Depending on the quality of the harbor, ships may berth along many long piers that stretch outward from shore. The largest and richest ships may seek shelter at a few coveted anchorages. Small boats — smugglers' vessels, fishermen's craft, water hoys, pilot boats and rowboats or canoes — litter a bay or inlet's surface and occupy every available berth.

The piers and quays of a successful deep-water or river port are made of stone. Those of a new or shallow harbor consist of wooden beams or even planks, supported by a tangled web of ropes, cables and spars. A new-money port might have a mixture of both constructions. Most piers are one-and-a-half times to twice the length of the local beach (or the average length of the ships serviced at deep-water ports). Wagons and carts load and unload cargoes and rumble away along shore roads (which might be cobble, brick, gravel or even muddy ruts).

Large ports might have a dry dock or shipyard, a large pit resembling a quarry, located close to the water. Some

shipyards have cunning sluice gates that are opened to float ships out; others depend on brute force to lift vessels into the water. Ringing hammers join the creaking of shipyard pulleys and ropes. Carts traveling to and from the city carry planks, masts, spars and raw lumber. The largest shipyards are surprisingly fast and efficient; Venice's 60-acre, 2000-man Arsenal uses interchangeable parts and can build an entire galley in less than a week!

Beyond the port's shore road squat rows of warehouses, built low and wide for easy access. Merchants have warehouses constructed as cheaply as possible. In some ports, such as Seville, the amount of cargo delivered far outstrips warehouse space; goods are simply piled along the strand under tents and oilcloths that extend for miles, making the shore seem like a marketplace for giants.

The customs house is often the only notable building in the dockyard. Traders and shipmasters pay their port taxes, import and export fees and bribes here. Solid brick or stone construction (and hardened professional guards) make the customs house stand out. Flags or blazons of the lord of the port or the local merchants' guilds (or both) reinforce this statement of power. Merchants meet at the customs house to discuss their enterprises and make deals with each other; such transactions are posted on a signboard at a nearby tavern or even within the walls of the house itself.

Seville's Holy Inquisition maintains a customs office. Its bright-robed (and notoriously difficult-to-bribe) inspectors check all cargoes (outgoing and incoming) for forbidden books. The inspectors of other cities under other lords may search for other things (or people) that are considered suspicious.

A naval captain may use the customs house as his headquarters in wartime.

The City Street

Impressions: The city, like the docks, is bustling. City streets are rife with potential and greed. Thieves and prostitutes, water-sellers and artisans ply their trades where they can as rich burghers and head-low peasants travel by. On market days, the cries of merchants drown out even church bells. Carts rumble in bass, countered by the tenor brays of donkeys and the whinnies of overburdened horses. Children and pigs squeal and run through the narrow corridors, and the smell of human closeness mingles with the odors of dung and wood smoke. Incense temporarily overpowers these scents near the great churches or mosques. Elsewhere, the fishmarket's reek dominates. Someone is selling and someone is buying, someone is stealing and someone is always suffering.

Description: A main street in a major city such as Paris is only 15 feet wide. Others are even more narrow. Travel through the city in wheeled carriages is slow and impractical. In many cities, particularly in the old Roman world, the



law forbids wheeled vehicles on the streets before nightfall. Daylight deliveries are thus made by mules or sweating laborers. In Italy and Germany these porters are peasants come to make their fortunes. They are slaves in Spain and Turkey.

In most cities, animal and human dung settles into the middle of the muddy (or dusty, depending on the season) streets. Only the sidewalks are clean. Wealthy cities (in northern Italy and Flanders) have cobbled or bricked streets, with gutters and sewers that carry away filth. Rushes are thrown over mud and refuse in other towns, which also cuts down on the smell.

Most urban buildings are only two or three stories tall. However, as town land becomes ever more expensive, newer buildings, especially tenements, are built upward (up to seven or even 10 stories) rather than outward. These tall buildings are made of wood; brick is too heavy and cannot be supported at such heights. In the cities of Turkey and the Moslem world, high buildings are forbidden by law so streets are very narrow — two loaded donkeys cannot pass each other in Constantinople's lanes. Wide streets are the order of the day only in fabled China, and even there the vast crowds make rapid travel impossible.

Brick-walled shops, intermingled with the stone houses of the rich and the wooden shanties and tenements of the poor, line most streets. Whitewashed stucco glows amber under Italy's evening sun, and shines a blinding white at noon. Roofs in the Mediterranean are red tile. Elsewhere, they range from dull-gray slate or shingles to muddy thatches to flat adobe. Shops' large doors and shutters are flung wide. An apprentice or journeyman lurks at every entrance, eager to make a sale. Wooden awnings over shops shade customers and can be brought down to cover windows at nightfall or in case of riots.

Each square, piazza or maidun in the city may contain a statue or fountain, but definitely has a marketplace — a town without a market is no town at all. Farmers' sons sell produce here alongside the stalls of artisans and craftsmen. A wide street — perhaps 20 feet or more — leads from a square to a city gate, to allow wagons access to load and unload.

The small shops and houses of wealthy peasants lie apart from the marketplace. Many vintners, cattlemen and orchard tenders live in the city and commute to their farms.

The shops closest to the cathedral or mosque preen in the largest, cleanest and best-kept market square in the city. Here, goldsmiths and silversmiths, gem dealers and jewelers, perfumiers and apothecaries keep their clean, prosperous shops in sturdy, respectable, thick-walled buildings. Clothiers, dyers, weavers and embroiderers depend on fashion for their trade, and keep quarters near those of the monied families. Woodcarvers and joiners, potters and chandlers, farriers and smiths can be found in any city district, given the universal need for their services. Particularly unclean or odoriferous establishments such as tanneries or stockyards

are kept as close to city gates as possible, and downwind from the houses of God (and the rich).

The Tavern

Impressions: The quality of a tavern can be determined by its odor. If it smells smoky or rancid, it may not suit refined tastes. On the other hand, at some taverns the smells of roasting meat, garlic and onions, baking bread and brewing beer overwhelms those of the animals in the yard and the men sitting at long tables. Such an establishment likely offers suitable accommodations for gentlemen.

Most taverns seem dark; their rooms are large and lamps are expensive. Light filters in from leaded glass windows by day or is cast a disturbingly short distance from the fireplace at night. Strangers wait in the shadows to see what newcomers bring. Newcomers standing in the doorway wait to see what strangers inside offer.

Description: Important cities such as Rome have hundreds of taverns and inns of all classes, catering to everyone from the richest merchant princes to the poorest pilgrims. Roman inns are built on a standard pattern, copied throughout western Europe: a large front room serves as the common dining place for travelers and as the dormitory for the poor or lower class. The hearth, which is often large enough for two people to stand inside and cook meat on a spit, dominates this refectory. Long tables and benches are surrounded by fresh straw or rushes. Windows are open until sunset to let in light and air.

The kitchen is behind the main room and has its own fireplace for cooking, and sometimes shares a chimney with the main room's hearth. Rashers of smoked and salted meats and strings of dried vegetables hang in the pantry behind a wooden partition or simply in a corner of the kitchen.

If the tavern is not part of a village or city, it probably has outbuildings for horses, mules, pigs and cattle and chickens. Even in the city, the tavern keeper raises pigs and chickens in the alley or rear garden.

A series of variously sized rooms await their occupants upstairs. The landlord and his family may live here or in quarters off the kitchen. Servants sleep in the kitchen. Serving girls and maids sleep with travelers who have money. Upstairs rooms have beds and washbasins for rich travelers (the best rooms have their own fireplaces) or piles of straw for middle-class wayfarers who can afford to sleep away from the refectory.

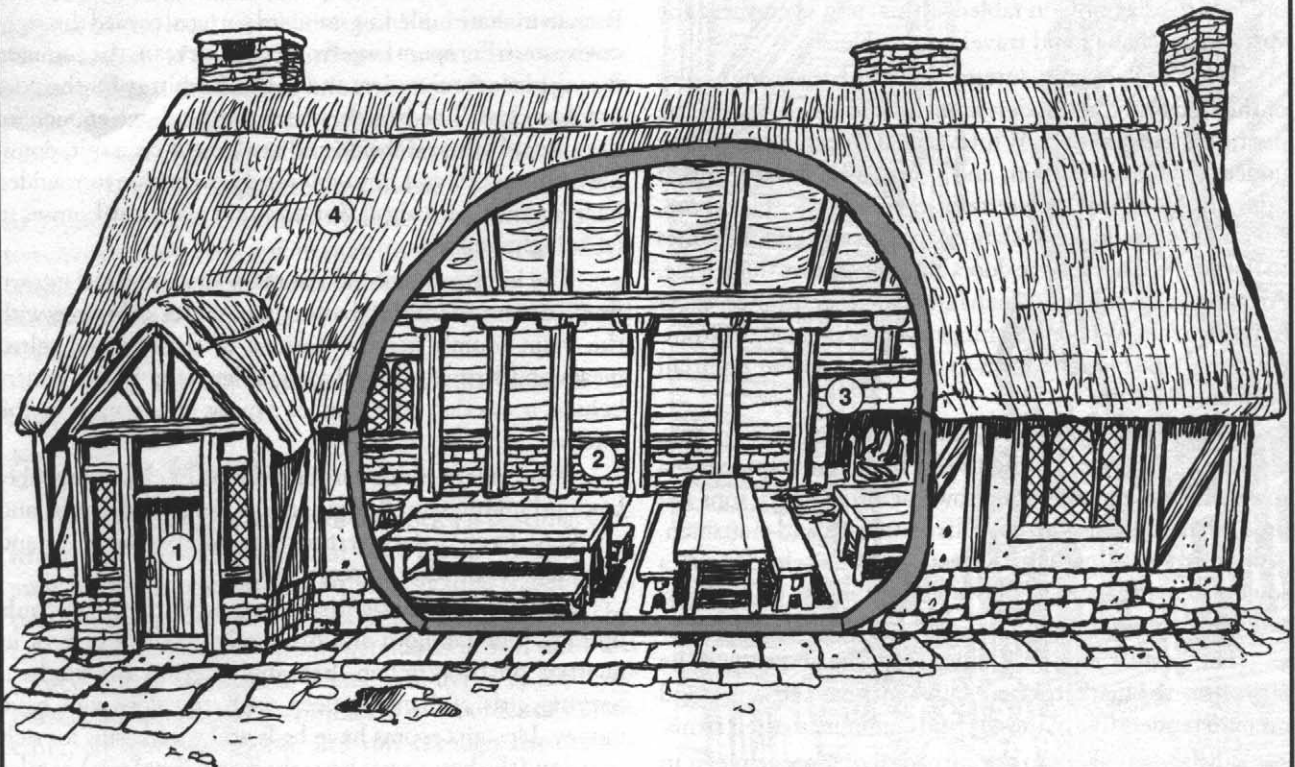
Very well-to-do taverns have cellars for making beer and storing wine. Poor inns make do with only one fire in the kitchen. Such an inn boasts no chimneys, only a makeshift tube that carries some small measure of heat upstairs (and that pours vast amounts of smoke into the common rooms downstairs). There are no casks or hogsheads in poor inns. Wine must be stored in the kitchen in goat- or pigskins, with predictable consequences for the flavor.

Greek taverns are common in the Balkans, Turkey, Persia and the East. Built around a large central court, such inns often feature a well or fountain. In small inns, horses, camels and mules stable in the courtyard; in larger inns, one wall of the courtyard, covered with an awning and lined with straw, serves as a stable. The common room is usually on the opposite side of the courtyard from the gate, and the servants and drivers eat in the courtyard. The other walls of the courtyard bear small or large rooms for guests. Important inns, such as those on main trade or pilgrimage routes, offer sumptuous suites for guests. These rooms not only have beds and

washbasins, but carpets and lamps. However, no Eastern inn has a fireplace; braziers provide heat.

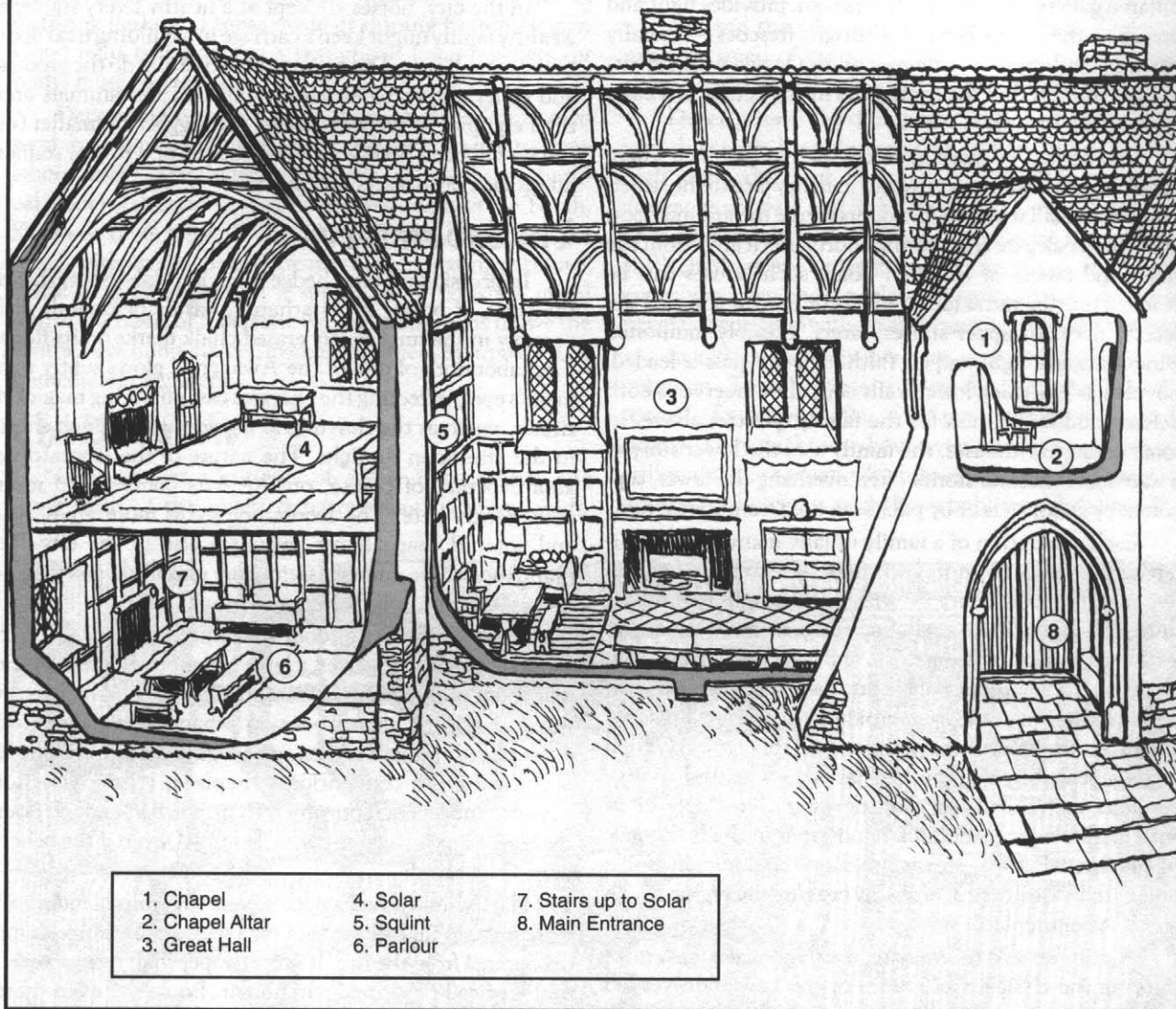
The best inns maintain a full kitchen and pantry. The traveler must provide his own food in poor inns. If meat or bread isn't brought in personally, the tavern boy has to run to the village to buy a chicken or rabbit — at significant expense. Enlightened rulers require inns that sell food and wine to display their prices prominently on a board in the common room; some inns boast that their prices are carved in bronze. Even the best inns serve food to guests on wooden trenchers or clay bowls with wood or clay spoons, although enameled and painted water-jugs add an element of color to

TAVERN



1. Main Entrance
2. Serving Area
3. Fire Place for Cooking/Heat
4. Thatched Roof

MANOR HOUSE



the setting. (Forks are noble kickshaws; every traveler uses his own knife to cut and eat.)

The Noble House

In short, if I could feed the touch and the other senses as I feed the sight, this house which I am praising would be to me a paradise.

— Pietro Aretino, 1537

Impressions: The cramped townhouse of a merchant family, the sprawling country palazzo of a Mediterranean potentate and the blocky manor house or chateau of a powerful baron share one important quality: They convey a sense of opulence. Everywhere the eye looks, it falls on carvings, frescoes, statuary, tapestries and brocades. Status and position aren't apparent from stark lines or sharp

corners, but from the flowing richness of gilding, inlay and paint that almost obscures the veined marble or dark walnut beneath. Somewhere, a fountain chatters, echoed by the gurgling of fine wines into a golden goblet or an amethyst cup. Something about that cup may tickle the hair at the back of a mage's neck — could there be poison mixed within the rich vintage? Perhaps the pearl-encrusted velvet arras behind him conceals more than a simple wine-steward.

Description: Even in the most modern quarters of Florence and Venice, the Mediterranean rich man's house (be he Spanish hidalgo or Turkish pasha) follows the millennia-old pattern borrowed by the Romans from the Greeks (who learned it themselves from the Persians). The house looks inward on a garden, which might hold fruit

trees, looted Greek statuary and a fountain. The larger the home (houses can be very large indeed outside the cramped quarters of cities), the larger the garden. Some palazzi (such as the papal palaces and "hunting lodges" in the hills of the Romagna) feature several gardens. A loggia, a roofed and pillared gallery looking into the garden, provides light and breeze to the rooms beyond it. Bright frescoes — usually pastoral landscapes — shimmer on the loggia walls, creating the illusion that the garden sits in the center of a calm and perfect Arcadia.

Old houses, or those in places such as Florence where urban violence is common, turn a haughty face to the street. Only very small windows and doors pierce the ground floor, and a high oak gate seals off the courtyard (if any) from the noise and rabble of the city. Some such houses can be reached only by retractable ladders or narrow stairs to the second floor. In upper stories, larger, possibly mullioned windows admit light and air (although the glass is leaded, not clear). The thick lower walls of the house serve as both defense and foundation for the family quarters above. In some urban townhouses, the family uses the lower story as a warehouse. Second stories often overhang the lower, supported by cantilevers or by pillars salvaged from a local ruin.

Each generation of a family usually maintains a semi-separate household on its own floor — extended families live together in the city — with each couple retaining a suite off a common stairwell. Such an apartment comprises a salon (where the writing table, and later the writing desk, might sit), a bedroom (rich curtains hang from the four posts of the square bed; embroidered scenes of Eros and Venus decorate the canopy) and a small toilet room (which holds a sealed, wide-mouthed jar for waste and a large perfumed marble basin for washing water). Fireplaces, often with marble mantels or brick hoods, roar in the bedrooms. In northern Europe, stoves are more common in noble houses than are hearths, probably because the region's high winds make fireplaces smoky.

Architects try to emulate the Florentine system of suites in the chateaux of France or the Lowlands, yet old manors maintain the medieval tradition of a series of rooms off a corridor. Common rooms in the modern European house include a chapel (usually located close to the entrance), a dining room (with silver and crystal stored in sideboards along the walls), a large kitchen and pantry, and a garden.

Carved and inlaid Italian walnut indicates the best furniture in any wealthy house. Old and blocky pieces in oak or cherry wood are set aside in small rooms and parlors. Chairs are often three-legged or resemble the letter "h," with carved solid footboards and high backs. Upholstery, if any, is embroidered velvet. An artist or writer, or one who patronizes them, might keep folding "Dante chairs," which are common to studios and galleries.

Every vertical surface of the European noble house seems to be enmeshed in ornate carvings of vine-leaves,

flowers and cupids. The walls are painted with elaborate scenes from legendry, history or mythology, and are adorned with rich tapestries of hunting and pastoral scenes. Maids strew the floors with fresh rushes, sweet-smelling herbs and flowers; carpets are unknown in Europe.

In the city, horses are kept at a nearby livery stable; a wealthy family might keep a carriage in a building next door to the main house. The horses stable there, as do the grooms and other servants needed to maintain the animals and their equipment. In the country, the loggia of a smaller (or rustic) villa can double as horses' stalls, or a row of stables might face onto a second courtyard.

The Laboratory

Impressions: Even a hedge magician's laboratory shows the signs of power in its athanor, basins or crystals and possibly in the imperfectly erased chalk marks on its floor. The laboratory of one of the Awakened glows subtly to a mage's eyes, reflecting the energies cast off during magical rituals, much as the shavings at a goldsmith's bench shine in the afternoon sunlight. The nature of the laboratory's aura depends, of course, on the Arts commanded most consistently here. The laboratory seems more alive, real and colorful than almost anywhere else in the city. To mundanes, these same sensations are unnatural and disquieting — things to be feared, not sought out.

Description: Any room that offers enough space to work — a long attic garret, a large cellar or basement or the rear room of a townhouse — can serve as a laboratory. It should have the capacity for an athanor (an alchemical oven, usually built of bricks, and roughly the size and shape of a hot tub), a conventional fireplace, a long table for working and a bench on which to sit. Ideally, enough floor space remains for a large pentacle or two, even if the bench has to be moved.

Flat, whitewashed stucco covers the walls; a mage can work out careful calculations on a white wall using a lump of charcoal from the fire. It's far cheaper than using exorbitantly priced paper and parchment. Books are even more expensive (the earliest printed books cost the same as 30 pounds of beef), and binding is left to the buyer. The mage of limited means therefore has to choose between one or two texts lovingly bound in leather (with enough room for the inevitable marginal notes) or many texts sewn between boards or even kept unbound in oilcloth wraps. These books are probably kept in a cedar chest to avoid rot and sparks (the latter of which is always a danger in the laboratory of the practical alchemist).

Rows of shelves hang on a laboratory walls or perhaps all along one wall, as in an apothecary's establishment (an apothecary makes an excellent tenant for a prosperous mage). These shelves hold jars, flasks and bottles of brass, glass and glazed clay. Herbs, powders, roots, gems and ingots of metal (and less identifiable things) lurk inside these jars.

Small braziers, candleholders, mortars and pestles, sieves, mirrors, spheres of blown glass, smelting pans, basins, flasks, beakers, engraving tools, tongs and metalworking hammers lie scattered on the worktable like a routed army or wait stored in their slots in precise array. If there is room, a second table may hold another athanor or a series of distilling flasks and tubes made of shining beaten copper. Good light is important; a skylight or lamp-brackets (or both) must be present.

Depending on the mage's style, another item could rival the athanor in importance (or even replace it in some laboratories). Astrologers might keep an orrery, a mechanical model of the cosmos. For Kabbalists, a copy of the Torah, Koran or Bible might hold a place of pride on a rosewood stand, with an abacus kept nearby for calculating permutations. Scryers might use a speculum (a polished metal mirror), a basin or a crystal. Any of these items draws the visitor's eye immediately, even if the object's purpose is not immediately apparent.

The Dungeon

Impressions: Centuries of agony radiate from the stone walls of the oldest dungeons, but in these witch-

hunting, heretic-burning times, even the newest ones are black with murder and the spirits of vengeance. These places throb with evil to even the least sensitive mage. Prolonged darkness, dampness and ignorance combine to reduce even the strongest man to a quivering, blind imbecile. The only sounds are of skittering rats, the shrieks of the tortured and the gibbering of fellow prisoners. The roasting-pork smell of burning human flesh only occasionally overcomes the stink of rotting corpses and filth.

Description: The dungeon of any castle or monastery is in the cellar. It might be dry or perhaps lit by arrow slits high above the floor, but probably isn't. The majority of dungeons are dark and forbidding places, even if they were once simple storerooms. Those built under the walls of a castle, in the space between foundation stones, are the most oppressive, even under a relatively benevolent lord; they can never be ventilated without endangering the castle's stability.

In old castles, prisoners are cheap and space is at a premium. These dungeons have the infamous "standing rooms" (four-foot-by-four-foot pits with no room to lie down). They might also have even smaller chambers with grilles above, through which brutal guards feed gruel and water. Old dungeons might have oubliettes, lightless shafts



into which the powerful drop their enemies and forget about them. Prisoners confined to an oubliette struggle wearily to live as best they can on rats and the bodies of their cellmates before the inevitable disease, madness and death overtake them.

In large dungeons, prisoners are confined in cages made of iron-plated wood or crossed iron bars that are set in serried ranks along the ground. Chains suspend some cages above the floor. A hanging prison actually seems like a kindness when the dungeon floods and rats are forced into cells with prisoners. The dungeon in the Tower of London lies well below the Thames high-water mark: the hordes of rats that live in the tower docks invade the dungeon regularly.

Most dungeons are pitch dark. Lords build their walls thick and windowless to prevent escapes and communication with the outside world. Lords also begrudge the waste of expensive torches and lanterns on prisoners. The combination of bad air, rats, corpses and human waste makes dungeons breeding grounds for diseases of the body. The impenetrable gloom and inhuman noises also breed diseases of the mind. Light enters a dungeon only when guards do, as they bring in food or water in wooden or clay vessels, or when they bring in new prisoners. Sometimes guards escort the torturer on his rounds; the light they carry serves only to amplify the terror hidden by the dark.

Torture implements might be stored in the common dungeon if prisoners are well-chained or are locked in individual cells or cages. Otherwise, the tools are kept in a separate, convenient chamber. Ruddy firelight both reveals and heats these tools whenever they're used. The thumb-screw, boot and rack are all quite popular, but the red-hot poker, pincers and tongs are cheap, universal and effective. The inexpense of the "Italian rack" makes it the most popular torture device of its kind. It consists of two iron rings set about four feet high in opposite walls that are located roughly seven feet apart, a handy length of chain for fastening a prisoner, and a razor-sharp spike, also about four feet high, between the two rings. The prisoner, once fastened to both rings, must stretch his muscles constantly (and painfully) to avoid relaxing onto the spike and maiming or killing himself. The cheap, sadistic and effective Italian rack epitomizes the Renaissance dungeon.

The Catacombs

And often did I enter there the crypts, deep dug in the earth, with their walls on either side lined with the bodies of the dead, where everything is so dark that it almost seems as if the psalmist's words were fulfilled: Let them go down alive into hell.

— St. Jerome

Impressions: Catacombs are dark and confining, like the ritual passage through the night into initiation. Occasional shafts of dirty, reflected sunlight shine down from lucernaria, shafts cut into the ceiling. These pale beams, or

the flickering shadows of a torch or lantern, show only a few feet of rough-hewn volcanic stone and perhaps a hastily drawn picture of a saint or prophet. Everywhere else remains the realm of the dead. They lie underfoot in formae, they rest stacked in loculi in the sides of the walls, and they repose in stone sarcophagi in the center of the vaulted cubicalae from which the winding passages depart. The scents of incense and myrrh from times past still seems to hang in the air, and to carry the nervous whispers of the persecuted. This is the country of the sacred dead, hidden from their enemies. It would be easy to become lost here, with neither sun nor stars to guide you.

Description: Lying beneath the ancient quarters of Rome, Syracuse, Naples and other great Imperial cities, the laboriously carved catacombs twisted and crept through the living rock over centuries of persecution. Some passages, especially the great ceremonial ways beneath Rome, are relatively straight, making doglegs only where a shaft of hard rock defied the picks. Other tunnels twist and wind, with steep flights of stairs leading up or down seemingly at random. The passages can narrow enough to force a visitor to crouch, or they may open into vaulted processional ways that are 10 feet high. A deep cistern, still full of cleverly diverted rainwater, interrupts a path occasionally. Rats find little to eat in the catacombs; the passages do not connect with the basements of the city's granaries or mansions, or even with its sewers. Rather, the paths connect with hidden wells that provide rare shafts of sunlight, or they meet obscure tombs in the ancient cemeteries.

Where light is present, paintings, carvings and mosaics are visible. The pieces were made by the ancient Christians who fled underground from Roman law, and by the Jews and heretics who fled the later Christian emperors. The tombs of many early popes, decorated with carved pillars, passages from Scripture and scenes of Christ triumphant, lie beneath Rome. The faithful scraped and painted the walls of these chambers smooth or even built them out of stuccoed brick. The ceilings are still dark and sooty from centuries of torch and lamp smoke.

Some vaults contain things other than tombs — many people used the catacombs as living quarters during particularly fierce persecutions. Grave robbers stole most items long ago, leaving only thronelike chairs or benches or table slabs carved from the volcanic rock itself. Occasional "shelves," often decorated with battlements like miniature castles, jut from the walls. Only graves remain of the people who lived here. The remaining pick marks and paintings are mute testimony to the strength of their beliefs.

The Graveyard

Impressions: The slight odor of sanctity emanating from the nearby church is overwhelmed by the miasma of disease, death and corruption that rises from the greasy earth. Lime hangs strong in the air where the poor lie buried

in mass graves. The scent of laurels, yews and cypresses fights a losing battle against the fetid stench of the decomposing dead. Clusters of marble and stone tombs stand like snobbish widows at a feast, looking down on the well-turned soil that is spangled with wooden crosses and the occasional stone plaque. The buzzing of flies underlies the murmured prayers of the recently bereaved.

Description: In Europe, the rich demand burial as close to the church as possible; beneath the edifice itself in many cases. The Episcopal crypt beneath the altar is usually restricted to the bodies of bishops and abbots, but sextons can always pry up flagstones of the nave and lay a body to rest beneath them for a sufficient donation. Eventually only inscriptions remain as enterprising churchmen covertly dispose of bodies to make room for new arrivals. Many churches (or their unscrupulous caretakers) make a tidy profit selling displaced corpses' rich funerary jewelry and coffin handles to artists and other metalworkers.

When the rich cannot buy burial within the church, they claim fine tombs in the churchyard. These crypts can be large family affairs holding generations of nobles or merchant princes; or they can be single monuments to one man's *post mortem* vanity. The sculptures of crypts are often more grand than any in the church; the rich compete to have the gaudiest tombs, just as they contend for everything else in the city. Lavish funerals lead inevitably to grave robbing on a large scale, and to a thriving black market in grave goods.

Crypts are built of marble or whitewashed stone. One might replicate the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem if the entombed was noted for his piety or had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Other crypts are modeled after Greek or Roman funerary temples. Rich families consider their tombs personal property beyond the jurisdiction of Church or nobility. The personal flags of the wealthy families of Florence fly over their graves and crypts, creating a bizarre carnival atmosphere. Then again, flags flapping and creaking against their posts at night might seem more ominous than festive.

The graves of the middle class display less decoration, and less attention is paid to them. Some might boast a marker stone, but only in a very literate society or in a Jewish cemetery, which is cleaner and better maintained than a Christian cemetery. A cross or a carving of a skull, a *memento mori*, is also common. A knight's resting place might bear a stone with a sword carved into it. A sculptor might cast the image of death or a patron saint over his own plot, or on the plot of someone who can afford his work.

The graves of the urban poor are unmarked and communal, like the houses in which they lived. Diggers stack cheap coffins or shroud-wrapped bodies like

cordwood into mass graves and shovel aside old remains to make room for the new. In some churchyards, wardens pile extra earth up to the lowest crypt windows to make more room for the dead. Islamic graveyards do not suffer from overcrowding; Islamic law mandates the placement of graveyards well outside of cities for sanitary reasons.

Graveyards might also be used as rubbish heaps, as is the practice in Edinburgh and other cities with restricted access to open water. This only adds to the problems of disease, vermin and filth — not to mention the horrors of demons and ghouls, who are well-known to feast upon the dead.

The Forest

Impressions: Man's encroachment is apparent at the forest fringe. Here, the forest is an extension of village economy and is full of hunters, charcoal-burners and coppicers. At its heart, the forest is the antithesis of civilization. Trees are masters of this domain, and grudgingly give light to the lesser plants beneath them. Animals move through the trees, birds cry and sing, and the smell of green, growing things hangs in the air. The Sphere of Life beats strong here, and magi attuned to that force feel it coursing through their own veins and limbs.

Description: The dominant tree in any wood determines the forest's character, and depends in turn on the soil and water nearby. Pines, which dominate the Black Forest and the woodland seas of Poland and Muscovy, grow where winters are cold and soil lies over limestone. In these "pine barrens," carpets of needles silence footsteps and keep the ground warm for saplings, but there is little other underbrush. Other conifers, like spruce and firs, follow this pattern. The thick needles and fronds of conifer groves muffle sounds, creating an uncanny sense of stillness.

Silence of a more ominous sort hangs over yew stands. The trees are poisonous, and nothing else grows in a yew alley. The abominations protrude from the pale chalky earth like ribs from a rotting corpse. Even light slanting through yew boughs looks wan or lurid. Yews almost always grow in small groves; coppicers and other woodsmen endeavor to trim them into hedges.

Oak forests, such as Sherwood or the New Forest in England, are more forgiving than the aristocratic pines and despotic yews. Oaks prefer sunny land with plentiful water, on which almost all plants and other trees thrive. Stands of beeches, chestnuts and apple trees spring up among oaks, especially in France. A riot of flowers and ferns, hollies and berry vines emerges below. Deep in the green, thickets grow heavy with berries and thorns. Such undergrowth is quite common near streams and pools, where it shares space with rushes and cattails. This boscage can actually choke out trees in some portions of the forest.



Wise nobles allow peasants to cut back the underbrush and dried timber in their woodlands every three to seven years, letting new trees grow to replace those felled for houses and furniture. These brush-cutting paths (and those used by charcoal-burners and poachers) parallel the winding trails used by game animals. The sides of paths are scored with stumps and fallen logs; after a storm, a heavy oak may lie athwart a path and force everyone, animal and man alike, to blaze a different trail. Lichens and mosses grow on these fallen giants, and mushrooms shelter beneath their roots. Masses of ivy take advantage of the break in the tree cover where a tree has fallen and send creepers throughout the woods.

Oaks can grow to 25 feet or more in circumference, and one tree can support entire colonies of birds, squirrels and even peasants (acorn flour makes a nutritious bread). Forests are also great sources of game, from deer and boar to pheasants and grouse. In some woods, meadows are home to badgers or rabbits. Others meadows have wide expanses of heath and moor where the soil is too harsh to allow trees to flourish. Waterfowl nest in ponds and low-lying marshes here, and chipmunks and field mice tunnel under bushes of gorse and thistle.

The Camp

Impressions: A camp is marked by a circle of fire-light, reflecting off tents or wagons and barely holding the night at bay. Thousands of stars shine down from Heaven, obscured occasionally by aromatic smoke from wet branches and from roasting meat. There might be singing or story telling, although the noise carries far in the night air. Travelers are better served to spend their time listening for the scrape of a brigand's shoe or the growl of a prowling panther. A rich camp has guards to stand vigil, but is still a tempting target for local thieves. Men on the road make both friends and enemies quickly, in the spirit of transience that such travel instills.

Description: Travel amounts to finding someone who is going the same direction, and joining in. Traveling groups, whether they are pilgrims in Europe or caravans in Asia, beat paths and roads through the wilds. Hostels lie along these routes in civilized empires, offering shelter, fuel and sometimes even dried beans or grain for food. In other places, there are known campsites and oases where those who have gone before have rested. A native guide is often a wise investment; without knowing where the next well is, a party can kill its animals or even die of thirst and hunger itself. Of course, there is always the risk that the friendly guide is in league with bandits and waits to lead unwary travelers into a trap.

Traveling parties of magi may suffer fewer problems of this sort, but even they are advised to stay on roads, if only to be sure of their direction and to make the best speed. Couriers on relays of horses can make 40 miles a

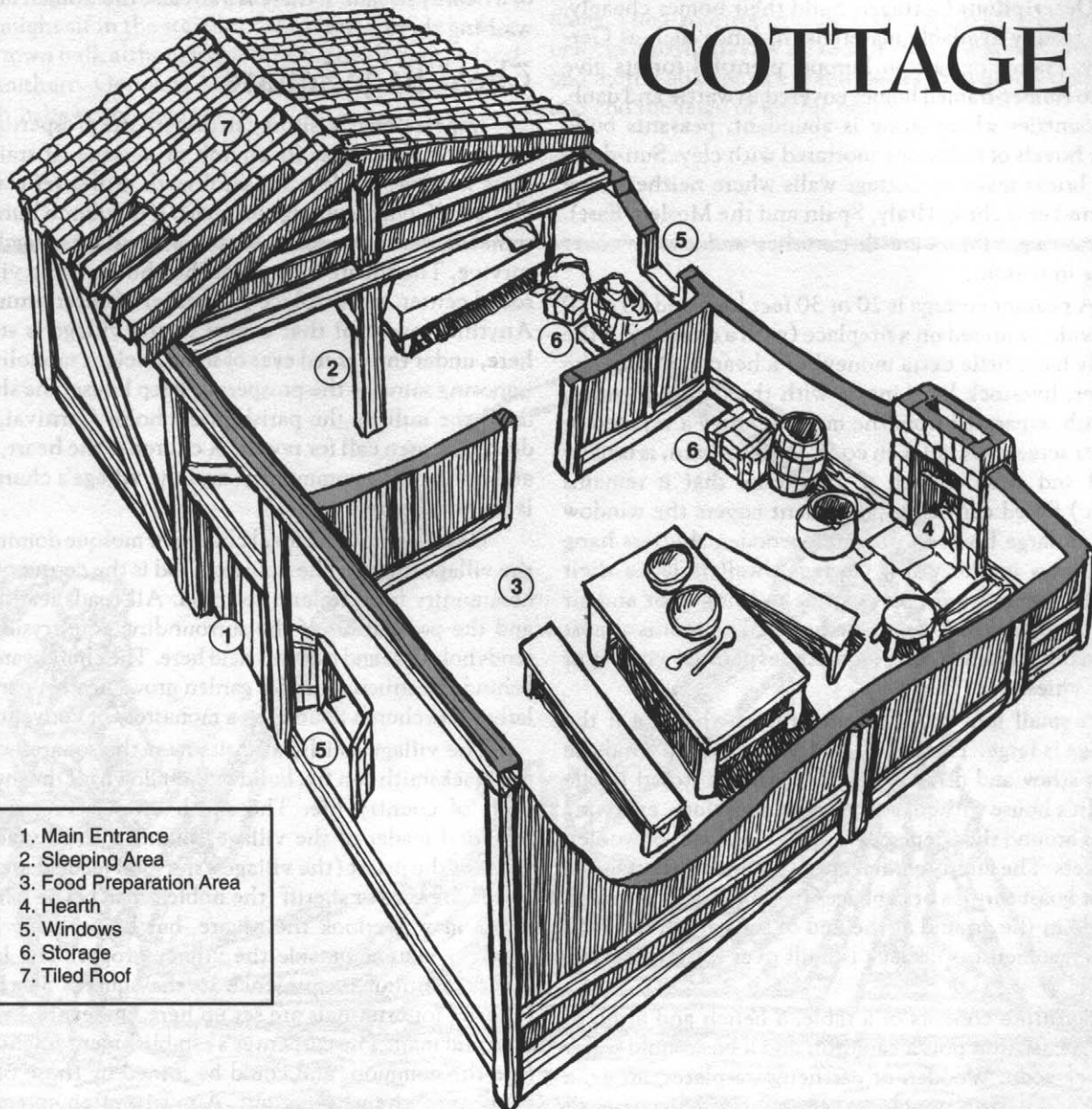
day or more. Parties of men and mules without fresh mounts are lucky to cover 10 miles in normal weather. In the Mediterranean world and the East, the ruins of Roman or Persian hostels line the roads. Local families also make their living taking in travelers. Shelters are farther apart in the wilds of eastern Germany, Poland and Russia, and travelers make less time since they must bring their own food, water and protection with them.

Portable shelters consist of skin tents, sometimes with a fire hole in the peak of the roof. In forested country, a hired man or local woodsman can build a lean-to of saplings and branches. Starting a fire is essential and usually easy; flint and steel are commonplace, even

for peasants. Fuel sometimes presents more difficulties; charcoal is available in any village, but is bulky to carry on the road. Water is the other difficulty — it weighs even more than charcoal, and is much more difficult to find in the wilds. Access to such necessities is another reason why most travelers stay to roads; earlier pilgrims have cut the paths to places where they can be found.

Travelers should hunt for food wherever game can be had (although this slows travel), and should smoke it for use when pickings are slim. Bread goes bad very quickly (especially after rain soaks saddlebags) and takes up space best reserved for feed for mules or horses; bread and cheese are staples that can usually be found along the

COTTAGE



1. Main Entrance
2. Sleeping Area
3. Food Preparation Area
4. Hearth
5. Windows
6. Storage
7. Tiled Roof

way. After a fourth or fifth meal of moldy bread and tepid creek water, even the most solitary mage may regret having traveled on her own!

The Cottage

Impressions: The common family's residence may be clean, or it may sit in resigned filth. It may bustle with activity, or molder quietly in the waste. It may smell of new rushes and oatmeal, or of unwashed animals and mildewing thatch. No matter its condition, the cottage is poor, and life within it is an unrelieved routine of boring sameness. Only watching children play and grow gives any meaning to life here. Cottagers make the occasional stranger a topic of conversation and gossip for years.

Description: Cottagers build their homes cheaply, from readily available materials. In lands such as Germany, France or eastern Europe, plentiful forests give rise to timber-framed homes covered in wattle and daub. In countries where stone is abundant, peasants build their hovels of fieldstone mortared with clay. Sun-dried mud bricks make up cottage walls where neither stone nor timber is cheap (Italy, Spain and the Moslem East). Most cottage floors are dirt; rushes and clover cover floors in season.

A peasant cottage is 20 or 30 feet long and 10 or 20 feet wide, centered on a fireplace (with a chimney, if the family has a little extra money) or a hearth. During the winter, livestock lives inside with the family for extra warmth, separated from the main room by a wooden or wicker screen. (A chicken coop, unlike a barn, is usually small and close enough to the house that it remains warm.) Oiled canvas or parchment covers the window (two in large houses), or simple wooden shutters hang over holes in the walls. Cottage dwellers leave their windows open whenever possible to bring light and air into the close confines of the house. The roof is almost invariably thatched straw, sometimes planted with ivy or berry vines.

A small loft might lie underneath the roof if the cottage is large. The farmer and his wife sleep amid the warm straw and dried cheese and onions stored in the loft. In a house without such accommodations, everyone sleeps around the fireplace, wrapped in cloaks or woolen blankets. The family garden grows behind the cottage. It might boast turnips or cabbages in season or even herbs. A hole in the ground at the end of the garden serves as a privy; sometimes a shack is built over it to reduce the smell.

Furniture consists of a table, a bench and a tub or two. A cast-iron pot, a cauldron and a basin hold water or cook soup. Wooden or earthenware plates, an ax, a spade and a knife complete the inventory of a peasant's

housewares. A "wealthy" serf might have a stool, a wooden bed or even a chair made from an old barrel. With a little skill and patience, a new mother can make a cradle from a barrel end or from a piece of canvas hung from the roof.

In Persia and Turkey, peasants don't even have these few goods. A brazier replaces the fireplace, carpets and mats replace chairs and benches, and cottage dwellers use a copper basin and skewers rather than pots and plates. Wealthy peasants in the East might also have a cedar chest for extra blankets and cloaks. Stone or pottery jars hold water, cider and homemade beer, and a barrel catches rainwater. Water is kept outside, while cider and beer are stored in the loft or in a crude root-cellar, if one is available. Most water comes from a well or a nearby stream. If there is a stream, the women do any washing there.

The Village Square

Impressions: Visitors can discern the prosperity of a village by looking at its church or mosque. If stained-glass windows or delicate scrollwork grilles reflect the glories of God, the village prospers. If its church hunches tumbledown and weather-beaten, the village struggles to survive. The square in front of the church is the village social center, marketplace and center of entertainment. Anything eventful that occurs in the village is staged here, under the carved eyes of some ancient monolith or imposing saint — the prosperous keep house, the sheriff drills the militia, the parish priest holds Carnival, and desperate men call for revolt. A church is the heart, eyes and brain of the community, and the village's character is reflected here.

Description: The local church or mosque dominates the village square. The house of God is the center of any community from Ireland to India. All roads lead here, and the population of the surrounding countryside attends holy days and festivals held here. The churchyard lies behind the structure, and a garden grows nearby, particularly if the church doubles as a monastery or convent.

The village smithy also sits near the square, where the blacksmith can fix, build or melt down all the myriad tools of country life. The smith often serves as the temporal leader of the village, adding a third voice to those of the priest (the village's spiritual leader) and the bailiff, steward or sheriff (the noble's man). The bailiff's house may overlook the square, but he probably lives near the manor, outside the village proper. The lord's justice maintains a presence in the square. Stocks or pillories for criminals are set up here, under the eyes of God and man. The carpenter's establishment might also face the common, and could be joined by those of the cooper and the wheelwright. A tavern often completes

the square, allowing the notable men of the village to see any strangers in town for themselves, and to hear news first as befits their station.

Wealthy villages might have a fountain or may brick their plazas over to allow carts to travel more easily. Such villages hold market day in the square from spring to harvest, and may attract traveling players, tinkers or others who normally come to town only for Carnival, before Lent. Buyers and sellers haggle and bicker in the village square or, more often, use the church courtyard or nave for their business. In Seville, merchants meet on the steps of a ruined mosque.

Relatively rich villages often have a town hall, assuming a village is not under the suzerainty of a lord. The local judge lives and holds court in the hall. Disputes are settled under the curious eyes of passersby. A clock might sit in the steeple of the church or in the face of the town hall, although this is rare outside Switzerland and southern Germany. More often, the chiming of church bells keeps the time.

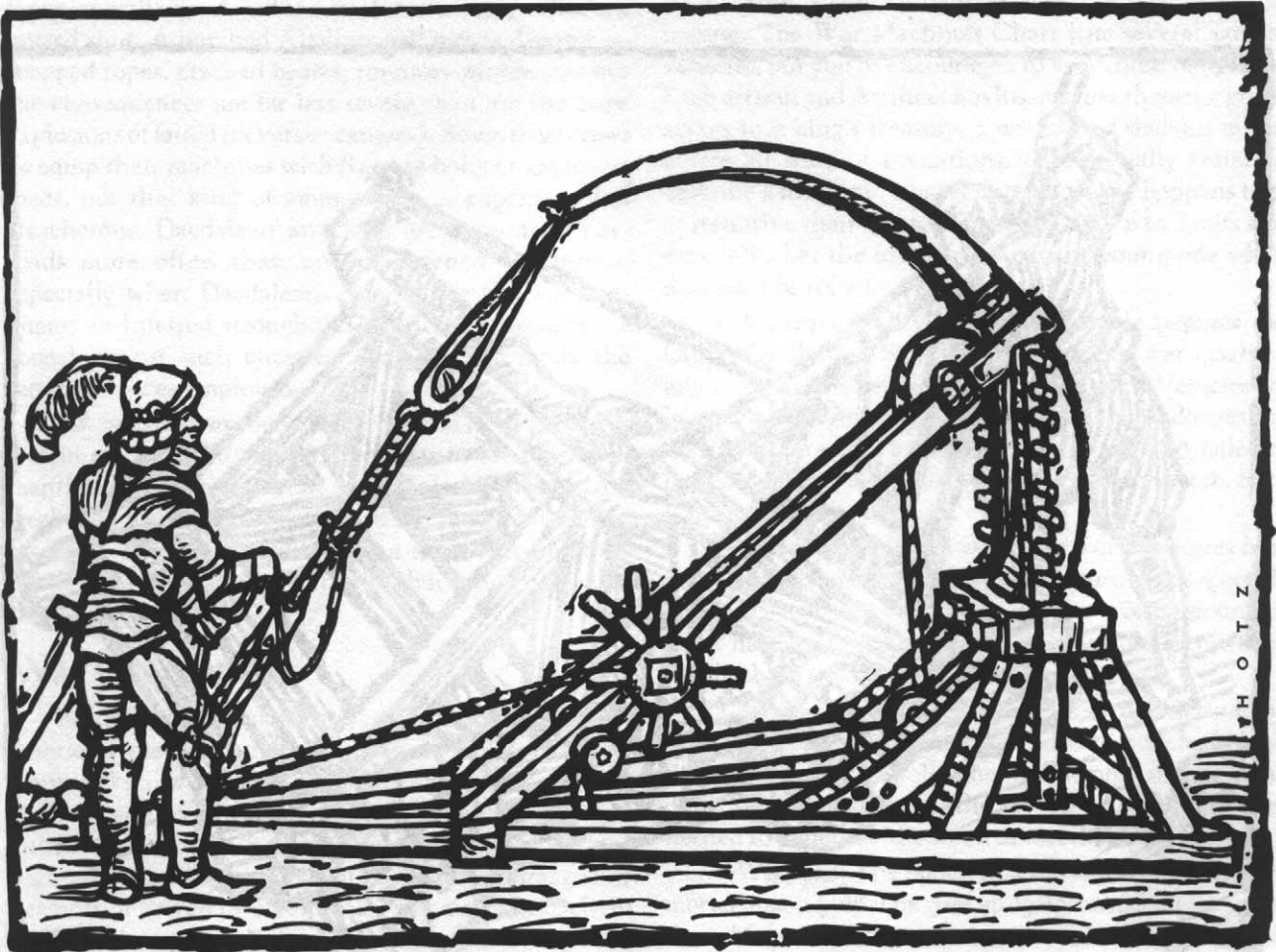
Warcraft



Those who cannot deploy their war machines effectively are in trouble.

— General Du Mu

Let the mysticks have their dragons and golems! A skillful Daedalean has access to more reliable allies: war machines. Though they lack the flexibility of living things, such devices can wreak havoc in a dozen different ways. Cannons reduce walls to rubble. Mantlets protect their crews as battering rams hammer down castle gates. Rocket racks, often mounted on large shields or frameworks, send explosives flying into armies or over walls. "Fire shields" keep their rockets in place and spray the enemy with jets of flame. Tried-and-true ballistae and catapults lob huge spears or rocks into the fray. With such devices, the armies of mage and mortal alike reduce grand castles to their foundations and end the reign of mythic beasts.



The *Sorcerers Crusade* describes several types of cannon and firearms; the following weapons are more exotic, but no less effective. Specific game mechanics for these items are provided in the War Machines charts, on pages 24-25.

Rockets and Incendiaries

Rockets can hurtle the length of a battlefield and blow the enemy to bits (or they can explode on the spot). Invented by the Chinese *Dalou'laoshi*, rockets and fire-lances make risky but effective weapons. Indeed, by combining these items with Greek Fire "flame-throwers," elite Daedalean troops can devastate a conventional fighting force. Magi and their companions are more capable of standing against such forces; clever sorcerers can use weavery to set incendiaries' greatest flaw — their tendency to explode at the wrong time — against artilleryists. The results can be... messy; fire inflicts aggravated damage.

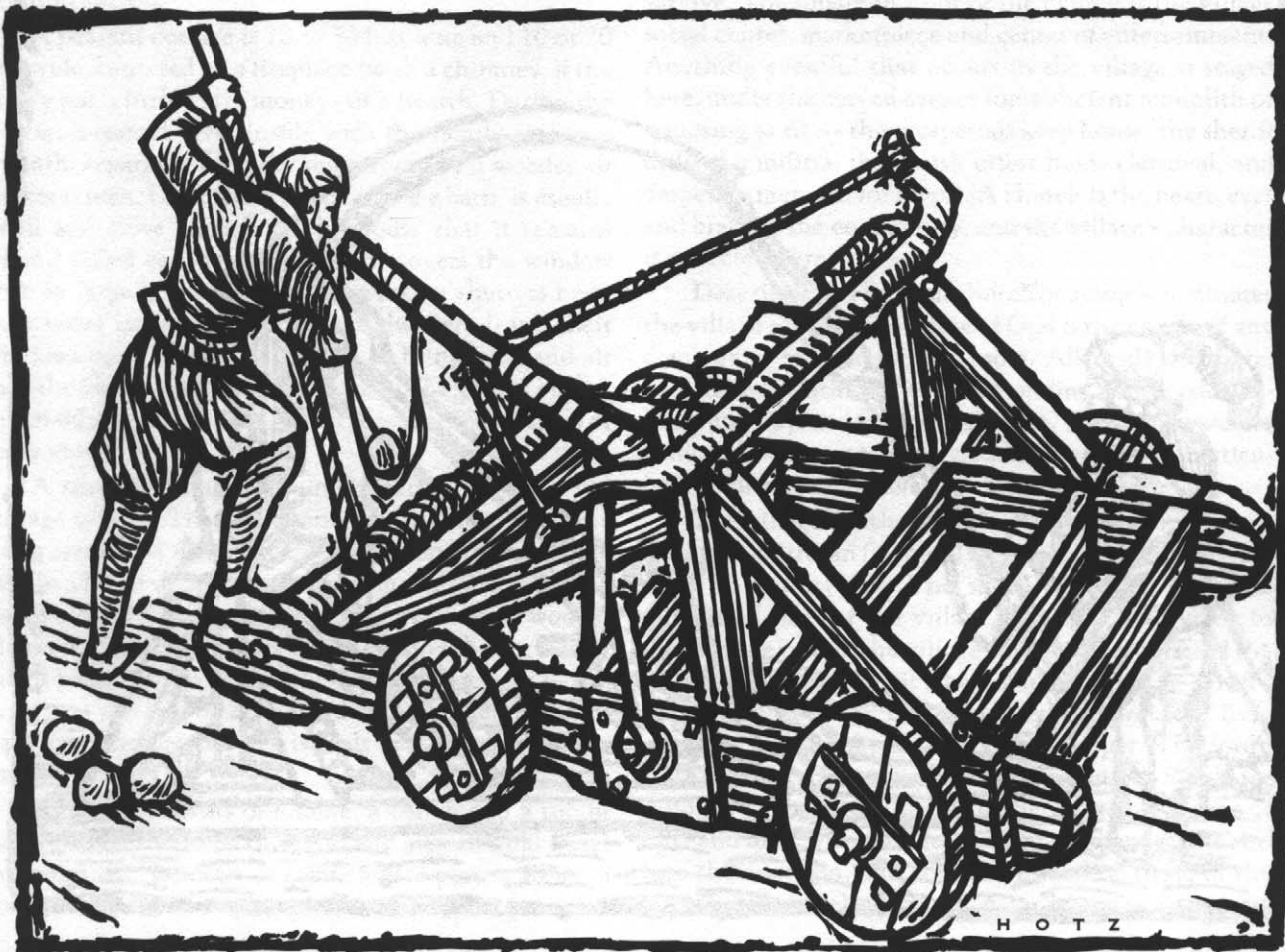
- *Rockets* range from small fireworks to huge missiles. Several types are listed on the heavy weapons chart, but like cannons, rockets are individual creations. An artilleryist sets

the trajectory, lights the fuse and runs. A successful roll puts the burst where it should go, a failed one indicates a misfire or miss, and a botch sets the rocket off on the launch-frame.

- A *fire-shield* bundles a dozen or more rockets onto a single frame that's aimed at the enemy. When lit, the rockets spray him with fire. A *fire-lance* consists of a single rocket carried on a long pole. Such weapons burn for roughly five minutes and incinerate everything within a cone in front of the framework. The artilleryist aims the machine, lights it and gets out of the way. A botched roll sets the whole works off prematurely, devastating the entire area and anyone in it.

- *Flame-throwers* pump Greek Fire (a flaming liquid similar to 20th-century napalm) through metal nozzles, dousing a target with incendiary goo. Small models can be carried by one (very brave) man; larger machines are mounted on ships or vehicles. Either type explodes if hit by flaming projectiles or random sparks.

- *Greek Fire* is a vicious weapon in and of itself. Most armies have forgotten its secrets by the 15th century, although the Craftsmen and Artificers have not. "The fire that cannot die" reminds many folks of Hell-flame;



water cannot douse it, and smothering merely spreads it. This concoction blazes until there is nothing left to burn. Elemental magick diminishes or spreads it, as desired, but few other spells affect it.

- Boiling oil, tar, pitch and lead are poured from the walls of besieged castles and swirl in the cauldrons of the executioner. A character exposed to such infernal weapons suffers agonizing burns. Boiling liquids seep through cracks and seams, often negating armor's protection, or heats metal plates to seething temperatures. Worse, such materials stick, cool and harden, becoming one with whatever they touch. Anyone unfortunate enough to survive such fiery dousing bears the scars for life.

Old-Fashioned Siege Machines

- *Catapults* and *ballistae* hurl huge rocks or bolts with enough force to shatter stone walls. Such weapons can take several minutes to aim and hours to adjust; once aimed, however, they can rain destruction on their targets at a rate of one or two shots every five minutes (or as fast as one a minute for a trained ballista crew).

With no explosive components, these machines are far safer and more common than other, more delicate forms of artillery. A failed attack roll simply reflects a missed shot. A botched Artillery roll means disaster — snapped ropes, cracked beams, runaway winches — but the consequences are far less severe than are the huge explosions of failed rockets or cannons. Some siege crews *do* equip their machines with flaming bolts or explosive loads, but that kind of ammunition is expensive and treacherous. Daedalean attackers use incendiary payloads more often than un-Enlightened artillerymen, especially when Daedaleans' targets are mystick covenants or Infernal strongholds. And when assaults are staged against such enemies, catapults are rarely the latest advances employed....

- A *battering ram* boasts a hard metal head affixed to a stout oak trunk. Swung from chains inside a wooden mantlet (see below), the ram smashes holes in gates and weakened walls. It takes a fair-sized crew to move and employ a ram; a titanically strong man might be hale enough to swing a ram in its chains, but would be unable to move it otherwise.

War Machines

Battlefield artisans contrive huge war machines — mantlets (wheeled shields), siege towers, mobile ballistae, giant corkscrew-bores — to topple enemy strongholds. Built on site by skillful craftsmen, these amazing machines mingle defensive and offensive technology into nigh-unstoppable warcraft. Pulled by horses, dragged by peasants or driven by clockworks, war machines deliver an intimidating punch that goes far beyond their physical weaponry. The mere sight of one has broken armies'

spirits. Fireproofed and shielded by metal and wet hides, siege machines are damned near impossible to stop by mortal means.

Of course, defending magi can use fire spells, summoned demons, sudden rot and other, less obvious weaveries to turn a war machine into junk. Yet, on the other side of the wall, a touch of Daedalean genius can turn an improbable design into a terrifying mechanical monster. Un-Awakened craftsmen can devise powerful war engines with little help from their Enlightened colleagues; historically, Renaissance-era armies employ self-propelled siege engines, flame-throwing mantlets, war gliders (in China), poison-gas mortars and even primitive tanks. When the Arts of Shaping and Forces are focused through a mechanical weapon, the possibilities are horrific indeed.

The "secret history" elements of *The Sorcerers Crusade* allow a Storyteller to introduce clockwork beasts, war balloons, armored carriages and a host of other weird inventions to the battlefield. The Artificers have a free hand during this period; many machines that theoretically *shouldn't* work roll into battle anyway — and prevail.

In story terms, a war machine is a plot element — huge, intimidating, difficult to harm and dangerous to oppose. The War Machines Chart lists several sample vehicles, but you're encouraged to vary those templates. Each artisan and Artificer has his own pet theories; given access to a king's treasury, a would-be Daedalus might create all sorts of inventions.... It's usually easier to describe a machine, what it does and what happens to it in narrative than it is to reduce the device to Traits and dice rolls. Let the following Traits be your guide when dice *must* be rolled:

- **Maneuverability:** Driving a vehicle requires the Craft (Coachman) Skill; a truly advanced war machine might demand its very own driving Specialty. Vehicles are large and bulky, even at their best; this Trait indicates the maximum Dice Pool a driver can bring to bear. A failed or botched roll might tip a vehicle, dump it into a ditch, back it into a corner or crash it.

- **Speed:** Vehicles are slow; this Trait indicates how many yards the machine can move per turn at full speed. It may, of course, move much slower over broken ground or other hazards. In many cases, significant deterrents keep the machine from moving forward at all.

- **Armor:** This Trait measures the thickness of the craft's walls and the successes needed to punch through them with a damage roll. The first number indicates the difficulty of damage rolls; the second gives the successes needed to penetrate the wood or metal.

- **Weapons:** The punch that devices bring to bear. A mortal man is pulp if he goes up against a machine in most cases. Magi have a better chance, but *no one* wants to get hit by one of these things.

Heavy Weaponry

Rockets and Incendiaries

Name	Difficulty	Damage	Range (yards)	Rate	Notes
Hand Grenade	(1*)	8	10	1	Explosive
Rocket, small	8	8	300	(2*)	Explosive; one use
Rocket, average	7	10	300	(2*)	Explosive; one use
Rocket, huge	6	15	600	(2*)	Explosive; one use
Fire-lance	7	(3*)	5 (cone)	1	Fire, diff. 5, intensity 1; one use
Fire-shield	(4*)	(3*)	16 (cone)	1	Fire diff. 7, intensity 2; one use
Flame-thrower, small	7	(3*)	20	1 (3 turns)	Fire, diff. 7, intensity 2
Flame-thrower, large	6	(3*)	30	1 (5 turns)	Fire, diff. 7, intensity 3
Greek Fire	N/A	(3*)	(above)	1	Fire, diff. 7, intensity 2-3 Boiling
Tar or Oil	6	(3*)	0 (poured)	1	Like fire, diff. 6, intensity 2

Additional Notes

- 1: Range = Distance to Target divided by thrower's Strength.
- 2: Fired in sets; Rate depends on the number of rockets in a set (1-10).
- 3: Fire damage forces target to soak; damage depends on intensity of the fire. See "Mortality" in the *Sorcerers Crusade* rulebook. May also ignite flammable items.
- 4: Shoots fire in a small cone in front of lance; target must be directly in front of weapon-user (who, on a bad roll, might burn himself, too).

Siege Machines

Name	Difficulty (1*)	Damage	Range (yards)	Rate	Notes
Ballista, small	8	8	300	1/3	Crew of 2
Ballista, large	8	10	500	1/4	Crew of 3
Battering Ram	N/A	10-14	N/A	1	Crew of 6-16
Catapult	10	15	800	1/5	Crew of 5

- 1: Against a human-sized living target; -1 difficulty against large living target, -2 difficulty against large moving object, -3 difficulty against large stationary object.

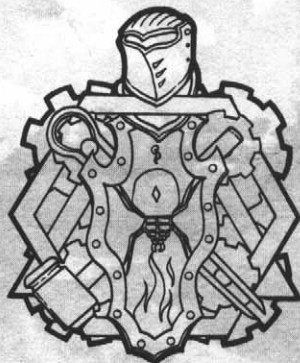


War Machines

Machine	Maneuverability	Speed	Armor	Weapons
Armored Chariot	5	20	6	Two slashing blades(6 dice); two-four wheellock rifles or one small cannon.
Clockwork Automaton(1*)	N/A	10	5	Strength 6-10; possibly blades (Strength + 3), small flame-throwers or battering ram.
Clockwork Beast(1*)	N/A	15	5	Strength 6-8; claws & teeth (See "Bite," "Claw" on Hand-to-Hand Combat chart)
Clockwork Tank	3	10	8-10	Spikes (4 dice); four-eight wheellock rifles and/or cross-bows; possibly one-two small cannons, or one large ballista or flame-thrower; also 3-6 armed crewmen.
Corkscrew Tank	3	10	10	One giant awl-device (for boring through walls);four wheellock rifle ports; also 6-8 armed crewmen.
War Balloon, small	6	(2*)	4	Four small cannons or ballistae; also 4-6 armed crewmen.
War Balloon, Multi-decked	4	(2*)	6	Six-10 small cannons; four small ballistae;possiblybombs (10 die explosion); also 10-20 armed crewmen.
Skyrigger	5	(2*)	1	Six-12 small cannons; two row cannons; four-six small ballistae; grapples and often large slashing blades (8 dice damage against large attackers); also 20-40 armed crewmen.

1: A self-propelled machine that acts like a living creature. No intelligence to speak of — destroys everything in sight. May be crewed by a pilot for more control. Tends to run down after six-eight turns.

2: Flight only; speed depends on winds — may be as slow as 10 yards/turn or as swift as 30. Requires at least one man on rudder at all times, and may demand more crewmen to handle sails or balloon. Such handling requires Dexterity + Crafts (Skyrigger). Machine is also unstable — balloon may rip or explode during combat or Scourge backlash, dumping (or incinerating) occupants. *Balloon Armor:* 4.







Chapter 11:

The Play's the Thing

*All things that are
Made for general uses are at war, —
Even we among ourselves.*
— John Fletcher, "Upon an Honest Man's Fortune"

This chapter is dedicated to players and their characters. The Storyteller is encouraged to share these new concepts, Merits and Flaws, and Traits so that players may expand upon the character possibilities offered by **The Sorcerers Crusade**. You can also apply these qualities to your own characters, the ones whom the protagonists meet, love, struggle with and fight.

You have complete authority over these additions; they may not suit your chronicle, or could unbalance characters' involvement in stories or their relative power. You have final word on what new Traits are available in your game.

Concepts

My father named me Autolycus; who being, as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles.

— William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*

We may not always be what our professions make us, but it would be foolish to assume that what we do has no bearing on who we are and what we know. Our careers shape us in the 20th century. Now extrapolate that phenom-

enon over to the stratified, socially confining Dark Fantastic world: You're believed to be born to a station in life; to disagree would be to flout the wisdom of God. In the grand scheme of things, peasants will never be anything more than that. Their place in the scheme of things determines what they can do, what they can own and where they can live, and their position establishes their fundamental rights (or lack thereof). The nobility, on the other hand, are born to extensive rights and privileges, and have the freedom to do and be what they choose. This is the social order into which Renaissance characters are born.

Magi, belonging to no social group or class, defy the order. Society has no immediate role for them that defines their status. Magi are therefore dangerous, examples to others who could also defy the system. Magi are also persecuted because they're frightening; few ever seek to be more than they're born as, and magi's rebellion terrifies those who accept their own fate. Yet even magi are the products of their outsider positions and birthrights. If nothing else, assuming their roles is where their greater lives began.

Since 15th-century occupations and birth roles aren't exactly common knowledge in the 20th century, some "character concepts" are provided here to inspire your own histories. These are springboards for character backgrounds and motivations; see the Appendix of **The Sorcerers Crusade** for other insights, Traits and details.

Artist

You capture the miracle of life. Vital, perceptive, free of the constraints of ignorance — you and your work embody this new age. God's creation is a living thing; the Greeks and Romans realized this, and you strive to follow their example. Your hands and eyes are always busy painting, sculpting, sketching or perhaps experimenting with music. If you're fortunate, you have a patron who supports your work. Otherwise, it's a hobby for the twilight hours. A truly lucky artist has time to follow the latest innovations — perspective, color theory, architecture — and Classical achievements dredged from the ruins. If you don't have that luxury, you use what you can to capture the essence of God, nature and man.

Bandit

Some people have more than they deserve. You right that wrong. While the common folk starve, rich tradesmen, nobles and the stinking offspring of them both flaunt their riches in full view. Daring mutilation, the gallows or the iron cage, you sally forth to plunder the bastards. Perhaps you're a vagabond living off other people's wealth, or a soldier out of work scouring the countryside for something to eat. It may be that you're a highwayman — not the gallant hero of later legends, but a dashing fellow just the same — or a gypsy whose quick hands and sharp blade ensure that she is fed. Morality is for other folks — you live for yourself. A bandit need not be a murderer to get his wish; you might be a cutthroat, a trickster, a seducer or a sneak. Whatever methods you employ, the goods of another are swiftly your own.

Bastard

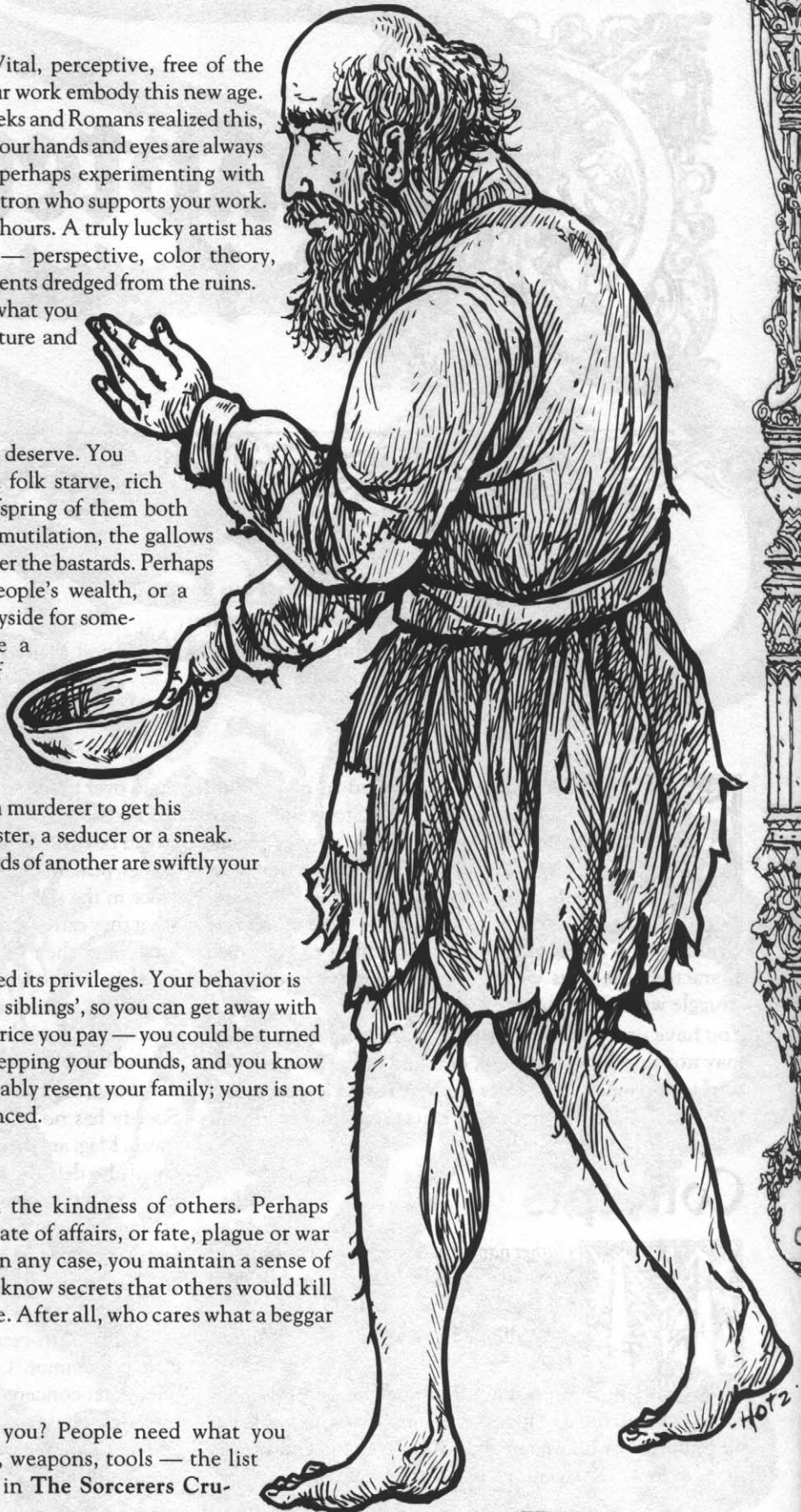
You were born to nobility yet denied its privileges. Your behavior is never scrutinized as is your "legitimate" siblings', so you can get away with scandalous activities. Insecurity is the price you pay — you could be turned out of the house at any time for overstepping your bounds, and you know you'll never inherit anything. You probably resent your family; yours is not a rare lot, but your shame is never silenced.

Beggar

Cast off by society, you rely on the kindness of others. Perhaps gambling debts caused your present state of affairs, or fate, plague or war crippled you. Maybe you're just lazy. In any case, you maintain a sense of pride under your pathetic facade. You know secrets that others would kill for, and might speak them — for a price. After all, who cares what a beggar thinks?

Craftsman

Where would they be without you? People need what you provide. Leatherwork, shoes, jewelry, weapons, tools — the list goes on and on (see the Crafts Skill in *The Sorcerers Cru-*



sade). After years of apprenticeship, mistakes and experience, you know your business. You might be a youngster just learning the trade; or perhaps may possess authority, such as a title in a guild or a reputation for fine work. In any case, you pursue handwork with dedication and finesse. The Lord smiles on good labor.

Diplomat

War is a costly way to do business. You specialize in making deals, using words and schemes to achieve your goals, or those of your lord, without battle. Your skills of persuasion, logic and deceit suggest a natural mediator. In the service of prince, merchant, magus or Church, you do what you can to make differing parties agree. Intrigue is a natural aspect of such affairs; you understand the secret language of half-truths, favors and misdirection as if it were your native tongue. Long journeys — by foot, horse and sometimes magick — are part of the trade. It's not an easy life, but you have your reasons — position, ideals, cash or adventure — for enduring it.

Explorer

The world is as vast as your ambition to see it. The courts of Cathay, the cities of Arabia, the farthest shores of the Indies... not even the sky is a limit to you! Leaving clan and country behind, you make adventure your companion. Harsh travels and near-death scrapes have made you strong, but the marvels you discover are worth every hazard. You've learned vital skills — seamanship, herbalism, medicine and the arts of war — along the way. After all, no one else will save you from disaster. Someday, the angels won't be looking, and the Reaper will embrace you; till then, face the wind, laugh at the Dark Powers, and keep your feet on the less-traveled road.

Farmer

Everyone dies without food. It's your place under God to set the tables of your land. It's hard work under the best conditions; harsh weather, heavy taxes, war and plague undo your labors with sickening regularity. You were probably born to a farming family. Maybe you're a poor crofter, living off a patch of dirt and under endless obligations, or a wealthy cottager with large fields and hired hands. Harvests don't lend themselves to adventure, so you've probably left the farm behind. Are you a runaway? A refugee? A vengeful peasant? Whatever your future role, you were born to the land. Crops and animals are your life's work.

Heretic

You know in your heart that the orthodox perspective is wrong. Perhaps you were raised in a secluded town where things are taught differently.



Maybe you're a rebel who refuses to accept what God's messengers relate. You could have been born to a faith that few around you share. More likely, you received a vision so powerful that it opened your eyes, and you have been unable to swallow the accepted truth ever since. In any case, your radical faith endangers you. Keep quiet about it and trust no one. Torment and the stake are heresy's price.

Inquisitor

God is not mocked. Nor are you. His enemies are your enemies and they are everywhere. Rumor depicts you as a somber executioner, but that really isn't fair. You know how to laugh, how to love, how to put down the torch when the crisis is past. But the Devil is at the door, and God's children must be protected. You possess rare skills — book-learning, faith and warcraft — that help you pursue this task, and you have seen the demons that infest the House of the Lord. Your task may be interrogation, diplomacy or ferreting out lies; the savage witch-hunter is only one aspect of your trade. You most likely investigate heresy with calm questions and veiled threats. The Church stands behind you, and the angels guide your hand.

Midwife

No miracle is more common — or more deadly — than childbirth. You know the secrets of womanhood, and many people shun you for it. Some call you a heretic or worse; these are bad times for the wise women of Christendom. Yet when a baby comes, the gossip ends and your work begins. Aside from your birthing skills, you understand herb lore, nursing and other, more esoteric mysteries. You were probably taught your arts by your mother, who was tutored by her own. Yours is an ancient and valuable profession. Let no one scorn it.

Monk

Chastity, piety and poverty characterize your life. Monks are the working class of the clergy, whether in transcribing books, farming or teaching rich children. However you assumed this position (poverty, dispossession, compulsion or deep faith), you probably take it seriously. This is still a pious age, despite the corruption lurking behind the cathedral walls. The Lord is watching, so you try to make Him proud.

Noble

Your father was of aristocratic blood, as was his father before him. Your lot in life has a long legacy, one to be respected, valued and, above all, passed on. You could be a lowly page, a knight or any other lord beneath the king of your land. You could have been the first-born son and possess your family title, lands, manor, peasants, and liege duties and responsibilities. Or you could have none of that power or prestige, depending on how many brothers precede your right to authority. If your family is poor, you could own nothing and wield no power, even if you were first-born. Indeed, you



may have inherited your father's debts. As a second son to impoverished lands, you might not even be able to afford the armor expected of noble station. However, no matter how fate has smiled or frowned upon you, you are among the lords of society and must be respected by all of lower status — or so you believe.

Nun

You are married to God, entrusted to teach unruly girls and guide women. Chastity, virtue and honesty are the foundation of a nun's life; whether you follow these path-stones depends on your dedication. Some do not. You may have been cast into a nunnery to keep you out of trouble, or perhaps were sent away because your father could not afford a dowry. Perhaps you joined of your own piety. Regardless, you are not nearly as powerless as you might seem — people listen when you speak, and the Blessed Virgin stands beside you. Prayer is your companion and humility your bread, but you have a mystique that lends weight to your presence.

Outsider

What are you doing here? Perhaps you're here for the Convocation, or you work in some barbaric city as a favor to the Order. You may have been born to this land, but follow a creed that puts you at odds with your countrymen. You may be a Pagan, gypsy or Moor. Perhaps you traveled from a place no one has ever heard of. Be alert and watch the shadows. Trouble always comes for you, so have a quick word and a ready knife when it does.

Pardoner

Traveling the world and selling salvation, you collect donations to ensure safe passage into Heaven. For a flask of wine, you'll allow a lord to keep his concubine. For a few pieces of silver, you'll pardon mortal sins of the flesh... including your own. A priest with a sense of duty, humor and business, you provide the Vatican with necessary funds. The Lord's city requires gold for its ministry, and sinners need some form of absolution. Scripture grants you license to do your work, so don't question its honesty. Silver is fleeting; salvation is eternal.

Philosopher-Scientist

Nothing happens without a cause. God is a master artisan, not an arbitrary *tyrannos*, and Enlightened men can discern the patterns He left behind. Steeped in the lore of the Greeks, the Romans, even the Arabs and Turks, you seek the rhyme and reason behind natural phenomena, divine influence, human behavior and the invisible ties between all three. You spend your days in contemplation and your nights in study as the servant of some rich patron. Perhaps you're a scholar, a curious monk, an artisan or an author. Regardless, your research and declarations shed light on the dark corners of the universe.



Priest

God's flock is wayward, and you must shepherd them. You are a servant of the Lord and the Church, and ministrate the Pope's will. The clergy offers many positions, from lowly parish priest to archbishop or even pope, though to hold such awesome status and have dealings with magi is unlikely. You probably tend to a small church and a small rural or urban flock. Education — Latin, literacy and Biblical lore — are integral to your role, although faith is not. You might have joined the Church because you were second-born to a poor nobleman who could not afford the lifestyle that you hoped for. Then again, you could be truly pious and hope to do the work of God. Perhaps that's why you dare work with magi. Someone has to save their souls.

Sailor

A tar's life is brutal — cold, cramped, torn between peril, boredom and the lash. Yet you wouldn't have it any other way. The open sea offers freedom that few men ever know, and the excitement of a new port is more intoxicating than rum. Most likely, you were impressed — seized from the streets one night. Perhaps you began as a stowaway, slave, pirate or simply a lad (or disguised lass) with a hunger for discovery and a strong arm — it doesn't matter. Tarred timbers and salt breezes are your life now, a life you love and loathe in equal measure.

Servant

The rich are helpless without you. Deep down, you realize that. Luxuries demand maintenance, and you know how to keep things running. Perhaps you're a favored servant, privy to your lord or lady's scandals. You could be a lesser worker — a groom, a scullery wench, a groundsman or even a slave — without respect, but given tools and trust just the same. Are you proud of your work or jealous of your masters? Do you perform your duties, or shirk them when you can? You might be the foundation of your household, or a rat in its walls.

Spy

You are not what you appear to be. Some patron or cause enlists you to burrow holes in your social surroundings — to watch, to gather, to steal — and you do so with skill. Capture means sentence to a horrible death, so bend your will to the mask and cloak yourself in others' trust. Perform favors for your marks — if the masquerade ends, you'll need all the help you can get — and keep an eye on the door. Sooner or later, it will be time to pull the tapestries down, and it would be wise to be long gone when they fall.



Tavern-Keeper

A tavern is neither quiet nor peaceful, and you wouldn't have it any other way. Maybe you're an innkeeper, a goodwife, a wench or a bouncer — no matter! Your fingers are in the grub, and your hands are wrapped around the tankards. Gossip and a good hard punch are fine survival skills, and the talk you overhear would turn a bishop's spy green with envy. It takes savvy to run a tavern, too; you wouldn't believe how many thieves there are around here! Few highfolk ever know your kind of freedom. Let 'em look down on you — they're far more prisoners than privileged! Who buys the next round? Let's sort things out in the morning.

Tradesman

Merchants are the social enigmas of your time. They belong to none of the foundations of society, yet are pervasive and relied on by commoners, clergy and nobles alike. Perhaps you were a peasant who escaped your lord's lands for a year and a day and won your freedom. Or you might have been a nobleman who turned to trade to compensate for an impoverished family. Or you might simply have wanted to see the world. Whether you're a traveling merchant or a sedentary craftsman, you have found your calling. You provide the goods that everyone from the country manor to the city square has come to demand. Yours is the way of the future; before long, everyone will rely on your services for their needs. Before that day comes, you plan to enjoy the freedom and independence that your life affords. Just watch out for the competition.

Traveling Player

You're a vagabond tool of Satan, if the tales are right. You live outside law and country, prancing for the groundlings in a mask or painted face, then leaving in the morning. Applause and freedom are your food and drink; good thing, too, since players are notoriously poor. Still, you have your "family" — a gang of roustabouts like yourself, pantomiming passion for a free meal and a bit of squeeze on the side. The work is hard, the living more so, but the open road is the only place to be.



New Traits

Talents Empathy



ou understand and can sympathize with the emotions of others, and are thus able to respond to them appropriately. You can often discern the motives behind someone's actions by simply listening to him. You can also detect when you are being lied to. Empathy

has a down side, though — because you are so open to the feelings of others, you often feel the same emotions as those around you.

- Novice: Gossipy widows feel that they can trust you.
- Practiced: You occasionally suffer sympathetic pains for others.
- Competent: You have an amazing insight into others' emotions.
- Master: You often finish other people's sentences.
- Legend: You read complicated emotional textures at a glance.

Possessed by: Fortunetellers, Gossips, Parents, Priests, Skilled Merchants

Specialties: Background Emotion, Emotions, Family Problems, Personalities, Truths

Carousing

This is the ability to have a good time at a social gathering while ensuring that others do the same. It involves a mixture of eating, drinking and good cheer, while avoiding making a fool of yourself. On a successful Manipulation + Carousing roll, you make a lasting good impression on everyone around you. This Ability is helpful if you are trying to make friends, gather information or distract attendees while allies liberate prisoners from the dungeon. The difficulty of the roll depends on the social event — 1 or 2 for a small gathering with libations, 5 or more for a proper feast.

- Novice: You know a few good songs or dirty jokes.
- Practiced: You can ease tensions and avoid fights.
- Competent: You can move from social circle to social circle without standing out.
- Master: You can carry on three conversations at once, drink, eat and laugh with out skipping a beat or losing your audience.

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Legend: You can command the entire gathering's attention and entertain them for hours.

Possessed by: Buskers, Nobles, Performers, Rakes, Savvy Merchants, Spies

Specialties: Anecdotes, Drinking, Exaggeration, Lewd Jokes, Sexual Innuendo

Skills Climbing

You can climb mountains and/or walls and seldom fear falling. You are familiar with and perhaps even possess the gear required — ropes, grappling hooks, spikes, hammers — to climb for extended periods. You may also be skilled at assisting the untrained who accompany you on a climb; you probably worked as a guide or burglar at some point.

- Novice: You can scale gradual slopes or walls with handholds.
- Practiced: You can shinny up a tree in moments and can scale heavily weathered stone walls.
- Competent: A past or present occupation requires you to climb steep and sheer surfaces every day.
- Master: You have scaled mountains, perhaps to find trade routes through them. You can also climb a smooth stone wall.
- Legend: You find routes and handholds up sheer surfaces that are invisible to the common observer. Sheer, smooth surfaces are like craggy stone to you.

Possessed by: Burglars, Guides, Impetuous Boys, Mountaineers, Woodsmen

Specialties: Buildings, Caves, Cliffs, Ice, Trailblazing, Trees

Disguise

You can change your appearance or conceal your true identity with clothes, make-up and acting talent. (Note that Renaissance make-up is fairly primitive; detailed disguises are difficult to sustain.) A must for intriguers and witches who don't want to get caught!

- Novice: You can fool simple people under ideal conditions.
- Practiced: You can impersonate another person with a bit of effort.
- Competent: You're good enough to fool most strangers.
- Master: You can assume other identities for days on end, and pass for another person of your general size.

- Legend: Man? Woman? Who can tell?
You're whomever you want to appear to be.

Possessed by: Assassins, Masqueraders, Shapeshifters, Spies, Traveling Players

Specialties: Impersonation, Improvised, Magickal, Opposite Sex, Theater

Knowledges Politics

You are familiar with the politics of the day, including the people in charge and how they got there. This Ability can be applied to almost any organization, from the Church to a guild to the local bailiff. It can be essential when attempting to deal with mortal authorities in any way. You might even be a capable politician.

- Dabbler: Casual observer.
- Student: Local herald.
- Scholar: Aspiring heir.
- Savant: Courtier.
- Virtuoso: Machiavellian student.

Possessed by: Courtiers, Guildsmen, Heralds, Judges, Lords, Powerful Clergy, Wealthy Merchants

Specialties: City, Courts, Covenants, Heraldry, Magi, Religious

Seneschal

You were (or are) responsible for managing and maintaining a household or organization. Maybe you were a prominent guildsman or the abbot of a monastery, or you might have been a nobleman's bailiff. Perhaps you maintained a cathedral or were simply the lady of the house. You have experience with balancing the books, keeping inventory of the larder and wine cellar, managing servants, entertaining guests, keeping the house and lands in good repair and making sure that the household, abbey, cathedral or guildhouse is in good running order. Even a farmer might have some ability in making sure there was enough money for rent and for keeping his farm in order.

Along with the attendant experience, this Knowledge may allow you to evaluate how another household is running (and to spot and correct problems), to appraise the quality of trade goods or to entertain a guest, even if you're not in your usual household.

- Dabbler: You can keep a small place running without too many problems, and you know how much money is available.
- Student: You can balance your books and money for expenses, and guests are never a problem.
- Scholar: You can handle a large household without assistance, and your guests always have a good night.

- Savant: You can manage a large household or series of small households without trouble.

- Virtuoso: You can keep your household running even during the most difficult of times, and your superiors consider you indispensable.

Possessed by: Chief Stewards, Innkeepers, Noblewomen, Seneschals, Wives

Specialties: Accounting, Guilds, Hostels, Innkeeping, Kitchens, Noble Households, Religious Orders, Taverns

Symbolism

Great wisdom hides in plain sight. In artwork, lore and Scripture, symbols reflect a greater truth. In this age, everything is loaded with deeper meanings; gestures, plants, animals, weather — all these things hold secrets for those who understand them.

In game terms, this Knowledge allows you to send and decipher codes or recognize heraldry and omens (Intelligence + Symbolism); notice the theme in an artist's work (Perception + Symbolism); or send and receive secret messages in art, speech or even architecture (Manipulation + Symbolism). To a magus, symbols provide the keys to Creation. It is a dull custodian who cannot handle such keys.

- Dabbler: You grasp the obvious.
- Student: Sudden revelations impart hidden meanings.
- Scholar: You're versed in many formal symbolic "languages" (Biblical verse, flower codes, hand gestures).
- Savant: *Everything* has a deeper significance, and you know where to look for it.
- Virtuoso: You read prophecies in the patterns of leaves.

Possessed by: Artists, Art Patrons, Bards, Gypsies, Lorekeepers, Spies, Theologians

Specialties: Alchemy, Animals, Architecture, Biblical, Codes, Foreign Cultures, Heraldry, Omens, Paintings, Sculpture

Merits and Flaws Code of Honor (1 pt Merit)

Your personal sense of right and wrong serves as a binding code, governing your actions. This sense of honor gives you the ability to resist many temptations or inducements that defy your beliefs. You can even resist supernatural coercion, such as use of Mind magick or the vampyr Disciplines Dominate and Presence.

In game terms, add three dice to resistance rolls against attempts to influence your actions supernaturally. Alterna-

tively, the Storyteller may increase the difficulties of such attempts against you by two. You must compose your own code, detailing your ethics and convictions as clearly as possible.

Noble Bearing (1 pt Merit)

Some people were born to lead. You are one of them. Were you born of noble blood? Perhaps not, but you still act as though you were, and impress others as a result. Your true heritage doesn't matter; people respect you on sight.

In game terms, this Merit lowers Social roll difficulties by two. In story terms, it gives you an air of respectability no matter where you are or what you do. It also makes you a target for jealousy, gossip and assassination attempts, but that's the cost of charisma.

Noble Blood (1 pt Merit)

Whether a bastard or favored child, you possess an obvious link to a noble family. It's well-known that "the blood will tell;" prominent features and other, less physical traits (good and bad alike) have been passed on to you. Perhaps you share the duke's fine features, the baron's temper or the princess' deep green eyes. People recognize your heritage, no matter how you dress or behave.

In game terms, this Merit is two-sided. It declares your parentage and wins you respect, but that's not always a good thing. You might acquire your family's enemies through no fault of your own, or cause scandals if you were born on the wrong side of the sheets. If your family has some noted personality trait — extraordinary courage, deviousness, generosity, wrath — you'll probably display some sign of it as a matter of course. Note that this Merit doesn't apply to every noble child; it reflects an undeniable tie to a specific aristocracy, not a simple heritage.

True Love (1 pt Merit)

Undying love for another gives you resolve and inspires you to greatness. The thought of your beloved lifts you above the tedium and turmoil of daily existence, even if you're a continent apart. Not even death can undo your devotion. In an age when courtly and unrequited love are revered, your true love is the stuff of legends.

Your pure devotion grants an automatic success on Willpower rolls related in some way to protecting or defending your beloved. The strength of your emotions may also serve as a charm against supernatural foes if the Storyteller so chooses. Your love may hinder your actions and distract you from issues as well.

Beast Affinity (1-4 pt Merit)

Animals love you. While other people must use force, training or magick to forge bonds with beasts, you do so naturally. Perhaps God has blessed you with the gift of St. Francis. Maybe you're a shaman with a powerful totem or a

witch touched by the Goddess. Regardless, animals are well-disposed to you. You cannot speak their language or read their minds, but some limited communication (based on gestures and vocalizations) is possible. You are probably safe from harm from animals unless you or your companions act hostile toward a beast or its pack.

- For one point, you get along well with a specific type of animal (wolves, cats, hawks).
- For two points, you bond with general types of animals (canines, birds).
- For three, that bond extends to any natural beast.
- For four, even the greater (magical) creatures regard you with favor, if not trust or friendliness.

The payback for this Merit is respect; a magus with a beast-bond must love the wild in return. Farmers, foresters and "barbarians" are more likely to win this trust than are priests or princes. This Merit is not an instant protection; if you anger a beast, it attacks. Intelligent or magical animals are still free to make their own decisions; they're inclined to like you, but may be wary of or even turn on you in the long run. This Merit fades if abused; a sorcerer who uses her affinity to recruit sword-fodder finds her favor revoked. Animals are not stupid, and their goodwill is taxed easily.

Arcane Heritage (2 pt Merit)

The blood of magi runs through your veins; one or both of your parents (and perhaps your ancestors as well) also Awakened to the calling of magick.

In story terms, your Awakening comes as an expected event rather than as a spiritual trauma. You begin the game with an extra dot in Occult or Magus Lore to reflect your familiarity with the arcane.

Faerie Affinity (2 pt Merit)

The Fair Folk are attracted to you. Rather than avoid you, as they do most mortals, the fae seek you out from time to time to enjoy your company or ask for your assistance. You might even be of faerie blood. The spirits treat you like a young sibling (regardless of your age), and rarely make you the victim of their mischief. Occasionally the fae may ask you to mediate disputes among them or between them and mortals. You can sometimes call upon them for assistance in your own affairs — if you dare submit your problems to faerie judgment.

Graceful (2 pt Merit)

You move with uncanny agility and efficiency. Coordination and balance come naturally to you. Even when you fail to achieve some feat, you avoid embarrassing yourself. In game terms, your difficulty for Dexterity-based actions is one less, while botches (even serious ones) do not affect the finesse of your movements. You may die trying, but you will never, ever appear ungainly.

Honeyed Tongue (2 pt Merit)

Lies pass your lips like the Gospel truth. People tend to believe what you say, no matter how inane your conversation or how incredible your stories. This liberty enables you to spread falsehoods with impunity, deceive friends and enemies alike, and explain your way out of most situations. All attempts at Subterfuge gain an automatic success.

Innocent (2 pt Merit)

You convey an aura of childlike innocence. Few believe you capable of anything even remotely evil or wrong, even if you are guilty of the most heinous crime.

In story terms, this Merit makes life a lot easier for you when interacting with potential enemies. You usually suffer mild punishments — even if someone catches you in the act — and your accusers tend to give you the benefit of doubt. In game terms, this Merit lowers the difficulties of rolls involving Subterfuge or Manipulation by two.

Poison Resistance (2 pt Merit)

You have the ability to resist the worst effects of most poisons, because of some natural hardiness or through years of exposure. In game terms, you can roll Stamina to resist a normally fatal dose of poison (difficulty depends on the potency of the draught; mild toxins are 5 or 6, powerful ones are 7 or 8, and really nasty ones are 9 or 10). You might become sick, you might even be incapacitated, but chances are that you'll survive.

Ties (2 pt Merit)

You have friends in high places — the Church, the guilds, the underworld. These friends can help you pull strings, meet people, funnel information or get a word in edgewise. Unlike the Allies, Influence or Spies Backgrounds, these contacts are not permanent or reliable — you are known but not established, and your influence is limited. However, this Merit may improve your chances of using one of those Backgrounds successfully.

In story terms, *Ties* gets your foot in the door. In game terms, an appropriate *Ties* lowers the difficulty of Social rolls by one or two, depending on what you're doing. A subtle request like a dinner invitation is easy to achieve (-2 difficulty). A more demanding effort such as requesting an audience with a prince is harder (-1 difficulty), but not impossible. It's not a good idea to abuse *Ties*; the more you strain them, the weaker they become. A social blunder, betrayal or ridiculous request might sever *Ties* completely.

Create a rationale or story for the *Ties* you have. Your Storyteller may disallow any *Ties* that she feels imbalance the game. The *Ties* Merit has variations; each one must be purchased separately for two points. These variations include: Local Church, Vatican, Jewish Society, Pagan Sects, Local Underworld, Craft Guilds, Artists, Local Prince, King's Court, Sultan's Court, Local Marketplace and Shipping.

Title (2-5 pt Merit)

You've acquired rank, whether by birth or deed. That title confers privilege, of course, but carries obligations, too. Honors are not given lightly, nor are they ignored when trouble brews. And in this world, trouble's always brewing somewhere....

You're expected to act according to your station. God assigns people to certain places in life, and you must do honor to yours. Others watch over you; their opinions are based on your wisdom, generosity, valor and honesty — or lack thereof.

- For two points, you possess a minor claim or title (knight, lady, priest). Your duties include doing what you're told; while you can command the common folk, you have many superiors.

- Three points gets you a lesser title (countess, prelate, burgomaster) or a minor title and some status (renowned knight, honorable lady). In addition to your rank, you can expect a certain amount of respect, but shoulder several responsibilities.

- With four points, you acquire a powerful title (bishop, duke, princess) and all the benefits and duties thereof. Your romances are arranged, your movements are scrutinized, and your commands are obeyed. Few people can order you around, but opinion and intrigue weigh heavily.

- Five points makes you mighty — a prince, archbishop or royal confidante. You command obedience from most people, but blades are forever at your back. Step lightly....

Note that the Storyteller may disallow any title that she feels would disrupt the game — or she may revoke your title, benefits or both on a whim. She will certainly make your rank the springboard for many adventures; assassins, toadies, gossips and supernatural meddlers surround powerful folk. This Merit bestows certain privileges, but rank is a fragile thing. "Uneasy is the head that wears a crown...."

Luck (3 pt Merit)

Fortuitous omens or favorable astrological conjunctions coincided with your birth, gracing you with an undeniable luck. Those who know you believe you have received Heaven's blessing or the Devil's favor, depending on their opinion of you.

In story terms, you seem to live a charmed existence. In game terms, you may repeat three failed attempts at actions that do not involve *magick* during a story. Only one re-roll may be made for any action.

Well-Traveled (3 pt Merit)

Your exhaustive travels and broad experiences have given you piercing insight into life. You possess a wealth of odd facts about cities, libraries, travel routes, obscure fighting styles and other subjects. Once per game session, you may gain an automatic success on any non-magickal roll to reflect your recall of some piece of helpful information.

A Table of Ranks

The highest rank is Emperor, and only two rulers bore that title: the Holy Roman Emperor (*Kaiser*) of the German Nation, and the Byzantine Empire (*Basileus*). Otherwise, the order of precedence runs roughly as follows:

Men's Titles

England	France	Italy	Germany	Spain
King	Roi	Re	Koenig	Rey
Prince	Prince	Prince	Prinz	Principe
Duke	Duc	Duca	Herzog	Duque
Earl	Comte	Conte	Graf	Conde
Baron	Baron	Barone	Freiherr	Baron
Knight	Chevalier	Cavalliere	Ritter	Caballero
"Sir"	Sieur	Signore	Herr	Senor
Squire	Ecuyer	Scudiero	Knappe	Escudero

Women's Titles

England	France	Italy	Germany	Spain
Queen	Reine	Regina	Koenigin	Reina
Princess	Princesse	Principessa	Prinzessin	Princesa
Duchess	Duchesse	Duchessa	Herzogin	Duquesa
Countess	Comtesse	Contessa	Grafen	Condesa
Baroness	Baronne	Barone	Freiherrin/Barunin	Baronesa
Mistress	Maîtresse	Maestra	Meisterin	Duena
"Lady"	Madame	Signora	Herrin	Senora

Church Titles

Pope — "Holiness"
 Cardinal — "Eminence"
 Cardinal Bishops
 Cardinal Priests
 Cardinal Deacons
 Archbishop - "Grace" or "Excellency"
 Bishop - "Excellency"
 Priest — "Father"
 Minister/Deacon
 Subdeacon
 (Nuns and monks are technically not part of the hierarchy
 (as they take their orders from God).
 Abbot/Abbess - "Father Abbot"/"Reverend Mother"
 Monk/Nun - "Brother"/"Sister"



Fae Blood (4 pt Merit)

Your mother or father lay with a faerie one night; you bear the blessing of the Otherworlds. This heritage manifests in your eyes, which see the Dreaming world. Normal folk regard you with both desire and suspicion. Fair in an unearthly way, you tread the line between human and changeling.

In game terms, this Merit makes you kinain — a human with faerie blood. Your Banality is low, even for a magus (typically 2), and your presence is often welcome in places where most mortals are shunned. Half-enchanted from birth, you see faeries for what they are, penetrating the disguises that hide the fae from human sight. This insight makes you vulnerable to chimerical attack, but lets you witness and even live among things that few mortals even sense. To you, the world is vivid, intoxicating, enchanted. Other magi call faeries “mysteries”; you call them cousins. (See Chapter III for details on the faerie world.)

Ghoul (5 pt Merit)

You have a taste for blood — vampyr blood! At some time or another, you have supped from a creature of the night. Her vitae gave you unnatural strength and vigor, but also bound you to her curse. God frowns on you, and the Devil capers as you pass. You must now feed again and again on the tainted stuff; perchance your mistress will claim your soul and bind it through the dreaded Bond of Blood....

In game terms, this Merit grants you one automatic success on any Strength roll you make, and you inflict an additional die of damage with all hand-to-hand attacks. You age slowly and can remain awake and alert while others grow weary. Given time and teaching, you might acquire other vampyric powers as well. However, those gifts fade quickly unless your blood supply is fairly constant (and comes from elder vampyrs). Your powers disappear one month after your last draught.

This Merit also imposes an insatiable thirst for blood — one that can drive ghouls to perverse and damnable actions. And then there's the Blood Bond; a ghoulish who feeds three times from the same vampyr becomes that demon's thrall. Not even a skilled magus can resist the demon's commands — and given the value of a captive mage, those commands will be onerous indeed.

(See Chapter III for details about undead society. If your game integrates the **Vampire** rules, you have a Blood Pool, a dot in Potence and the potential to buy and use up to two dots in several Disciplines. You may not use Thaumaturgy, Necromancy, Chimerstry or Quietus; such Disciplines clash with the powers of magick.)

Age (1 pt Flaw)

You began your magickal training either very early or very late in life. Perhaps your teachers saw great promise in

you and felt the need to begin your instruction when you were little more than a babe. Maybe you were far past the age when masters usually begin instruction, but one decided to teach you anyway. Either way, you are very young or old for your position.

Your age influences your treatment by others. If you are younger, you may be disregarded or disrespected by those who are older but less trained. You may even be resented. If you are older, your peers may assume you have more knowledge or expertise than you do, occasionally putting you in a very awkward position. Increase the difficulty of your Social rolls by one to three depending on the situation or the individual confronted.

Bard's Tongue (1 pt Flaw)

What you say often comes to pass. This is not an effect you can control; as with a prophet or true bard, words come to you at unexpected times and are sometimes regretted. Those who know of this “blessing” or “curse” are uncomfortable around you because they never know when your prophecies will affect them. You do not cause the events you speak of to happen, but you have been granted foreknowledge and the compulsion to make that knowledge public.

Bard's Tongue comes into effect at least once during any story. You may attempt to resist making a prophetic statement by spending a Willpower point.

Craven Image (1 pt Flaw)

No matter how highborn you are, there is something “low” about you. People tend to treat you with less respect than you deserve. While this might be good for an occasional disguise, it hampers your dealings with others more often than it helps. In story terms, your superiors chastise you, your peers mock you, and your lessers disrespect you. In game terms, the difficulties of Social rolls increase by two if appropriate to the situation; making requests or asking favors is daunting for you, for example.

Family Enmity (1 pt Flaw)

You hold no love for your family, nor does it feel any great affection for you. The change sparked by the parting of the Mists might have caused this fracture between you and your blood relations, or this enmity might have preceded your calling as a magus. Whatever the reason, you can find no support or succor among parents or siblings. In fact, some of your family members may actively seek to do you harm.

Alternatively, you are loyal to and loved by your family, but your clan is locked in a bitter feud with another. Members of the competing families conflict whenever they meet. The Storyteller can use this rivalry as the foundation for stories or as a subplot in larger tales.

In game terms, a Willpower point must be spent to resist slighting or attacking an enemy family member. The difficulties of Social rolls involving clan enemies increase by one to three, depending on the circumstances. An enemy might still help you if there's something in it for him — or he's setting you up to take a fall....

Dark Secret (1-3 pt Flaw)

You harbor a secret that could humiliate you, ruin your reputation or even turn your friends into enemies. You might have succumbed to diabolic practices in the past (although you have rejected that part of your life for good), or you may have committed a murder. You may even have been instrumental to betraying a magus to the Inquisition. Whatever the secret is, it lurks just out of sight.

Some secrets are disturbing, but not damning. Others are clear paths to the gallows, wheel or stake. The cost of the Flaw is determined by the consequences of discovery:

- You participated in some shameful act — petty theft, adultery, masquerading as a man. If discovered, you'd be punished, but not too harshly. (1 pt)
- Blood is on your hands — you've killed a cousin, murdered a nobleman or betrayed a village. You may not have committed murder personally, but people would tie you to the crime. (2 pts)
- Your crime is so great that death or banishment would be considered too mild for you. Perhaps you're a heretical cult leader, a shapechanger or a child killer. If discovered, you'll be sentenced to the most hideous public punishment your captors can devise, if only to make an example of you. (3 pts)

Inconvenient Alliance (1-3 pt Flaw)

You have an ally who is discomfiting to you, whether because of your family, your Covenant or your own dealings. Your ally rarely aids you, but has done so in the past, obligating you to return the favor. He may be demanding, but otherwise unremarkable (1 pt); someone whom you don't wish to be associated with, such as a Muslim or supernatural creature (2 pts); or someone repulsive or dangerous, perhaps an Infernalist or traitor (3 pts). Whatever the circumstances of your alliance, it is not a short-term association that you can end by performing a simple service.

Criminal Marks (1-5 pt Flaw)

Your body bears the marks inflicted on criminals, thus raising questions about your past (assuming that anyone can see the marks). Unlike normal scars, criminal marks are punishments inflicted deliberately not only to cause pain, but also to mutilate, branding victims as outcasts from normal society.

You may have these marks for obvious reasons, or may have come by them some other way. Perhaps you were not guilty of the crime, but were convicted of it and punished anyway. You may have lost your hand fighting in a war, but its lack leads others to mistake you for a thief rather than a hero. Some criminal marks are easier to hide than others. Someone branded on the forehead could cover it up with strategically placed mud or soot and an overhanging hood. Rope burns from a noose may be hidden by a shirt or jerkin. A missing nose is considerably harder to hide.

Concealable Brand or Scarring	1 pt
Small Brand/Loss of Ear, Digits	2 pts
Obvious or Large Brand	3 pts
Nose/Lips Cut Off	4 pts
Loss of Hand/Foot	5 pts

Note that some of these marks may call for other penalties as well, such as lameness or inability to speak properly.

Cursed (1-5 pt Flaw)

Someone with supernatural powers — a mage, faerie, vampyr or some other creature who possesses a form of magic — has invoked a curse against you. The nature of the curse is specific and has some bearing on the reason why you received it. Only the most extreme measures can dispel it, and fulfilling them may result in your death. The severity of the curse depends on the cost of this Flaw. The following examples illustrate the types and point values of the Cursed Flaw.

- If you divulge some information received in secret, your betrayal rebounds unfavorably upon you. (1 pt)
- Some physical malady (such as a violent tic, spasm or stutter) affects you whenever you attempt to relate the fact or event that resulted in your curse. (2 pts)
- Tools and weapons break in your hands when you try to use them for specific kinds of tasks. (3 pts)
- You are fated to alienate those closest to you (including other players' characters). (4 pts)
- All your efforts and ambitions, your loves and possessions — everything you hold near and dear to you ultimately suffers. (5 pts)

Disturbing Mannerism (2 pt Flaw)

Something about you discomforts others. Perhaps you laugh like a pig being gored, whisper or hum to yourself constantly, or blink rapidly when speaking. This behavior is not something you can cease permanently; you may not even be aware of it. You tend to fall into the behavior again as soon as you stop concentrating on controlling it.

This Flaw may increase the difficulty of Social rolls at the Storyteller's discretion, depending on how well someone knows you. Strangers may find your behavior odd and distracting, while close acquaintances may find it difficult to deal with you at all.

Magickal Rival (2 pt Flaw)

Another magus seeks to outdo you in reputation, talent or some other aspect of your magick. This person is not necessarily an enemy; she may even be a close friend. However, she attempts to discredit your work, exceed your standards or steal your glory, no matter what you do. While your rival may mean you no physical harm (or even realize what she is doing), she remains a constant irritation. Even if you confront your rival and succeed in convincing her to forswear her need to outdo you, she eventually reverts to her previous behavior.

Religious Aberrant (2 pt Flaw)

You subscribe to a heretical sect or some religious philosophy that is out of place in the society you inhabit. If you are a Christian, you may adhere to any one of a number of unconventional (and proscribed) interpretations of your faith. Alternately, you might believe in druidism, paganism, Islam, Judaism or a shamanic religion in Christian lands — or you might be a Christian in parts of the world that do not accept that faith. You tend to hide your beliefs from those around you, even your friends and trusted companions. You run the risk of ostracism or condemnation by the authorities if your true beliefs become known.

Deformity (3 pt Flaw)

Some sort of deformity racks your body — a misshapen limb, a hunchback or some other physical abnormality — that affects your interactions with others and may make some physical tasks harder. The difficulties of all dice rolls related to physical appearance are raised by two, as are some Dexterity rolls (depending on the nature of your affliction). The difficulties of Social rolls in regard to those who do not know you are also increased by one or two; many folk believe deformity is a punishment sent from God to reflect the nature of a twisted soul.

Lame (3 pt Flaw)

Your legs or feet are injured or do not work effectively. You suffer a four-dice penalty on all rolls related to movement. Perhaps you cannot move at all and automatically botch any attempt at travel.

Repulsive Practice (3 pt Flaw)

Your mystickal practices involve the use of tools or techniques that others find repulsive or offensive. You may require rotted flesh, blood from infants or human waste in order to align the powers for your rituals. Your castings themselves may horrify those who do not comprehend your need for them. These tools or practices may even disturb you, but they are necessary for your magick. Your efforts must be performed in secret lest even other magi discover the foulness that lies at the heart of your craft. This Flaw may not be taken by Infernalists, whose practices already involve perverse measures. Consult your Storyteller before choosing this Trait.

Leper (4 pt Flaw)

You suffer from one of the most feared diseases of the known world. Leprosy is a scourge that leads to stench and rotting body parts. Some of your extremities (toes, fingers) may have been lost already. In any case, you have difficulty handling small items and performing fine manipulation (Dexterity Dice Pools are reduced by four). Furthermore, most people fear and ostracize you, terrified of catching your dread disease. You will not live long, barring the most advanced magickal healing.

Plague Bearer (4-5 pt Flaw)

You had a close brush with an outbreak of plague and survived. However, you now carry the disease and pass it to others, even though you are unaffected by its ravages. Those who fall ill from association with you may believe that you have cursed them, if they realize you are the source of their illness at all. Others may suspect you of trafficking with Infernal powers or of being a demon of sickness.

In game terms, a Stamina roll is made for any with whom you are in close or prolonged contact. The disease spreads if the roll fails. The Storyteller may also spread your contagion as a story element, eliminating any need for rolls.

If you have the four-point version, you are aware of your tendency to spread disease and may counteract it slightly by avoiding contact with others (i.e., keeping your distance from your companions). If you have the five-point version, you are ignorant of your condition and do nothing to contain it.

Dark Fate (5 pt Flaw)

God, Fate, the Devil, the stars or some other great force has marked you for a hideous end. Whether your death comes about in the fires of the Inquisition, at the hands of a supernatural enemy or through some catastrophic act of nature, there is no escape from your ordained demise. Worse, you fear that salvation and redemption are beyond your reach. Not only will you die in agony, you will continue to suffer in the afterlife. Perhaps worse still, all of your hopes and dreams will die with you, ground into the dust of anonymity. Dreams, visions and vague premonitions plague you, giving you tantalizing and horrifying hints of what is to come.

This Flaw (an excellent, if depressing, addition to the Destiny Background) drives you to near-madness. You may spend Willpower to avoid succumbing to an overwhelming despair, but the next reminder of your fate plunges you over the edge again. Yet, in lucid moments, you revel in the present; you do not have to live cautiously or circumspectly — your destiny has already been decided.

Sooner or later, the Storyteller will bring your fate to pass. In the meantime, you can strive to wrest some meaning from your lot. Do not choose this Flaw lightly — your fate *will* befall you.

Renaissance Flavor

Girls showing their breasts
To draw a fatter clientele
Brawlers, starters of fights
Jugglers with monkeys at heel
Fools and clowns male and female
Who march whistling six by six
Puppets and marionettes
I cry everyone's pardon
— Francois Villon, "The Testament"

The Dark Fantastic era is not the 20th century with Renaissance trappings. The following bits of setting color don't make you an expert on the 15th century, but they may help you create an appropriate atmosphere in your games.

Clothes

Men feed upon these vanities and rejoice in these pomps....
— Girolamo Savonarola

One of the most overlooked aspects of character design is what your character wears. Certainly it's not as important as her personality, driving motives, skills or magicks, but your character's wardrobe does indicate her origins, means, occupation, tastes or even her political inclinations.

So what's *haute couture* in the early Renaissance? Well, it depends a lot on who you are and where you're from.

Fashion Trends

The majority of Renaissance fashions originate in Italy. The Italians have cornered the silk trade, so the finest silks, velvets and brocades (as well as a host of other fine fabrics) are produced by them.

Italian noblemen and merchants don brightly colored silk hose, held up by decorative, colorful ribbons or jeweled garters at the knee. Some men wear short "pumpkin" breeches to cover their thighs, while others wear a looser-fitting form of hose. These upper leggings are often multicolored and patterned with intricate designs. Gentlemen wear a codpiece to make up for the lack of fabric between the legs. This piece of clothing had humble beginnings as a simple piece of cloth that attached to the upper hose or breeches with ribbon, but it becomes a "status symbol" by Henry VIII's time. Some codpieces are padded or even bejeweled.

A long shirt, most likely of silk or fine linen, laces at the neck and wrists and is worn over the tights. A man of taste also wears a doublet — the Renaissance answer to the fancy-dress jacket. The doublet serves a practical function as well as a stylistic one. Upper hose are tied to the doublet and the ties are tucked in or hidden with a belt or sash. Doublets can be simple affairs of sober, dark wool or they can be colorful extravaganzas of heavy velvet, fine brocade

and intricate embroidery. A fine dresser finishes his ensemble with a cape, some well-heeled shoes or boots, and a flat or round cap with a feather.

And the ladies? An Italian lady of the upper classes going into the streets wouldn't do so without a pair of chopines (an early form of platform shoes) to keep her fine shoes and skirt hems out of the muck. Wearing these stacked shoes under a heavy dress can sometimes imbalance the lady. Fortunately, the well-groomed maid has servants to tend to her every step! Ladies' gowns are styled with a high waist, long skirts and elaborate sleeves. Dressing begins with a silk or linen underslip called a chemise, followed by an underskirt of a solid-colored silk material, over which is worn a heavy skirt or dress of brocade or velvet. The overskirt or -dress is usually quite ornamental, decorated with gold or silver trim, embroidery and a multitude of jewels and beads. The sleeves are tied to the dress, allowing for versatility as a lady varies her gown simply by changing the sleeves. Such finery wasn't for everyday, unless one was noble; wool and broadcloth were often used for daily wear.

Of course, the lady of taste also wears that essential fashion accessory — the corset. It's likely made of steel, iron or stiff leather, to keep the bosom high and the waist at a svelte 13 inches. After all, as Catherine de Medici duly notes, "A thick waist is bad manners." Normal waistlines are accepted eventually, and corsets become more ornamental rather than practical. The lady may also be burdened with a farthingale, an early form of the hoop skirt created by the Spanish. During the reign of Elizabeth, the drum-style farthingale makes it quite difficult for dashing young rogues to get close to their sweethearts, and occasionally to get through doors.

As for ladies' headwear, the cumbersome (if not dangerous) pointy hats of medieval days have thankfully passed in favor of more flattering styles. The gabled hat is *tres chic* in well-dressed English social circles. It sits on the back of the head and is shaped like a small gabled roof — hence the name.

Another significant fashion change occurs in the 15th century: Women display their hair. During the *passe* medieval days, noble women covered their hair (revealing it was considered sinful), and spent hours in front of the mirror plucking back their hairlines for a semi-balding effect. It's not uncommon now to see young (unmarried) women wearing their hair uncovered and simply arranged, perhaps even with a sheer veil. Married women style theirs in intricate braid designs and choose head coverings that suggest modesty, but that show off the intricacy of their locks as well.

Common Folk

The average man or woman cannot afford to observe fashion trends because they are still in the fields — and in the dark ages of style.

Peasant women wear chemises, much like noblewomen but of much less expensive material, over which a simple wool skirt and front-lacing bodice is worn. Hats vary depending on

climate and occupation (and wealth or availability of fabric), but the average housewife wears a variation of the wimple (a piece of cloth draped about the neck that completely encircles the face, sometimes topped off with a veil) or a muffin cap, which looks like an extra puffy beret, worn on the back on the head.

It's perfectly acceptable for peasant women to expose their legs below the knee. When you're working the fields, it's really not practical to drag your skirts — quite possibly your *only* skirts — through the mud. Common practice dictates drawing skirts up to keep them out of the way.

What if you want your female character to wear pants? That's up to you, but understand that her reputation will be held in serious question if the shape of her thighs is exposed. Only a prostitute shows her whole leg.

Ironically, the bare female breast is tolerated in the Renaissance. Children must be suckled, and most women have at least one child to care for. It's a lot of trouble to strip every time a baby needs feeding, so the bodice loosens to allow access to the breasts. Some women, especially prostitutes and courtesans, bare their bosoms in public for other reasons. It's not that the female breast isn't attractive in this period, it's simply not forbidden — and is less intriguing as a result.

The ordinary working man wears plainer versions of a nobleman's clothes — hose or some form of leg-covering under a long shirt. A tunic replaces the doublet, although a doublet might be worn for special occasions. The tunic is typically worn with a belt. The pocket has yet to be invented, so everything a person carries is hung on his belt in pouches or is attached to his belt by pieces of cord. Consider that when deciding what items your character keeps with him. If an item can't go in a satchel, pouch or on a belt, then it's probably cumbersome and gets in the way at the most inappropriate times.

Shoes are an optional part of peasant dress, partly because they're impractical unless it's extremely cold, but mostly because they're terribly expensive. Poor folk, especially children and laborers, often go barefoot. Early Renaissance shoes are made of leather wrapped around the foot and gathered at the ankle, then tied like a bag. The

ingenious Dutch carve shoes from wood. These are better known as *sabots*. Shoemaking is a laborious craft; you can't just go in and pick a pair, they have to be custom-made! Hence, footwear — or the lack of it — is an indication of status.

Soldiers

What about fighting men? Steel is quite expensive and hard to come by, so only noblemen possess full sets of chain mail or plate armor. Thus, only noblemen or their sons serve as knights. Everyone else wears armor made of thick leather, often reinforced with metal studs. If your character owns armor, it's likely a piecemeal of several different kinds and is probably handed down to him or her by a relative (like the "crow's mail" discussed in *The Sorcerers Crusade*, Chapter VII).

Soldiers in the Italian and Swedish armies wear long, organ-pleated skirts. These troops are considered the height of military fashion — even Michelangelo wants to paint their portraits! Spanish fighting men are recognizable by their extremely long, pointed armored shoes. Swiss soldiers started the fashion known as "slashing." It consists of cutting several small slits in an outer garment, say a doublet, and pulling through the contrasting material underneath. Slashing in sleeves or garments appears in many countries, from Italy to England, but the Germanic peoples make the most use of it.

Slashed intentionally or not, military dress takes a beating. Between training, marching, fighting and the endless rigors of camp life, a soldier gets dirty — *really* dirty. His garments must be strong and easily mended. A fine suit is a waste of time and money. A fighting man lives on his feet, and his clothes display his hard life.



And So...

Fashion trends are usually local and based on whatever whim the ruling class pursues at any particular time. Styles take a lot longer to spread than they will in the 20th century — England achieves the height of Renaissance fashion much later than do the Italians or the Dutch. It's perfectly acceptable to see people in a multitude of different styles. Self-expression is one of the main tenets of intellectual Renaissance philosophy. What better way to express oneself than through clothing?

Yet, despite this crazy patchwork, some fashions remain constant and some are even prescribed. Mercantile guilds advise their members to wear dark or somber colors and to avoid ornamentation to gain and keep their customers' respect. This might seem strange, but consider that black and indigo dye is extremely expensive; thus, wearing dark clothes suggests prosperity. Priests and nuns have a standardized dress code. The cassock, a long-sleeved, robe-like garment, is everyday wear for a priest. It has a regulation 33 buttons, one for each year of Christ's life. Nuns wear simple dresses with an overcape and a wimple and veil, quite similar to what they wore in medieval times. Keeping warm in the winter months determines fashion as well. Granted, a peasant's cloak isn't as heavy or as well-cut as a noblewoman's cloak, but the design and function are similar.

There are even laws that govern acceptable dress for the classes. Peasants are not allowed to wear decorative trim or ribbons except on feast days. Such ornaments are suited only to those of higher station. Members of the middle class must take care with the colors they choose, and must never wear metallic trim; certain colors and gold and silver ornament are reserved for nobility. These sumptuary laws require that transgressors pay a hefty tax for fashion violations! However, these laws are dismissed quickly for those who can afford the luxury.

Pride and Prejudice

I send you more salutations than there are thieves in Poland, heretics in Bohemia, boors in Switzerland, pimps in Spain, drunkards in Saxony, harlots in Bamberg, children of Sodom in Florence...."

— Ulrich von Hutten (a German)

Many of your character's beliefs and feelings may be dictated by his origins and social position. A peasant in northern Europe doesn't behave like a Florentine noble. Other beliefs are dictated by your character's awareness. If you live in Spain, for example, but are aware of the political ideas being discussed in Italy, you may not see the world the same way as others in your area. Thus, in the Renaissance, as in any other period, beliefs and attitudes vary, even among people of the same social stratum or in the same geographic area. There are, however, a few beliefs that are fundamental to the Renaissance mind. These outlooks may determine or influence your character's perspective on the world.

What does the universe look like? To your character or anyone in the Renaissance — with the exception of Copernicus and a small group of his students — the universe is a series of crystal spheres moving outward from a flat, dislike Earth. Each sphere contains planets or stars, the moon or the sun, and each of these objects is perfect and heavenly, removed from the disorderly world. The Earth is obviously imperfect, as are all of the things on it, from mountains to men. The realm of air is between Earth and the heavens, and it's inhabited by demons and angels. These beings are the bridges between complete imperfection and the ideal.

God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh. There have been no major changes since. European culture is Christian. The Church is the rock upon which people have built their lives for hundreds of years. God sits at the center of the community and people live for their homes and therefore for God.

Yet a new belief is starting to spread. This belief — Humanism — maintains that man should live for himself, think for himself and strive to be a better person — not in order to serve God, but in order to serve *himself*. Your character's reaction to this and other revolutionary ideas depends largely on two factors: geography and social position.

Italy

The Renaissance begins in the Italian city-states. Fabulous wealth pours into the area. The magnetic compass has simplified shipping. The refinement of gunpowder encourages widespread wars. The printing press, newly arrived from Germany, makes the dissemination of new ideas cheap and easy. And because they are surrounded by the wonders of the ancient world, feudal lords, elected officials and rich merchants of every town use their new-found wealth to recreate the glory that was Rome. This trend is most evident in the city-state of Florence.

The merchant-princes of the Medici family control a huge banking and shipping empire based in the city. Lorenzo de Medici, local businessman and alchemist, turns his commodities into gold. He uses that wealth to create the Florence Cathedral, the first piece of what will become known as Renaissance architecture. The structure's enormous vaulted dome, tastefully done in stucco, marble and red tile, dominates the city and can be seen for miles. Not since ancient Rome has an architect or town dared to create such a monument (at least in Europe). Work on this building has gone on for over 100 years and its completion is a significant event — one that the preeminent builders of Europe have long said would never occur. But it *does* happen, thanks to the engineering talents of Filippo Brunelleschi. Not so much an architect as an engineer, Brunelleschi has studied the buildings of the ancient Romans and unearthed their secrets of construction.

Imagine that in a culture in which God, Church and community dominate, the accomplishments of two men, following an ancient Pagan tradition, rise higher than the rest.

This cathedral, this monument to personal pride and excellence — to individualism — stands daily in the sight of even the lowliest of men. Classical culture has returned to Italy, and Florence Cathedral is just the beginning. Italy is a center of cultural upheaval for the next hundred years. Merchants, politicians and even the Church compete to have the best and most modern artists paint portraits or build homes.

Italian characters are therefore surrounded by a booming economy, ever more wondrous buildings, bigger schools, products from all corners of the globe, achievements in the arts and science, and by an indulgent Church. It is an exciting and turbulent time. The books of Aristotle bring logic into the world. The works of Erasmus promote the “official” philosophy of Humanism. Ancient Kabbalistic texts reintroduce the study of alchemy and magick to the lay population. New and forgotten ideas arise everywhere and your character — *especially if he’s a Daedalean* — is probably open to them all. Awakening into this climate isn’t a shock, it’s part of the spirit of the age.

Northern Europe

Much of the money spent to glorify Rome (which had to catch up with those upstart city-states) came from papal taxes. Taking a cue from Machiavelli, the Pope demands most of his taxes from regions that are far from him — the emerging countries of northern Europe. Thus, while reforms occur in the south, a very different culture takes shape in the north.

To understand this emerging culture, begin with another church: a Gothic cathedral, festooned with gargoyles and all manner of illustrative sculpture. Like Florence Cathedral, this building’s construction has taken centuries. Unlike Florence Cathedral, it is not finished by a single stroke of genius, but rather by a series of anonymous innovations taking place over centuries. It represents the Church and God, rather than glorifying a man.

To a northern European, architecture and grand monuments do not represent the rebirth of a Classical past, but reinforce the social order. The castle is the house of the local lord and the cathedral is the house of the Lord. It’s been that way for centuries.

Yet different ideas are beginning to form. In Germany, Gutenberg has perfected movable type for the printing press. In Holland, Erasmus is using this invention to promote his radical Humanistic philosophy. Centuries of refinement and tradition, the foundations of the apprenticeship system, are leading to amazing new techniques in both painting and architecture. The old feudal order is giving way to a merchant’s republic. A European Renaissance occurs. However, rather than copy Classical culture, this Renaissance is a result of centuries of small changes in European’s perceptions of the world.

Northern Europe is orthodox. The old Roman culture does not take root in the cold climate. In fact, it is rejected entirely. Introducing Greek Pagan philosophies such as those of Aristotle and Plato into Christian belief is anathema to the clergy of the north. A greater blasphemy is the selling of

“indulgences” — tickets out of Purgatory. Orthodox priests in northern Europe, far from Rome, are outraged at the idea. Meanwhile, secular governors are upset because the Pope continues to demand higher taxes in order to pay for more “Classical” buildings in Rome. By the time Martin Luther initiates the Protestant Reformation in the early 1500s, a large anti-papal fervor has developed in the north.

This foment is based on the realization that the Church is self-indulgent and that man should not be. The Puritan work ethic is born, rooted in Nordic Pagan values like austerity, courage and endurance. Piety, rather than pomp, is prized above all things.

Your character prefers an humble environment to an indulgent one, and is dedicated to tradition and God. Your Awakening tears you from society’s embrace, and the European clergy certainly condemns you. Perhaps magick is the Devil’s art, even to your eyes. You have sold your soul.

The rural peasant still believes in many of the Pagan traditions, and magic is everywhere. Awakening is a tradition to those whose Pagan roots run deeper than their Christian ones (especially to Celts, Lapps and Slavs). Magick is the work of the Devil to those who have forsaken the old ways, and magicians practice secretly among these devout Christians. Yet even pious common folk can respect someone who walks the Otherworlds. They never know when they might need him.

Bigotry

Sicilians hate Romans. Scots hate English. Germans hate Irish. French hate Germans. Florentines hate Neapolitans. The rich hate the poor. The poor hate the rich. The clergy hates the congregation. Everyone fears people from other places and cultures; foreign plagues and wars have killed thousands and destroyed vast lands.

Class, health, religion, nationality, appearance — these are considered God-given stations. Anyone born into a different role than you is suspect. Bigotry favors isolation; the more distant you are from other regions or social groups, the easier it is to mistrust or resent them. Yet a character who spends time among “strangers” begins to identify with them. The more contact your character has with foreigners and foreign lands, the more cosmopolitan his outlook is likely to be.

Prejudice also extends beyond Europe and affects you as you travel. The European belief that the universe is geocentric has an unspoken addendum: The universe actually centers on *Europe*. Obviously, people in the East do not accept this conviction. In fact, it’s as offensive to them as are smelly, hairy, pork- (or beef- or chicken- or lime-) eating, beer-swilling Europeans themselves. A European character is one of the most successful (and hated) barbarians to ever desecrate the holy places of an ancient and beautiful culture.

Bigotries are overcome by acknowledging your own culture’s flaws and by prizing the virtues of others. Ultimately, a mage has to get along with all kinds of strangers if she wants to survive the coming years.



LEIF JONES
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Chapter III: Night-Folk

*Hark! you shadows that in darkness, dwell,
Learn to condemn light.
Happy, happy they that are in hell
Feel not the world's despite.
— Dowland, "Flow My Tears"*

General Crossover Notes

Here are answers to some common questions about interaction between the supernatural beings of the Dark Fantastic realm. Refer to these guidelines when your players want to experiment with their characters or the chronicle.

- Magi *cannot* become vampyrs, wercreatures, faeries or wraiths, nor may such creatures employ Sphere magick. Although some powers described here mention Sphere powers, those references are meant for simulation of other supernatural abilities, for troupes that do not own the other White Wolf games.

- A magus who is Embraced by a vampyr loses her magickal powers. A dead magus who returns as a ghost does likewise. Faeries, werebeasts and human magi belong to different species. Each has its own innate occult talent. They may not use each other's powers; such powers are assigned by God (or the Devil, depending on your outlook).

- A night-creature with Thaumaturgy, Gnosis or Glamour can use basic counter-magick (see **The Sorcerers Crusade**, Chapter VIII), as long as it has at least one dot in that Trait. A werewolf who has spent all of his Gnosis cannot counteract a magickal spell. Such counter-magick requires a Wits + Occult roll, difficulty 6.

- Several Merits in the previous chapter deal with other magus/night-folk relationships. Refer to those for further details.

- For more details, see the pertinent gameline.

This chapter is dedicated to the other supernatural denizens of Renaissance nights — the vampyrs, wercreatures, ghosts and fae-folk whom magi might encounter. These creatures may be friends, enemies or completely indifferent to the characters. Vampyrs might have ancient lore that magi seek, but the undead always want something in return, and it isn't necessarily something that a mage is willing to part with. Werewolves might perceive magi, as they do most humans, as little more than cattle — certainly not equals to them, the Goddess' chosen ones. Wraiths are history without form and know all manner of secrets about the living world, but is a magus willing to sacrifice his body to fulfill his cerebral pursuits? Finally, the fae are prevalent throughout the Dark Fantastic world. Some are prepared to deal with magi, but the Fair Folk have their own bizarre agendas and a mage is never certain if he will make a friend or enemy; all it takes is one right or wrong word.

The Storyteller is advised to keep this material from players. The other supernatural beings of the world should be a mystery to the characters and players. Just because the players have copies of **Changeling**, for example, doesn't mean they know what the fae are like five centuries past — and even if they do, *your* faeries, vampyrs and wercreatures can be very different from anything published in a White Wolf rulebook.

The Demon Undead

The wine had a strange taste, but André's spell had not revealed poison. His host, seated in an elaborately carved chair, smiled as he lifted a chalice in salute. It would be a breach of etiquette to refuse, so the magus returned the gesture.

A knot popped in the fireplace. Embers flew. A few scattered across the hearth, glowed for a moment and cooled to ash.

"Wassail to you, too, my friend," André countered. "May you sire many children and live to a venerable age."

Duke Levitas laughed. "I thank you, good sir. Your toast is admirable, if unnecessary."

They both drank again and settled into their meal. Servants drifted across the stone floors on silent feet as the Tytalan and the duke exchanged pleasantries. The nobleman's daughter watched from further down the table, but said nothing. She's a pale thing, thought André, but comely enough for two. He sipped the wine again. Heady stuff, with a sweet nectar. The fire seemed to blaze brighter.

"You have other children?" the magus ventured. "Upstairs, perhaps, tended by their mother?"

"Of course," replied the duke. "I have a good many offspring. A man like me is quite virile. It's in the blood, you know."

Young as he was, André didn't miss the mockery in his host's words. He's playing with me, thought the magus. There's something about this alliance that Lord Peter didn't tell me. According to the Rite of Gabriel, this man was no sorcerer, yet the uncanny aura of the place was hard to miss. Could my spells have failed? The thought was disturbing. Still, the wine was sweet, almost compellingly so.

A trap.

"I'm not sure I do." André's voice grew suddenly hard. He drew a talisman from his purse, beneath the table. "Please, milord, tell me more about your family." The talisman flared to life in his hand.

The wraithlike girl flew suddenly from her seat and flung herself across the table. Startled, André dropped the Phoenix-Stone. It hit the floor and glowed like the fireplace ember. The servants shrank back.

The duke smiled. "Lord Peter chose well. Just reckless enough to be stupid." He leaned forward, spearing André with his gaze. Despite his magickal will, the magus could not look away. "Stiria, please offer our guest more wine."

André tried to shake his head. It was frozen to his shoulders. The girl leaned down, kissed him soundly with icy lips and lifted the goblet to his mouth.

When the girl drew back, André's lips burned from wine and the kiss.

"Now," said Duke Levitas, "let us discuss the future of your alliance and your service — to Clan Lasombra."

Sanguinis Obscuram

Magi fancy themselves possessors of many, if not most, of the secrets under Heaven. They are inheritors of traditions



stemming from the lost acropoli of Greece and the ruins of hoary Egypt. And yet, things lurk in the darkness that are older than they are. Even sorcerers walk the night at their peril in certain places.

All know the stories of vampyrs — foul spirits inhabiting corpses and possessed of a singular thirst for blood. Magi, however, know that the old legends are true. They are aware that an entire race of immortal vampyrs stalks the night, walking (though with increasing surreptitiousness) among the men and women who constitute their “herd” of blood-kine.

Yes, magi know the legends to be true, but the particulars differ somewhat from the tales muttered by wise women. A vampyr is created when another vampyr drains all the blood from a mortal, and then works foul rites over the corpse to animate it with the soul of a demon. (Not all corpses rise in this fashion; most serve as food and nothing more.) Once a mortal becomes vampyr, it is eternally Damned; no redemption is possible. So long as a vampyr drinks sweet human blood, it lives forever. Vampyrs can be destroyed, though this undertaking is exceedingly difficult. A slain vampyr returns to Hell to face Final Judgment.

Magi also know that, not so very long ago, vampyrs reigned openly over mortals, cementing their tyranny from towering castles and shadowed estates. The iron rule of the vampyr lords has been broken in this age of Reason and Faith; many vampyrs have been uprooted from their ancestral fiefdoms and forced deep into the wilderness or anonymity. Still, the Children of the Night have by no means ceased to trouble mankind. They have replaced overt brutality with subtle scheming, using mortal depredations as a veil for their worst excesses. Many among the mighty yet dance beneath the stringed talons of the undead. Vampyrs are undying and can concoct stratagems and machinations that span generations. Many magi can attest that the centuries-long hatred of a vampyr is one of the most chilling experiences short of Hell itself.

Magi have learned that these undead are in fact the possessors of a unique, if twisted, society and culture. There are vampyr lords and vampyr outcasts, vampyr “sires” and “childer,” vampyr “fledglings” (those under a century in age) and “elders” (fearsome beings who have lived for centuries). Vampyrs are proud in their iniquity, and they claim a history of dark deeds stretching back to the nights of the pharaohs and beyond. They even ascribe a Biblical genesis to themselves, claiming to be descended from Caine, the First Murderer. Perhaps this, alone among their statements, bears some vestige of truth. Grimoires speak of dealings with vampyr aristocrats who have accounted, in meticulous and incontrovertible detail, a litany of atrocities dating to the nights of the Flood itself.

As if this were not frightening enough, the undead even make war among themselves, using mortals, armies and entire nations — and occasionally magi — as pawns in their feints and attacks. Though much of this struggle is nebulous even to the most discerning magi, it appears that vampyrs divide themselves along ancestral lines of blood, and that many of these bloodlines bear ancient grudges and jealousies. Certain vampyrs also long for a return to the ancestral nights when they walked openly as predators. Yet others wish to dwell among mortals and manipulate them in secrecy. These two factions despise each other and all of Europe is their battleground.

Tremere, House of the Damned

One order of undead is particularly loathed by Europe’s magi. Somewhere in eastern Europe stands the fortress of House Tremere. Tremere are vampyrs, but are unique among the undead in that they were formerly magi of the Order of Hermes. The house leader actually sought damnation, transforming his entire order into vampyrs through foul magical rites; rumor claims that even the other undead hate him for this, and that the Tremere are friendless among the Damned.

Not long ago (1201-1350), a bitter war raged between the houses of Hermes and the corrupted things of Tremere. This conflict was never really rescinded, but simply grew too costly for either side to continue. Even now, the Order remains a dedicated foe of the renegade faction; dire alliances have been struck with other night-folk in the hopes of fouling Tremere’s bastard children once and for all. One secret pact with Clans Lasombra and Tzimisce links House Tylalus with the savage vampyrs of the Black Sabbat. As the Council assembles, plans are underway to sever these pacts. If revealed, these alliances could destroy the fragile unity sought in Horizon, and they could serve the Hermetics up to their enemies.

(To represent a Tremere vampyr, use one of the generic templates below, but raise Mental Attributes by one or more. Additionally, Tremere retain vestiges of their old magical arts. If you do not use the **Vampire: The Dark Ages** rules, you may represent this so-called “Thaumaturgy” with several dots in the Mind, Forces and Spirit Spheres. These powers are not True Magick and are not subject to the Scourge. The older the vampyr, the higher his Arete and Sphere ratings.)

The Black Sabbat

Not all vampyrs are content to exist as secretive schemers. Magi in remote regions have heard tales of entire villages being slaughtered by “packs” of shrieking undead. These creatures would bring on the Day of Revelation, dominating the world of men just as Saint John predicted. These creatures also openly acknowl-

edge their demonic taint, paying homage to Belial, Baphomet and the Eternal Crone through gory and perverse rites. The hordes of Tezghul the Insane have many allies within this so-called "Black Sabbath," allies who ride with them into battle, sup on screaming victims, and who indulge all manner of atrocities when the fight is through.

Two "traditions" within this abhorrent group have pledged themselves to the destruction of House Tremere. This enmity has made them allies (or pawns) of several Hermetic Covenants.

- **The Tzimisce:** These fiendish undead control the lands of nighted Carpathia. Said to be responsible for the maladies afflicting many of the region's noble families, these terrible creatures practice sorceries of their own. It is difficult to say whether their confederacy or enmity is the more perilous. Tzimisce are honorable in their fashion, though exceedingly strange, and they put even the Church's men to shame in their ability to inflict pain. Rumor claims the dreaded Vlad the Impaler rides among their ranks; certainly, he has leigemen within the sect, and he understands many vampyric secrets.

Tzimisce vampyrs and their servitors bear horrific mutilations; some arcane talent allows these nightmares to reshape living skin and bone into perverse designs. The fiends often "sculpt" themselves into grotesqueries and do far worse to their hapless servants. Worst of all, however, are the torments they visit on their enemies; living curtains and ghastly battle-beasts are just the beginning.

(To represent a Tzimisce vampyr, use one of the generic templates, but raise Mental Attributes by one or more and add several dots in Torture. Additionally, Tzimisce can liquefy and warp a victim's flesh and bones simply by touch. Assume the vampyr has five dice to spend on this attack, and roll versus the victim's Stamina + 4; if the roll succeeds, the vampyr may disfigure, twist or otherwise maim the victim.)

- **The Lasombra:** More subtle than their twisted counterparts, these erudite nocturnes play the scholar's role among their kind. As the war between the Black Sabbath and their undead rivals roars into an inferno, Lasombra emissaries offer much to learn the secrets of magick. While they seem to have achieved a pact with darkness itself, molding mere shadows into living form, their efforts have thus far failed to win them the crown they seek. Some have taken to less diplomatic measures, imprisoning or enslaving magi in order to uncover the mysteries they seek.

(A Lasombra commands darkness itself, warping it to play on a victim's fears or using it as an extension of his own body. Simulate this innate talent with several Mind and Forces 2 enchantments, channeled through sur-

rounding shadows. Like Tremere and Tzimisce, Lasombra are unusually intelligent.)

Hell-Spawned Strengths

Most vampyrs have at least one of the powers listed below and elders of the breed typically have most of these abilities. All undead have the gifts of Fangs, Healing and The Blood.

- **Fangs:** All vampyrs bear fangs as part of their curse. The undead can be distinguished from mortal kind by this feature. These fangs inflict aggravated damage (as per the Bite maneuver given in **The Sorcerers Crusade** combat tables). Mortals bitten by a vampyr must also roll Willpower (difficulty 6) or succumb to a hellish and prurient ecstasy, refusing to resist the vampyr's predation.

- **Might:** Most vampyrs possess supernal puissance, courtesy of demonic aid and their own corpse-bodies. In game terms, assume that a recently created vampyr has Physical Attributes in the 3 to 5 range, while a vampyr over a century old has at least one Physical Attribute in the 6+ range. The most common Trait thus boosted is Strength; many vampyrs pay bloody credence to the legendary "strength of 10 men." An enraged vampyr can easily rend asunder a man in a full mail suit.

- **The Blood:** Vampyrs drink blood — this much every tinker and peasant knows. Magi, however, understand that the vampyric frame transmutes human blood to a marvelous elixir, which animates the dead body and provides the vampyr with its monstrous powers.

In game terms, vampyrs have 10 "Blood Points" that can be spent to heal wounds and increase Physical Attributes (each Blood Point spent lets the creature raise one Physical Attribute by one point for one scene). Blood Points return through the drinking of mortal blood; each pint of blood consumed restores one Blood Point.

- **Healing:** A vampyr may heal his wounds with little trouble through those selfsame Blood Points. In game terms, each Blood Point heals one normal Health Level of damage. Aggravated damage costs five points plus one day of rest per Health Level.

- **Uncanny Fortitude:** Such is the power of the undead that many of them can shrug off injuries that would kill several mortal men. In game terms, the Fortitude power allows a vampyr to soak one to five Health Levels of damage (normal or aggravated) automatically, without a roll.

- **Immortality:** A vampyr is effectively immortal unless she meets her end through fire, sunlight or beheading. Other damage hurts her, but does not destroy her.

- **The Bond of Blood:** Anyone — mortal, magus or even vampyr — who drinks three draughts of blood from the same vampyr on three separate occasions falls under a

powerful love spell. The victim becomes a thrall to the night-creature. Though he may fear or even hate his mistress, she can command him and expect to be obeyed. Such Bonds (also called *Blood Oaths*) have tangled magi — whole Covenants of them! — into alliances with the undead and have undermined the courts of Europe. Hidden vampyrs weave their most subtle intrigues through such oaths.

- **Illusion:** Some vampyrs can cloak themselves in an illusory disguise, appearing as harmless maidens, wretched beggars or small children. They use this power to lure their prey into dropping its guard. These vampyrs can also walk completely unseen or can disappear from mortal sight in an instant.

- **Superhuman Senses:** It is very difficult to hide from a vampyr. The undead hear the night-wind and the secrets it carries; the barking of dogs and the mewing of cats are intelligible to them, while a faint footfall a league away sounds like the tread of an approaching colossus.

- **Superhuman Speed:** Many, though not all, vampyrs move swifter than would seem possible. In game terms, certain undead can take between one and five extra actions per turn.

- **Shapeshifting:** A few vampyrs can assume bat- or wolf-form, just as the legends say. In bat-form, the vampyr can fly; in wolf-form, she can lope at double speed and savage her prey with fearsome fangs. Truly powerful elders can even become clouds of mist and float away from a fray unharmed.

- **Mesmerism:** By gazing into the eyes of a mortal or animal, and successfully rolling Manipulation + Subterfuge against a difficulty of the victim's Willpower, a vampyr can mesmerize the victim mystically, bending him to her will. A vampyr may affect magi in this way as well (see the fiction introduction to this section), although a good mental defense spell (Mind 2), cast *before* the mesmerism attempt, may deduct one success from the vampyr's roll for every success achieved by the casting magus.

Vulnerabilities

- **Sunlight:** The undead are mighty and terrible foes, but Sol's cleansing light is as poison to them. A vampyr exposed to the sun begins to burn, suffering one Health Level of aggravated damage per turn of exposure.

- **Fire:** Fire is anathema to the undead; they fear it greatly, and a properly wielded torch has occasionally saved a hapless peasant from a hideous death. Fire inflicts aggravated damage on vampyrs and sends them into a horrible frenzy.

- **The Beast:** All vampyrs have the souls of demons. They lapse into berserk frenzies when maddened by bloodthirst or fear. While thus crazed, a vampyr attacks anything in the area, including erstwhile allies.

- **Rowan Stake:** A rowan stake, thrust through the heart of an undead, drives the creature into tormented slumber. The vampyr is helpless in this state and may be disposed of in the traditional way (head chopped off and mouth stuffed with garlic).

Counters

- All vampyrs are immune to the effects of Life magick. A Life-based spell must incorporate Matter 2 to harm an undead thing. All other Spheres work normally.

- A magus may use basic counter-magick against a vampyr's Thaumaturgy spells.

Masters of Night

The following are basic templates for the various vampyrs that magi may encounter.

Fledgling Vampyr

This creature haunts large cities and midnight roads, hiding by day in rundown buildings or (in some cases) maintaining a double identity as a mortal. Most fledglings have existed for a century or less; while devious, he's no match for his elders, and typically relies on numbers and brute terror.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 4, Willpower 5

Suggested Attributes: Physical Attributes of 3+; Mental/Social ratings of 2 or 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 2, Hearth Wisdom 2, Melee 3, Occult 1, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Suggested Powers: One to three of the powers listed above

Gear: Good-to fine-quality clothes, a purse, perhaps a knife for the recently Changed

Prince of the Undead

The elder has lived for three centuries or more and is among the most maliciously cunning creature in the world.

Character Creation: Attributes 10/7/5, Abilities 20/15/10, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 9

Suggested Attributes: Physical Attributes 5+, Mental/Social Attributes 4+

Suggested Abilities: Academics 5, Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression 3, Fencing 4, Hearth Wisdom 2, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 5, Leadership 3, Linguistics 4, Melee 4, Moneylending 3, Occult 5, Seduction 5, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 5, Torture 2

Suggested Powers: Most, possibly even all, of the powers listed above

Gear: Fine-quality clothes and jewelry, guards and retainers, ancient ritual equipment

Wild Vampyr

This feral undead scorns the society of his own Damned kind, preferring to make his den in sewers, cisterns, plague-yards and other places of filth. With few exceptions, he and his kind are abominably foul of visage — appearing as beasts or outright monsters — and bear the stench of the open grave.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 7

Suggested Attributes: Strength 6+, Dexterity 3+, Stamina 5+, all other Attributes 1 to 2, Appearance 0

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Animal Ken 5, Archery 3, Brawl 4, Crafts 3, Dodge 3, Enigmas 3, Hearth Wisdom 3, Herbalism 2, Intimidation 4, Investigation 3, Stealth 5, Survival 4

Suggested Powers: Claws (Strength +2, aggravated), Uncanny Fortitude, Superhuman Senses and either of Shapeshifting or Illusion

Gear: Tattered clothes, recently dead animal

Vampyr Affairs in the Renaissance

Vampyrs are the masters of the night in the Dark Fantastic age. Yet the past few decades have cost them dearly. The undead struggle to reinvent themselves amidst the cleansing fires of the Inquisition, while retaining their vast webs of influence.

• The Camarilla (1450+)

The brainchild of Clan Ventrue's leadership and Clan Toreador's passion, the Camarilla officially forms in 1450. It is the result of powerful vampyrs' efforts to unite the undead clans under a protective banner of guidance. Young vampyrs cry foul at this claim. To them, the "precautions" are a pretense, a ruse to gather the sheep together into a single flock for the shearing — or the last supper.

Despite the opposition of neonates, many vampyrs support the idea of a common set of protocols. The most important of these becomes known as the Masquerade, a mandate stating that vampyrs may not reveal themselves to mortals. In order to avoid the witch-fires, the undead conduct an elaborate ruse, hiding among humans to escape the notice of the hated Inquisitors.

The confederacy is not without its problems, chief among them being the almost universal hatred for Clan Tremere. Tolerated for their magical powers, the renegade Hermetics make many enemies for the nascent Camarilla — among them, the Houses of Hermes themselves. It will be many bloody nights before the magi and the united clans achieve anything resembling peace. In the

interval, the vampyric sorcerers move their greatest chantry from Ceoris, Transylvania, to Vienna, Austria — a move accomplished over the bodies of several dozen Daedaleans.

• The Anarch War (1450-1493)

Certain vampyrs (mainly disillusioned fledglings) reject the principles of the so-called "Camarilla." Rather than suffer the whims of their sires, they throw off the shackles of the elders. At first regarded as immature and impertinent, the anarchs soon demonstrate the ultimate commitment to their cause by destroying two of the founders of the undead clans. This patricide touches off the Anarch War; overt and covert struggles rage across Europe.

In the end, the Camarilla meets the daunting task before it; insurrectionist leaders are forced to drink the blood of their elders. Many anarchs, fearing the power of united vampyrs, surrender to the Camarilla's wishes. Many others do not. They drink each other's blood, swearing oaths of sanguinary fealty to one another rather than the oppressive elders, and resolve to never suffer the tyranny of their immortal superiors again.

• The Conspiracy of Isaac (roughly 1444)

Amid the skirmishes of anarchs and elders, another treachery swirls from the ashes of forsaken loyalty. A group of Venetian vampyr necromancers known as the Giovanni usurps the age and power of its progenitor. With the secret blessing of the aristocratic Ventrue (who wish to take advantage of the wealthy Giovanni), a select few Necromancers invite important members of other clans to aid them in their cause. These vampyrs, with their "the Conspiracy of Isaac," bring down another vampyr ancient, and the leader of the Giovanni consumes this monster's soul and takes his place.

• The Sabbat (1490+)

After the bloodshed brought on by the Conspiracy of Isaac and the failure of the Anarch Revolt, many vampyrs take their hatred of the elders one step further. Denying all the precepts imposed by the Camarilla, they choose to uphold the monstrous majesty of vampyrism rather than hide among mortal "kine." These marauding beasts gather into packs for protection and wage a covert war against the elders they so despise. Peasants, fearing these "sabbats" of devils and witches, inspire the packs to present a cohesive front against their enemies. Unified by a common cause, the Sabbat struggles against its archnemesis, the Camarilla, in clashes that cost many lives (and unives).

It is a dangerous time in vampyr politics, and the extensive influence of the undead provides an excellent backdrop — or foreground! — for almost any **Sorcerers Crusade** chronicle. The vampyrs have their talons in many of Europe's pies and it's conceivable to encounter the Damned almost anywhere.

The Skinchangers



eRoi gasped desperately for breath as he fell to the forest floor. The howls of wolves were all around him. His satchel of implements was lost far behind. Panic ruled his mind, driving even the simplest incantations from his thoughts. His skin crawled. How terrifyingly soft and fragile it was, and how easily it would tear under claws and fangs.

He gasped for air again — and nearly choked on the charnel reek of fresh gore. His fingers, scrabbling for purchase, caught a sodden, warm piece of — dear God!

LeRoi flung the gobbet away with a sob. He tried to scramble to his feet, but could manage to only rise to his knees. Claudette — poor willful, ambitious Claudette. He hadn't wanted to leave her, and now the wolves had driven him in a circle back to her.

Suddenly the howling stopped. The brush parted, and it stepped through. A wolf — no, surely not, for it was nearly the size of a horse, with fur like soot and blazing yellow eyes. The demon's muzzle was spattered with blood and it stood firm before the weeping LeRoi, impaling him with its gaze.

A soft voice with a peasant's accent but a countess' rich texture, drifted from the shadows behind the brute. "This is not your land. Keep your feet to the roads and the cities — or feed this soil with your entrails." LeRoi thought he saw a flash of eyes, somewhere off in the cloying dark. Then the massive wolf tensed, and his attention leaped back fully to the killer before him.

"Now run, for great Garm here will bide only moments more — and then he will come for you."

LeRoi was on his feet again, racing for the sunlight, tripping over fallen branches and trying desperately not to think of the crashing noises drawing ever closer....

Beasts in Human Skin

In the Age of Exploration, the desire to chart the unknown runs stronger than ever before. Ships ply the seas, foresters cut ever deeper into ancient glades, and traders cross the steepest mountains. But many of the wild places are still wild, and their defenders are dead-set on keeping them so. Whether magus or human, Christian or Pagan, trespassers in these sacred sites often find nothing but swift death at the talons of the Moon's children — the werebeasts.

Common lore describes the shapeshifters as humans able to take beast forms; the learned occult scholar knows better. Werereatures show all the fevered emotion, savagery and low cunning of animals able to wear human guise — and so, mysticks reason, they must be just that. Even those shapeshifters who walk



city streets amongst the herd of humanity remain somehow apart, their only truly human trait being the skin they wear.

Werewolves

The most common of the shapechangers are the warriors of the breed — werewolves. Swift, furious and strong, werewolves haunt the wild lands between cities, hunting animal, human and Awakened prey alike.

Wolf-changers keep to themselves for the most part. This is a time of change, true — but few wolf-men consider human affairs worth their attention. But there's an exception: Werewolves are highly territorial creatures and often adopt certain human communities or wolf packs as their own. Anyone who threatens these charges — or who tries to draw Quintessence from their sacred grottoes and vales — usually finds herself torn to shreds and strewn across the deep forests of Europe.

Unfortunately for many concerned, not all werewolves keep to the forests. A few live like other humans in the city, although they always have a certain *something*, a predatory aura to them that keeps them a measure apart. These urbanites follow human progress with great interest and an element of detachment. But when their volatile souls are moved to action, blood soaks the cobblestones.

Few magi survive a clash with werewolves. Those who do tell cautionary tales. Lore states that the wolf-changers are the deadliest of their ilk, particularly since they operate in packs. They augment their already inhuman fighting prowess with Gifts (spirit-powers) that increase their speed and strength; with supernatural abilities granted by their totems; and even with the occasional war fetish, such as their silver daggers, called *klaives* (which do aggravated damage to any creature). Many sorcerers have attempted to parlay with werewolves in an attempt to gain these juggernauts as allies in trying times — but virtually all have failed. The werewolves seem to respect only the Dream-speakers; yet not even the masters of Spirit gain much ground with the wild ones.

Ceilican Werecoats

Tales of “devil-cats” cantering through the rural villages of Europe have a very dark ring of truth to them. Such legends typically arise from the activities of the Ceilican, fae-blooded cat-people with mystic powers and lurid appetites. Although born to wildcats, these dangerous creatures are reputed to prefer dipping their paws in human affairs — whether the humans like it or not — than remaining in the wilds.

Once renowned for their hedonistic lifestyles and playful “games” with mortals, the Ceilican no longer have the luxury of idle play. These fae cats ride the South Wind to extinction, hounded by Inquisitors, fearful townsfolk

and Gabrielite beast-hunters. Most devil-cats forge pacts with whomever (or whatever) will listen, in hopes of saving themselves. Some even flee Europe entirely, stowing away on ships in hopes that the “New World” they hear about might prove more hospitable.

Tragically, the Ceilican lend a shred of truth to tales that link cats and witches. The werecoats have a healthy interest in the whys and wherefores of human magick, and aren't above tagging along with a sorcerer to learn a few trade secrets. However, woe to the errant mystick who decides that a Bastet would be a perfect subservient companion or an ideal romantic partner — the cats don't play by *anyone's* rules but their own. Even the closest allies of a Ceilican find themselves dancing to the tune of the werecoat's mindgames.

Ratkin

In the thickest, filthiest boroughs of the expanding cities, some people whisper frightened tales about intelligent rats, creatures that poison cats and dogs and wield tools and weapons — and murder people in their sleep. Ancient lore from the first cities records tales of similar beasts — the wererats.

The rat-shifters are rumored to be plaguebearers of the worst sort, creatures who deliberately spread sickness through human communities while remaining untouched by their own poxes. Some tales also paint them as assassins, creatures willing to lead swarms of rats from the gutters to devour clergy and noblemen in their beds — if properly motivated. Their existence proves something of a challenge to the Cosians, as well. When virulent illnesses strike an area suddenly, these magi often gather in hopes of capturing a wererat and analyzing its supernaturally pestilent nature. They have yet to succeed; by the time the magi arrive, any rat-shifters that may have been there have long since vanished.

Whatever the truth behind the Ratkin, many mysticks agree that such creatures probably inhabit catacombs, labyrinthine burrow complexes or well-hidden warrens below humankind's cities. Although some have tried to ferret out these dens, none have returned; presumably the Ratkin are capable of winning any fight waged in their territory and on their terms.

Wereravens

Few people know that some werecreatures wear feathers instead of fur. Fewer still realize that the carrion birds wheeling above battlefields may be carrying word of intruders to the werebeasts of the wild. Even the human legends of the Morrigan, Hugin, Munin and their ilk are but shadows of the truth. The Corax have always been careful to make sure that they know more about others than others know about them.

Although far less infamous than their savage brethren, the raven-folk are fairly widespread throughout Europe. Their presence is rarely noted, even by Awakened witnesses; one expects to see ravens at a battlefield or following a caravan. The Corax seem content to simply watch the events of the time, storing away the outcomes of wars or the passage of armies for their own benefit. Certainly they don't share their counsel with humankind or even mysticks. However, ravens occasionally descend into the dark reaches of the Black Forest, into the remote highlands of Scotland or into other places where werewolves rule. Whatever words pass between the creatures, no human can say. But sometimes Daedalean troops are annihilated in surprise attacks by berserk werewolves, or by traps that must have been set for them — and the only ones left to note the victims' end are the ravens, who descend to eat their fill.

Legacies of the Moon

Although skinchangers come from many cultures and take the forms of many beasts, all have a few traits in common:

- **War Form:** They are able to assume the forms of a human, a beast or a nightmarish "war form" that blends the aspects of both. In this middle form, a werebeast's Physical Attributes rise far above human limits, according to his species (werewolves double all of their Physical Attributes, wererats and werecats enjoy greatly increased Dexterity and moderate gains to Strength and Stamina). However, changers' Social Attributes drop significantly in "war form" (or *Crinos*, as they call it). The very sight of a werecreature in *Crinos* invokes a terrible, instinctive fear in un-Awakened humans, who may even lose their minds temporarily when confronted by these primeval killers.

- **Innate Speed:** Skinchangers move with remarkable speed and are capable of taking two to five actions in a single turn (although they can maintain such quickness for only short bursts).

- **Regeneration:** Werewolves and their relations heal remarkably quickly, recovering one Health Level per turn. Only silver, fire or other aggravated forms of damage cannot be regenerated so quickly (and the changers have ways of healing even these).

- **Spirit Powers:** Shapeshifters enjoy very close relations with the Middle Worlds, and many can shadow-walk (step sideways) at will. They have a number of rites and powers that enable them to coerce spirits into doing their bidding. Although they cannot manipulate the Gauntlet itself, most have the equivalent of at least Spirit 2. In addition, they often carry fetishes that aid them in their duties.

- **Awesome Attacks and Resilience:** The teeth and claws of werecreatures inflict aggravated damage.

Shapeshifters can also soak aggravated damage (with the exception of that taken from silver).

- **Gifts:** Werecreatures have certain "Gifts," mystical tricks that allow them to run without leaving a scent, summon handfuls of flame and animate oaks into battle. The older the shapeshifter, the more potent his powers. These creatures fuel their Gifts with Gnosis, spirit energy. As a result, they often take powerful Crays as their own, the better to tap the spiritual energy there. They guard these sacred sites to the death. (See the Cray Background in *The Sorcerers Crusade*, Chapter IV.)

Counters

- A magus is totally helpless before a werebeast's claws, unless he casts a Life 3 spell to protect himself before an attack begins. Although a Storyteller *might* allow a sorcerer to soak aggravated claw damage, we do not recommend it. There are reasons why sorcerers fear these night-folk — very good reasons!

- A magus with Spirit can try to use basic counter-magick against a werebeast's Gifts, if a Gift is used against the magus directly. For example, a Gift that reduces a sorcerer to a quivering heap might be countered, but one that transforms the ground beneath her to mud cannot be. No other Spheres may be used to counter werebeast magic.

Bloody Beasts Urban Werewolf

She paces among the human sheep, confined by her own will, but restless nonetheless. She wanders the streets hungrily by night, sniffing out the secrets hidden from others of her kind.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/7/5, Abilities 20/15/5, Backgrounds 3, Willpower 5

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Academics 1, Alertness 3, Animal Ken 2, Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 1, Brawl 4, Cosmology 1, Crafts 3, Culture 3, Dodge 3, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Intrigue 3, Investigation 3, Larceny 2, Law 2, Leadership 3, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Medicine 1, Meditation 1, Melee 4, Occult 2, Science 1, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival (Urban) 3

Suggested Powers: Strength +1 Bite; Strength +2 Claw. Often skilled in human weapons, the urban werewolf can also call on Gifts and rites that control and manipulate man-made objects, as well as sway human thought.

Gear: Poor- to fine-quality clothes, a purse, a forest memento

Caern Defender

The magical power pulsating beneath the earth is sacred to this guardian of forbidden places. To rob the caern is to rape the Earth Goddess — and to court a messy death at the hands of Her Pagan children. Not even witches dare challenge such creatures. A shared reverence does not translate into camaraderie — or to “borrowing privileges.”

Character Creation: Attributes 9/7/5, Abilities 20/15/5, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 6

Suggested Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Animal Ken 3, Archery 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Cosmology 3, Crafts 2, Dodge 3, Enigmas 3, Etiquette (Garou) 2, Expression 2, Herbalism 2, Intimidation 3, Law (Garou) 1, Leadership 3, Lore 3, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Occult 3, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 1, Survival (Woodlands) 4

Suggested Powers: Strength + 1 Bite; Strength + 2 Claw. The caern defender's Gifts and rites usually allow her to call on natural forces such as wind, fire, earth and wood. They also heighten her combat abilities.

Gear: Weapons made in the wilds

Ceilican Rogue

So sleek! So lean! So utterly seductive! With a flash of his shining eyes, this sophisticate can soften the hardest heart or convince the shrewdest noblewoman to put her riches in his safekeeping. The fact that he would never — *could* never — keep his troth cannot hinder the affection he engenders when he looks into the eyes of his prey.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/7/5, Abilities 20/15/5, Backgrounds 4, Willpower 4

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Acrobatics 2, Alertness 3, Animal Ken 2, Archery 2, Artist 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Cosmology 1, Culture 1, Dancing 3, Dodge 3, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 3, Expression 2, Fencing 3, Hearth Wisdom 3, Intrigue 1, Larceny 3, Linguistics 2, Lore 4, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 3, Seduction 3, Singing 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Suggested Powers: Strength +1 Bite; Strength +2 Claw. Many are skilled at swordplay. Ceilican magic calls on fae energies to spin glammers and stir hearts; werewolves are masters of illusion and mental manipulation.

Gear: Fine clothes, jewelry, dice, sword, dagger

Ratkin Cutthroat

Caked in filth, this degenerate curls himself into a ball at the coming of winter. Even in human guise, the Ratkin bristles with wiry hair and spouts cutting curses at whomever disturbs his rest. However, he'll cure what ails ye, for a price — assuming that cure involves a little skulduggery and a plague of nasty tricks.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/7/5, Abilities 20/15/5, Backgrounds 3, Willpower 5

Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Animal Ken 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Cosmology 1, Crafts 1, Culture 1, Dodge 4, Hearth Wisdom 2, Herbalism 1, Intimidation 3, Intuition 2, Larceny 4, Linguistics 2, Melee 3, Occult 2, Poisons 4, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 3, Survival (Urban) 4, Torture 2

Suggested Powers: Strength +1 Bite. Many carry fetish daggers. Ratkin Gifts and rites usually focus on stealth and shadow manipulation, inflicting magical poisons and diseases on their foes and escaping from bonds or tight situations.

Gear: Soiled clothes (if any at all), fetish dagger, bones, filth

Corax Spy

Child of the Sun and companion of Odin One-Eye, this witty fellow excels at intrigue. Shedding his cloak of feathers, he moves throughout polite society, watching from the shadows or hidden places. His curiosity sated, he beds his nest with tasty gossip — or claims the reward of a wet, glistening eye with which to feed his hunger.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/7/5, Abilities 20/15/5, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 6

Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Suggested Abilities: Academics 2, Alertness 5, Animal Ken 2, Archery 1, Athletics (Flight) 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Cosmology 2, Crafts 1, Culture 3, Dodge 4, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Hearth Wisdom 3, Instruction 2, Intrigue 4, Investigation 5, Larceny 3, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Medicine 2, Meditation 1, Melee 2, Occult 4, Research 3, Science 2, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 4, Survival (Woodlands) 3

Suggested Powers: Strength +2 Claw; however, werewolves prefer flight to fighting. Their supernatural abilities lean toward spying and communication, although they can also manifest several solar magics granted to them by their patron, the Sun.

Gear: Low- to moderate-quality clothes, intercepted messages, shiny objects, love letters (others')

Shapechangers in the Renaissance

Although the Renaissance is a time of sweeping change for human society, Garou culture remains much as it has always been. Most Garou care little for the Inquisitions or witch-hunts sweeping the land and intervene only when their precious Kinfolk are threatened. Furthermore, it's not a time of great communication between septs; apart from a concolation every five years or so, the vast majority of Garou are content to tend solely to their own territories.

The Pure Ones of the Americas remain all but untouched at this time, and play no major role in the Garou Nation as European werewolves know it. Similarly, the Stargazers as a tribe remain withdrawn and introspective, a legend even to the Akashics, with only the rarest wanderer of the tribe leaving the Orient to walk among his distant cousins. The Bunyip, hidden in a land no one has "discovered," are nothing more than an evening's curious tale to European shapeshifters.

Of the tribes that remain, the Bone Gnawers, Silent Striders, Children of Gaia, Red Talons and Warders (the tribe that eventually calls itself the Glass Walkers) are fairly evenly distributed across the continent. The rest have yet to be driven from their ancestral territories, although many septs feel pressure from the Gabrielite campaigns.

Northern Europe is held by the Get, who claim territory even into Germany. The Silver Fangs reside mostly in Russia, but have established a sprinkling of caerns near the capitals of France, England and Spain. The Shadow Lords haunt the forests, peaks and valleys of

eastern Europe. The Fianna have yet to venture beyond the British Isles. Perhaps the most aggressive tribe of the time is the Black Furies. The Furies ferociously defend their ancestral lands along the Mediterranean Sea from Turkish invaders, but many also venture beyond, stalking Inquisitors and opposing the Burning Times. Regrettably, they have little success — their tribe is spread too thin and their haughty demeanor wins them few allies in foreign territories. Although the Furies' Kinfolk form a continental organization called the Sisterhood (used to ferry accused witches into hiding), each fight with witch-hunters weakens the tribe a little more.

There are few intertribal packs at this time; the handful that exist are often collections of Warders, Black Furies and Children of Gaia who refuse to ignore the atrocities of the age. These humanitarian groups are often harried by more conservative Garou, who see no need to interfere in human affairs other than to protect their own territories and Kin. Worse, some septs of Shadow Lords and Red Talons point to the turmoil as a sign that humanity has perhaps developed too much hubris for its own good — and that something must be done.

As for the other Changing Breeds, their influence is decidedly limited. The Ratkin are perhaps the busiest and most populous non-Garou shifters in Europe, although their chief goal is nothing more ambitious than survival. The Corax act as spies and messengers as they always have, but rarely intervene in human business. The Gurahl — werebears — have apparently disappeared from Europe, and the rapidly vanishing Ceilican are the last remnants of Bastet in the area. As the Order of Reason sweeps the lands and injured pride keeps the Changing Breeds from approaching the Garou for aid, the shapeshifters simply lay low and wait for tomorrow.

The Restless Dead



Aphrodite rose from the same waves that I do, though there are no portrait painters waiting for me. My galley, *Benedizio*, lies broken under the Cytherean waves and with it lie the bodies of my crew. What is left of those bodies, I should say — the fish and scavengers have been at them and the remains are not beautiful. In pace requiescant, as the late Monsignor Graffanino would say. Alas, he is on the ocean floor as well, and it is left for me to say those words.

A pity, is it not, that I am dead as well? I cannot help but wonder if my blessing will carry less weight, seeing as it comes from a ghost. But it is no matter — dead I may be, but there is still work to attend to. Our passengers, three men whom the cook, Gaetti, distrusted as having “the evil eye,” are the only survivors of the wreck of my ship. They sit now on a raft cobbled by sorcery from the broken planks and beams of my *Benedizio*, discussing the nature of the storm that sunk us and whether they should put into shore.

They do not realize they have another passenger.

It is clear from their discussion that the storm was intended to sink the *Benedizio*, solely because of their presence on board. My ship, my cargo, the lives of my crew were as nothing to whatever called up that wind. I resent that, and I resent that the lives of the men who served me were sacrificed for these three smiling, laughing men. There is a demonic voice in my head that has made me an offer — revenge first on these three and then on whomever sent the storm. And the cost, well, it does not seem so very high.

Soon, there will be four dead men aboard this raft... and then the hunt begins in earnest.

The Unquiet Grave

Wraiths are an enigma wrapped up in a puzzle surrounded by a mystery, at least as far as the inhabitants of the Renaissance are concerned. Powerful enough to shatter stones and make the skies rain blood, wraiths are nonetheless frail things; a child can walk through even the mightiest wraith as if he weren't even there. The Restless Dead are also trapped between worlds, caught between the implacable demands of wraith society and the sometimes inexplicable forces that bind them to the lands of the living. Attempts to manipulate or simply deal with ghosts are therefore fraught with peril. After all, wraiths are beings and powers in their own right — they do not exist at the whim of or for the needs of others.

The Shadowlands in which wraiths dwell is a decayed vision of the landscape of the living world, overlaid on and woven into what mortal men see. A man and a wraith may stand in the same place in the same cathedral and see the same nave and apse, but their vision relates very different things. To the living man, all is splendor and glory, polished gold and shining flame of tapers. To the wraith, everything



is ruin and rot, the splendor of centuries past. The wraith can also peer into the Skinlands, though with distorted vision, seeing the form of the mortal (marked by the sickly aura denoting his life-force) standing in the midst of the decay.

Separating the world of the living (the Skinlands) from the land of the dead (the Shadowlands) is a veil of disbelief called the Shroud. This barrier is strengthened by the power of skepticism, and its resilience increases daily.

Ghosts are a very real part of the Renaissance world. Few mortals doubt the existence or the power of the Restless Dead, though the exact origins of the souls of the dead are disputed. Devout mortals are firm in their belief that wraiths are seducers sent forth from the Pit — or heavenly messengers warning of the perils of perdition. Ghostly tales of the rotted Shadowlands, horrific Spectres and Stygia, the City of the Dead (where human souls are given to unearthly flames) are easily transmuted into stories of Hell.

Other, more “rational” mortals suspect what the ultimate origins, purposes and destination of the Restless Dead might be, but remain quiet for now. The witch-fires burn hot, and there’s no sense in proving theories on the afterlife by example.

The Underworld

Wraith society is not homogenous. Rather, it is divided into a number of mutually suspicious factions bordering on open conflict. The most powerful group is the Hierarchy, also known as the Empire of Stygia, which reaches out from its timeless capital city on the shores of the Sunless Sea. Stygia has no real-world equivalent, though it is composed of the ghosts of the stones of Byzantium and Rome, Jerusalem and Babylon, Memphis and Tyre, and every other imperial city that ever was. From here, the Emperor Charon and his Deathlords rule, sending out Legions for their tithes of souls. Obedient citizens of the Hierarchy are forbidden from interfering with the living by a decree called the *Dictum Mortuum*. This law is honored more in the breach than in observance.

The Hierarchy is the most orderly society of wraiths, but it is by no means stable. Stygian ranks are currently split. So-called “Freewraiths,” craftsmen and artisans of the Guilds, are at war in the streets. Even as the Legions struggle to keep order, Stygia’s most skilled wraiths fight a shadow war that rages from the Skinlands to the heart of the Imperial City. Many of the most potent Guildwraiths have already been destroyed in the conflict, which has become known as The War of the Guilds. The war is ostensibly fought to remove the Artificers — those wraiths who forge others into the coveted substance known as soulsteel — from their position of pre-eminence in the Guilds’ councils. However, innumerable other conflicts flare up as well, and the Artificers are only too glad to make use of the casualties.

merable other conflicts flare up as well, and the Artificers are only too glad to make use of the casualties.

In opposition to the Hierarchy are the Heretics, their ranks bolstered daily by the victims of the assorted religious conflicts raging across the Continent. By the time of *The Sorcerers Crusade*, the once-unified Fisher movement has been decimated, its survivors splitting into innumerable squabbling factions. Some of these devout wraiths have journeyed across the Sunless Sea to the Far Shores, islands that supposedly embody Heaven itself. Charon has proclaimed the Far Shores to be hoaxes and their masters to be frauds. Needless to say, the faithful among the dead doubt his word.

Closer to home, many wraiths of Heretical bent seek the mystical state known as Transcendence, though no two Heretic cults can agree on what that is. Therein lies the Heretics’ problem: Splintered into a thousand different cults in a thousand different locations, they work at cross-purposes to achieve the same ends.

A third faction of Stygian society, gleefully at war with the others, is the ragtag rabble known as Renegades. Allies of convenience, not choice, Renegades welcome those to whom neither obedience nor religion has any appeal. Some Renegades are dedicated freedom fighters. Others are ruffians and highwaymen who prey on weak wraiths. Still others have been made outlaws by overenthusiastic prosecution of the *Dictum Mortuum*. After all, any contact with the living that’s not officially sanctioned by Stygia is considered a crime....

Stygian wraiths are not the only example of the breed. Other Dark Kingdoms exist in Africa, the Far East and in exotic locales. The so-called Risen are ghosts who have climbed back into their rotting mortal shells and reanimated their corpses for purposes stronger than death itself. Risen are rare and often leave destruction in their wake. Hierarchy wraiths have explicit orders to destroy any Risen they find, but such efforts can cause more destruction than the Risen itself.

The last classification of wraiths is Spectres, also known as the Shadow-Eaten. Spectres are wraiths who have been conquered by their base, dark natures and who have given themselves over to the service of Oblivion. Wraiths’ factional squabbles come to an end when Spectres arrive on the scene; Oblivion’s servants are the ultimate enemy.

Shadows

Every wraith has a dark side, known as her Shadow. A constant presence in the ghost’s mind, the Shadow is equal parts tempter and trickster, destroyer and seducer. It seeks to drag its better half down to Oblivion in a self-destructive frenzy, at the same time working toward the ruin of all that the wraith holds dear. The Shadow is simultaneously the wraith’s evil half and an almost distinct personality. It can come to the fore when dark emotions seize the wraith.

When the Shadow is in command, it often completely disregards any alliances or acquaintances that the normal persona, called the Psyche, might have. Such actions can confuse and offend those who know the wraith, but don't know her Shadow; one's Shadow and its tricks are not topics of polite conversation. Wraiths also tend to remain quiet about the existence of the Shadow to non-ghostly companions. Just as death is omnipresent but never discussed by the living, the Shadow is omnipresent but never discussed by the dead.

The other option that a Shadow sometimes has is to play along, pretending to be the Psyche and attempting to ruin whatever plans the Psyche has laid with her allies. Betrayal, backstabbing and deliberate misinformation are not beneath a Shadow, and many have Dark Passions that are fulfilled by such damnable acts.

There is no sure way to tell when a wraith's Shadow has come to the fore. There may be subtle hints in the wraith's visage — a sneer instead of a smile, an appraising gaze instead of a friendly one, a countenance that seems to be either twisted or always in darkness, the manifestation of a new ghostly relic that betrays unholy origins — but more often, dearly bought experience may be the only true indicator.

Interactions with Mortals

Despite "official" forbiddance, many ghosts take the opportunity to run amuck in the mortal world. Apparitions, manifestations and poltergeist hauntings are some of the favorite methods by which energetic wraiths reach across the nascent Shroud. There is much to be gained from interactions with the denizens of the Skinlands.

Wraiths are effectively immortal, spanning the ages. As such, they may know secrets lost to the living for decades and may be willing to share with a properly respectful petitioner. Furthermore, all wraiths are tied to objects (or places or people) in the Skinlands, colloquially known as Fetters. If a mortal is willing to tend a wraith's Fetters, the ghost may be willing to do all sorts of favors in return. As wraiths are invisible, nearly indestructible and have the ability to walk through walls, they make excellent spies and scouts. On the other hand, threatening a wraith's Fetters is a superb way to get him to do what you want — until such time that you slip and he seeks vengeance.

Ghosts depend on the living for what they call Pathos, the spiritual energy that fuels their unearthly existences; they are fed by emotions in the living that echo or mimic their own. Some of these Passions relate to specific individuals. For example, a wraith may be driven to protect his widow after his death. Should he succeed in his task, he is rewarded with Pathos. He would also be rewarded if he witnessed another soul working toward the same goal or even toward simple protection of another.

Magick workers and restless souls have come into conflict more than once. Many sorcerers kill and many of their victims have become wraiths, hell-bent on vengeance. There is also the matter of Haunts, places of strong emotion where the Restless gather to collect Pathos. Many of these locales draw the attention of magi who seek to drain the burbling Quintessence there. Local ghosts don't look kindly on such piracy. Still, most interaction between wraiths and magi is cautious rather than conflicted. Neither side knows what the other is truly capable of, and no one seeks a potentially ruinous struggle.

Ghostly Powers

Many wraith situations and powers, especially their Arcanoi, have no readily convertible equivalent in **Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade**. Storytellers are therefore encouraged to be creative and liberal in their treatment of wraith powers. In essence, Arcanoi's range covers the gamut of "classic" ghostly powers, from poltergeists flinging crockery to blood dripping from the walls to horrific nightmares being inflicted by the dead.

- **Life in Death:** A wraith can see the decay and rot within a living thing or object in the real world. The wraith knows how close the subject is to death or destruction.

- **Immaterial:** Wraiths are completely invisible and intangible. However any forceful contact with the area where the wraith is "standing" gives the wraith a single level of damage, and disrupts his physical state for a number of turns equal to his stamina rating. During this time, no further physical damage can be done to the wraith (except by another ghost). Wraiths willing to risk the injury can walk through doors, walls and other physical objects.

- **Poltergeist:** The wraith can "throw" handheld objects, break things and cause harm to the living. Make Melee or Brawl attacks normally against a living target, although each attack receives one success automatically. Damage is determined with a Strength roll.

- **Exhaust:** A living target is tapped of strength and will; he feels defeated and completely exhausted. Resisted Willpower rolls are made. For each success achieved by the wraith in excess of the target's roll, the victim's Willpower pool is reduced by one.

- **Spirit Travel:** The wraith is able to fly in the physical world and can appear and disappear at will. The Storyteller can locate the ghost wherever he likes at any moment.

- **Haunt:** The wraith can speak across the Shroud and even assume ghostly appearance in the Skinlands. People witnessing these phenomena must make Willpower rolls (difficulty 8) or flee in panic.

- **Possession:** The wraith can force itself into a victim's body, taking control of the host. A successful resisted Willpower roll is required for the wraith to take possession. Another

roll is called for every time the wraith attempts to perform an action that offends the living soul or defies its will.

- **Inhabit:** The wraith can possess unliving objects, entering and taking control of them. This includes inanimate objects, but could also apply to the bodies of the dead. The wraith acquires the physical capabilities of the object, but retains its own mental capacities. Imagine the damage that a wraith could cause by inhabiting objects in a magus' laboratory or by inhabiting cannons or siege machines on a battlefield.

- **Dreamwalk:** The wraith can enter and control the dreams of a sleeping mortal. A resisted Willpower roll is required between wraith and potential victim to enter the subject's dreams. Subsequent rolls are also required to control those dreams. This power can be used to convey messages, offer warnings or drive the victim mad.

- **Horriy:** The wraith can put on an otherworldly display of horrific images intended to terrify anyone who witnesses them. Walls bleed, statues move and moan, stairways grow mouths and teeth, and shadows seem to take on lives of their own. A successful Willpower roll (difficulty 9) is required to remain calm before such sights. A botched roll may result in the victim being driven insane.

Counters

- Ghosts are totally immune to Life- or Matter-based spells. A combination of Spirit and Prime magick acts like the Life Sphere against them. Unless the wraith has materialized or possessed a living thing (or material object), it is effectively immune to every Sphere except Spirit or Prime.

- A mortal cannot see a wraith without magick (Spirit 1), unless the wraith assumes material form or "appears" somehow through her powers. An astute mortal might sense an invisible ghost's presence (Perception + Awareness or Occult, difficulty 6), but would not be able to actually see the spirit.

- A particularly nasty magus could draw off a ghost's Corpus (Health Levels) through a spell involving Prime 4/ Spirit 4. The wraith could try to soak this damage with a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). A ghost "drained" this way descends into the Underworld for a horrific torture called a Harrowing. When she returns to her normal state, a certain magus will have a lifelong enemy....

- See "Necromancy" (Chapter VIII) in *The Sorcerers Crusade* for additional details about magi and wraiths.

The Serried Ranks of the Dead

What follows is a quick look at some standard wraiths. Approximation has been made between Arcanoi and

mage Spheres whenever possible. All wraiths should have at least one level of Spirit.

Lemure Usurer

A new member of the Usurers' Guild, this wraith has been dead for only a few years. Perhaps a touch careless, perhaps a bit contemptuous of Stygia's laws, he sells his services to the living in exchange for the destruction of other ghosts' Fetters. He is arrogant in his newfound power and incautious in his choice of clientele. Someday that daring may be his undoing, but he is master of his destiny for today — or so he believes.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 4, Willpower 5

Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Etiquette 2, Larceny 2, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Melee 1, Moneylending 2, Occult 2, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 3

Suggested Powers: The Usurer can, with a ghostly touch, drain either Health or Quintessence from a magus — or restore it — as the Prime 5 power

Gear: Relic scales, tattered clothing, one or two oboli

Vengeful Spectre

A simmering cauldron of jealousy and hatred in life, the Vengeful Spectre has not been improved by his death. Rapidly subsumed by his dark side, the Spectre has returned to the Shadowlands to hunt those who wronged him in life.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/6/4, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 8

Suggested Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 4, Awareness 1, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Enigmas 3, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Occult 1, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 3

Suggested Powers: The Spectre is in constant communication with others of his kind and can coordinate group actions. The Spectre can also cause objects to fly through the air in the material world and can corrupt the living with a touch (as the Spirit Charm **Corruption** or Mind 3; see "Uncanny Influence" in *The Sorcerers Crusade*)

Gear: Soulsteel dagger, tattered clothing

Anacreon

Perhaps the recently deceased lord or chief burgher of a city, perhaps an old ghost risen to prominence in the kingdom of the Dead, the Anacreon rules one Legion of

the Dead in his city. He is responsible for enforcing laws, fending off intruders and making sure his subjects don't interfere with the living. He takes pride in his work and guards his domains jealously. The Anacreon seeks to bring order to the dead and living alike by punishing those who offend him and by policing his ghostly Necropolis.

Character Creation: Attributes 10/8/5, Abilities 20/15/7, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 9

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Suggested Abilities: Academics 4, Alertness 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 5, Larceny 3, Law 3, Leadership 4, Linguistics 2, Melee 4, Moneylending 3, Occult 2, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 5

Suggested Powers: The Anacreon is quite powerful in many of the ghostly arts. He can possess as many as six of the powers listed above.

Gear: Ornate mask, soulsteel sword, chains of office, relic finery, a few oboli

Wraiths in the Renaissance

Stygia is a city under siege in the early 15th century. As Renegades, Heretics and Spectres harry the Empire's Skinland holdings, more and more ghostly refugees flee to the capital. Few ships leave for the Far Shores anymore, meaning that Stygia grows ever more crowded. Tensions between the Legions run high, and Charon's reign seems weak. The Stygian Inquisition has risen to a place of pre-eminence in this atmosphere of growing distrust and fear, as Shadows whisper paranoid secrets to their Psyches.

Even the Ferryman, the enigmatic wraiths who served with Charon from the beginning of his days, have abandoned their former comrade. They bear no love for him now. Stygia thus stands alone, and its subjects who patrol the Shadowlands do so at their own peril.



The Kindly Folk

As the shadows of the great oaks lengthened with the setting of the autumn sun, Edward began to search for a place to set up camp for the evening. Very little undergrowth grew beneath the shady boughs of the towering oak trees and it was not long before Edward came across a suitable bole.

The weather had been fine that day, but Edward could make out looming storm-clouds in the last of the evening light. As he set about his work, he thought about of his wife and children. He had served his lord for a long time now and looked forward to returning home.

The rumble of the storm brought him out of his reverie and he quickened his work, hoping to have a warm meal before it was too late. As he leaned over the kindling, trying to make a spark with his flint, he saw a light off in the forest. It was followed by another and then another. Peering into the gloom, Edward could see no sign of a building, only lamps seemingly suspended in the darkness. Numerous smaller lights now joined the first, except these danced merrily about as if blowing in the breeze. Edward knew there were no settlements in this part of the wood. Still, his curiosity — and hope for a warm, dry bed — got the better of him.

Initially, the lights seemed to be a short distance away, but Edward was no closer to them after making his way through the wood for several minutes. He even thought he could hear the sounds of faint laughter or perhaps music... or maybe it was just the wind.

The first drops of rain began to fall. Edward quickened his pace, hoping to reach cover before he was drenched — surely there must be some shelter; the lights continued to flicker tantalizingly before him.

The rain fell in sheets, too strong even for the oak boughs to keep him from being soaked, and still the lights eluded him. Just as Edward decided to turn back to his horse — assuming he could even find it — he stumbled into a clearing and there were the lights. The place was alive with torches and dancing, multi-hued globes. No rain fell here and men and women danced about the glade to a merry tune played by several minstrels. Off to one side, a table was laid out with food and drink. Folk of all kind, seemingly noble and common, mingled and jested. It was but a moment before a woman at the table noticed Edward and walked toward him.

"Welcome to our celebration, fair knight," she said as she approached, "Won't you join us?"

She offered him a hand, which he accepted gladly; she was one of the most beautiful creatures he had ever seen. Her skin was dark, like that of a Moor, and her eyes were depthless pools of tranquillity. He felt that he could look into them forever and find contentment.

"I am Dalila. You are welcome here," she said as they approached the table.

The others nodded politely to him, several making motions of greeting.

"I... I am Edward... Sir Edward. I do not mean to disturb—" he stuttered.

"Hush," she cut him off. "I have said you are welcome, and so you are. Please share our feast. You must be famished after so long a journey."

Edward was tempted to gorge himself on the food laid out before him — it had been a terribly long time since he had such an invitation. Yet the knight tempered himself and took only a turkey leg, a bit of cheese and some bread. This he washed down with a single glass of wine. Once finished, he graciously thanked his hostess who only smiled at him.

Then a sudden strangeness overtook him. He looked around at the celebration. The glade shimmered and the colors grew brighter, more vibrant. The music seemed louder and more beautiful. Even the revelers were different. One had antlers like those of a hart. Another had the legs of goat. Yet another looked to be a giant with horns, and skin the color of a clear summer sky. Dalila had changed as well. Her features were finer, her ears tapered to delicate points, and her eyes — her eyes were beyond description. Edward felt that he could become lost in them forever.

"Welcome to the world of the enchanted," Dalila said.

Dance with Me

The kindly Fair Folk are none of the kind. Once, it is said, they capered with humankind, born of dreams and sworn to good times. These tales, if they were true at all, have given way to rumors of angry spirits on the fringes of human lands. Imbued with unnatural power, these creatures supposedly pay tithes to Hell and lure gullible folk to their doom. One dares not walk the forests at night without a spike of cold iron and a charm of rowan wood. The faeries are abroad, and their whims mean disaster.

Yet ties with faeries still run deep in secluded Pagan places. The Kindly Ones look favorably on magicians in lands tended by Verbena, and by Pagan Disparates. For the most part, however, the fae keep their own counsel. Only when the fancy strikes them do they seduce or befriend mortal playthings, give grand gifts or forge short alliances with witches or kings. One such alliance stands when the Primi of the Council of Nine meet for the first time in the ruins of Mistridge in 1440. On the whole, though, the Dreaming Ones are suspicious, fearsome and proud. A mortal who offends them might end up dancing for 100 years in a misty faerie glen.

Unknown to mortals (or magi, for that matter), the greatest fae have fled the Earth. The eldest have slammed shut the doors to their Dreaming world, leaving half-bloods and young fae behind. To survive this harsh "Shattering," the remaining faeries have assumed human guise. Such

"changelings" move about the frayed edges of the mortal world, seeking life-affirming dreams. Glamour — the stuff of raw imagination — is plentiful, but often tainted by the dreary tedium of the age. In an era of plagues, witch-hunts and ceaseless wars, the phantasies of man grow dark, indeed. So too do the changelings and their Arts.

Like most aspects of the fae, those Arts are a mystery. Magi who study such things attest that the so-called "cantrips" spun from the faerie wheel have much in common with Awakened Arts. Yet the Scourge seems to overlook the powers of the Fair Folk. Faeries must perform strange dances and odd tricks to set their spells in motion, but God and the Devil both seem to let them be. Fae magic is like the changelings themselves — mysterious, wondrous, never the same twice and always a force to be reckoned with.

Treating with the Fae

Legends of the fae vary greatly. Few question that certain powers exist, but most common folk fail to distinguish between the works of demons and faeries (if any distinction is made between the two). Often times, the

work of other supernatural beings is credited to (or blamed on) the Fair Folk, and vice versa, confusing observers as to all night-beings' methods and motives. So while the Church condemns all as the work of the Devil, others dismiss sightings of Fair Folk as too much drink, madness, an imbalance of the humours or other such "rational" explanations. One can but wonder what these naysayers would think were they to discover that the local cobbler, shepherdess or the minstrel who played for the harvest last fall were all that remained of the magical creatures of legend.

While alliances between individual fae and sorcerers are relatively common, there is still considerable distrust between the groups as a whole. Many mortal sorcerers seek to learn, to understand and to ultimately control "reality." Composed of the stuff of dreams and the desires of mortals — including sorcerers', to some extent — changelings consider "control" of *anything* to be anathema. The chaotic nature of the fae (especially in this time of upheaval) makes broad treaties and agreements problematic. The borders of the "kingdoms" of the fae follow no mortal logic; what is acceptable to the Fair Folk of one area may offend others only a few miles away.

The Glastonbury Compact

Shortly before the Dark Fantastic period, one of the most important alliances between sorcerers and fae-folk was forged. The area surrounding Glastonbury, in England's West Country, had been held sacred by Christian and Pagan, mortal and faerie for centuries. Its associations with Arthurian legends were well-known, and its well was said to flow with the blood of Christ (who supposedly journeyed there in his youth). Custody of the land changed more times than anyone could count — until, that is, all sides found a common enemy: a cabal of magi-turned-vampyrs known as House Tremere.

All sides recognized the danger posed by the undead sorcerers. And so it came to pass that Seelie and Unseelie, wise folk and miracle workers, and more than a few werecreatures came together under a single banner to drive the Tremere-witch Meerlinda from England. To ensure that she and her cabal would not return, the allies made a pledge (which came to be known as the Glastonbury Compact), promising that the land would be held jointly by their people and defended against incursions of the Tremere and any others who wished to harness the magics of Avalon for dark purposes.

The compact has held for over three centuries — a rarity in these wartorn times. Although minor skirmishes erupt on occasion, the witch-folk, changelings and werebeasts who ward the land uphold their vows. A small council, the Glastonbury Circulus, addresses and resolves any disputes among them. Three magi, three changelings and three werebeasts sit on this council.

In more recent years (1436-1440), the Circulus organizes a formidable resistance against Wyndgarde's March. Try as he might, the witch-hunter general cannot take Glastonbury for more than a fortnight. After his death, the hunter's forces are wiped out mysteriously. Magick reigns again in Glastonbury Tor.

It may seem to many sorcerers that the faeries have all but vanished from the world. Places once rich with faerie magic and legend have apparently been abandoned. Still, signs of Fair Folk existence arise from time to time; pranks are played on sorcerers, and grievous harm befalls those who disturb places rumored to hold ancient fae magic. In truth, changelings are hidden in plain sight, living among those from whom they seek to hide. Not surprisingly, they are most commonly found in places where belief in their kind remains strong — where people are concerned with neither enlightenment nor spiritual politics, but with home, family and the “simple life.” Some wise human elders still remember the groves where faeries held court, though much has changed since the days when these places could be found by one with a true heart and an open mind.

Of course, there are exceptions. Some changelings enjoy the hustle and bustle of the city. Minstrels and *commedia del arte* players often possess a bit of faerie glamour. Whether changelings are attracted to mortals of an artistic bent or vice versa is open to debate, but there is an undeniable connection between the two. A love of the beautiful and grotesque, and a profound respect for those who can commit such to paper or canvas, is shared by all changelings. Many are afflicted with a kind of wanderlust, though, traveling from place to place, following their hearts and dreams.

Magi who study faerie folklore often classify the changelings based on the powers they display. Faerie glamour is well-known to have fantastic powers of illusion, and many fae make use of this magic in unusual ways that magi seek to identify. Others prefer to classify changelings according to the dreams with which they trace their ancestry. However, as with every other science of this day and age, what is considered canonical one day may prove false the next. Those who are wise recognize each encounter with a faerie to be unique, lest their assumptions turn out to be dangerously incorrect.

The Change

The Renaissance is an age of rebirth for the fae. Changes in the world have forced faeries to assume mortal flesh to shield themselves from the forces of disbelief that have begun to permeate the mortal world. This transformation affects fae in body, mind and spirit, diminishing their power while binding them to the land. Those fae who did not flee the world or could not adapt perished in unspeakable agony.

The Shattering is still a thing of the recent past. Fae nobles have fled to Arcadia, burning their bridges behind them, making the world a different place indeed. Chaos reigns among the Fair Folk who remain, commoners left to their own devices.

The Fae Courts

In ages past, the fae divided themselves into two Courts: Seelie and Unseelie. The departure of the nobility has undone that order. The changing of the Courts with the seasons has been abandoned as the commoners left behind have banded together for mutual protection. Most fae still claim allegiance to one Court or the other, out of habit and force of tradition, but such loyalty is meaningless without the nobles to rule. Indeed, Seelie or Unseelie has begun to lose significance as changelings huddle in the safety of their freeholds, struggling to survive in an increasingly banal world. Leaders have begun to emerge, but the Courts no longer hold sway over faerie society.

The Dreaming

Despite changelings' adaptation to the material world, they weren't always creatures of the earth. Once, the mortal world and the Dreaming were one — a single land, where mortal and faerie existed side by side. The two drifted apart over time as distinctions fell between the real and the unreal. The era when the two worlds were one is now referred to as the Mythic Age, its final closure marked by the Shattering that forever separated the two worlds. Some pathways between the Dreaming and the mortal world remain, but they are protected by powerful faerie glammers and the way is far from certain, even for those who know how to find these ancient portals. It is also said that the worlds overlap from time to time, in the darkest forests and most secluded glens. Magi with strong connections to Spirit or the Dreamlands may have a chance of finding these charmed sites, but the journey between the worlds is still perilous.

Most changelings envision the Dreaming as mortals might envision Eden — a paradise to which they are forbidden to return. Should the fae ever discover a magus with knowledge of the Dreaming and the means to access it, the changelings would think themselves truly blessed.

Ancient Fae, New Worlds

It is whispered that a few of the ancient fae, those with powers like unto the gods of old, survive in the mundane world. They're believed to exist only in the most secluded groves and on distant islands, far from the lands they once called home. Mortals who claim to have knowledge of these beings speak of powerful enchantments that shield fae fortresses from prying eyes.

With the explorations and expeditions of the Renaissance, the borders of the known world expand constantly. Ship crews report creatures spawned of dreams and nightmares in the New World. Could it be that faeries who fled the Old World left for these newly discovered realms? And now that the world is anew, how will the inspired dreams of humans affect the fae spirits

who still reside here? Mortals' Renaissance may be an era of renewal for the fae as well.

Glamour and Cantrips

Faeries bear similarities to sorcerers; one treats in dreams, the other in awareness. Yet changelings' odd powers leave many magi tugging their beards in puzzlement and frustration.

- **Passion:** Glamour "feeds" the faerie heart. Thus, changelings favor people who create things — artists, artisans, entertainers. The greater the skill or talent, the more popular the mortal. Fae-folk absorb artists' creative energy and power their magics with it. Most faerie-mage alliances are forged with the exchange of exquisite gifts.

- **Faerie Magic:** Changelings work odd miracles. Many of their cantrips appear to have limited effects, or no effects at all — unless the witness is enchanted. A person must be drawn into the faerie "illusion" through food, drink, music or some other stimulus. Once enchanted, a mortal sees as a faerie does — the world becomes dramatically brighter, darker or simply different. An enchanted human is vulnerable to any Art that a faerie weaves.

- **Fae Quirks:** Changelings possess certain powers — the ability to crack stone with a curse, the stamina to revel all night without tiring, the charisma to enrapture a mortal with a glance — that seem natural to them rather than the result of any intended spell. A single faerie has only one or two such powers; a collection of changelings may command a vast array of them. These talents aren't earth-shaking magics, but birthrights from an arcane heritage.

- **Hiding in Plain Sight:** All changelings may masquerade as normal mortals. Although enchantment or magical spells (see the *Soul Colors* spell in *The Sorcerers Crusade*) may penetrate this disguise, normal humans cannot recognize changelings for what they truly are. Rare folk who possess mystical awareness can sense a changeling's presence with a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 9).

- **Fae Seeming:** When pressed, a changeling may "carry" his faerie magics, appearance and possessions into mortal sight. In game terms, he spends a point of each of Willpower and Glamour and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty equals the changeling's Glamour rating). Changelings rarely reveal their true selves; they do so under extreme conditions, or when they must make their intent known to otherwise oblivious mortals.

Frailties

- **Cold Iron:** Faeries' weakness to cold iron is well-known. Such metal inflicts aggravated damage on them.

Banality Person

0	Maraud
1-2	Child, fae-blooded mortal
3-4	Rural peasant, fae-aligned magus
5	Average magus
5-6	Average urban mortal
7	Prince, philosopher, priest
8	Daedalean, bishop, Inquisitor

- **The Mundane:** Banality — the power of disbelief or of strong faith — is an even more potent threat than cold iron. To work his Arts on a mortal, a changeling must surmount the subject's Banality (see chart) or enchant her; otherwise, his Arts are useless. If you use Spheres to represent faerie Arts, a mortal's Banality rating equals the difficulty of an Arete roll.

Being in the presence of people or places with high Banality ratings actually sickens a changeling. A changeling probably flees if the Banality is sufficiently high (7 or higher).

- **Insanity:** Some faeries are so consumed with magic or anger that they go insane. This madness resembles the Scourge backlash of the same name.

- **Hubris:** Just as different changelings possess different talents, so too does each suffer from unique flaws — fiery temper, overconfidence, drunkenness. A magus who knows these frailties can outwit a changeling without casting a single spell.

Counters

- A strong-willed sorcerer can shrug off the effects of faerie enchantment. A magus must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) whenever he attempts to resist this influence. He must score one success for each point of Glamour that the changeling invests in the enchantment attempt.

- Changeling magic and True Magick flow from the same fundamental source. Thus, a magus can attempt to resist the power of a changeling's cantrips. The flip side is that a changeling can use his Glamour to counter a sorcerer's power. However, doing the latter removes a bit of magic from the world and risks inflicting the changeling with Banality.

When a changeling performs a cantrip against a magus, that sorcerer can use her Arete to counter the cantrip. (Roll Arete, difficulty equal to the highest level of the Art used in the cantrip + 3.) Each success rolled by

the mage reduces the changeling's successes by one. If the changeling's successes are reduced to zero, the cantrip fails.

To resist a mage's magick, roll the changeling's Glamour (difficulty equals the highest Sphere rating used in the spell + 4). Each success rolled reduces the sorcerer's successes by one. If the mage's successes are reduced to zero, the spell has no effect. However, if the faerie counters the spell successfully, she receives a point of temporary Banality for having removed some small bit of magic from the world.

The Fair Folk

The following are some examples of changelings that may be encountered by mages in the Dark Fantastic world. Spheres are listed to approximate changeling abilities (called Arts). Assume that changelings possess Arete ratings of 4 to 6, and spend one point of Glamour each time they cast an enchantment. Storytellers should always feel free to create new, even seemingly random effects that are appropriate to a particular changeling.

Troll Warrior

Centuries of battle against the Unseelie could do nothing to prepare this mighty warrior for the pain and suffering of mortal warfare. The troll can be found anywhere in Europe, serving as a soldier or mercenary. He often has limited contact with those outside his own kind, and has little tolerance for frivolity or capriciousness.

Character Creation: Attributes 10/5/3, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 4, Willpower 6, Glamour 7

Suggested Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Crafts (Carpentry) 3, Culture 2, Dodge 2, Etiquette 2, Hearth Wisdom 2, Intimidation 4, Linguistics 2, Melee 4, Survival 3.

Suggested Powers: A master of war-magicks, this changeling often commands great strength and body mastery (Life 3), elemental phenomena (Forces 2) and grand intimidation (Mind 2).

Gear: Crow's mail armor; bastard sword; axe or other large, deadly implement

Nocker Tinkerer

These reclusive fae live and work in dimly lit labs and workshops. They have little contact with the outside world, preferring to spend days and nights tinkering with gadgets and devises. Nockers occasionally play host to a restless Daedalean, whose imagination for devices compensates for his sheer Banality.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 4, Willpower 3, Glamour 8



Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Academics 3, Alertness 2, Artillerist 4, Crafts 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 2, Invention 5, Melee 1, Metaphysics (Sacred Geometry) 3, Research 3, Science 3, Stone Lore 2

Suggested Powers: High mastery over raw materials (Matter 4), familiarity with elemental forces (Forces 3) and creation (Prime 2), and a profound gift for obscenities

Gear: Workshop filled with odds and ends, strange machines and elaborate tools

Satyr Shepherdess

Long days spent out in the open field and playing the pipes are the simple pleasures of this changeling. Disturb her peaceful repose and you face a most dangerous enemy.

The shepherdess prefers her own company and looks unkindly upon intruders. She visits a local village from time to time; one or more young men are likely to go missing when she does. They return a few days later, exhausted and devoid of any memory of their time away... if they return at all.

Character Creation: Attributes 8/6/4, Abilities 15/10/3, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 3, Glamour 8

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Dancing 3, Dodge 2, Expression 3, Hearth Wisdom 2, Herbalism 2, Melee 1, Seduction 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Suggested Powers: Enchantment of all kinds (Mind 4; see "Uncanny Influence" in *The Sorcerers Crusade*) is this changeling's stock-in-trade. She's also adept at using the elements (Forces 2 or 3) to attack her foes.

Gear: Pan pipes, flock, dagger

Changelings in the Renaissance

The Sorcerers Crusade is set only a short time after the Shattering takes place (at least by the means that the fae measure time). Only a little over 100 years have passed since the last of the sidhe fled to Arcadia and the trods slammed shut or crumbled to dust. A few freeholds still exist, scattered across the world—barely enough to support the changeling population that remains. Minor skirmishes take place between the surviving commoners, but most are too busy struggling to survive to worry about who controls which freehold. During the Renaissance, "Kithain," as

changelings have come to call themselves, are only beginning to recover from the devastation of the Shattering.

Storytellers who wish to include changelings in their Renaissance chronicles must take the following into consideration:

- For the most part, the only sidhe (fae nobles) who remain are members of House Scathach, and a rare few of House Liam. A very few members of other houses remain, but these should not be created as characters.

- The Seelie and Unseelie Courts have only recently called a truce, and old hatreds die hard. The Shadow Court, as it is known in the modern era, does not exist, and the rift between the Courts is far greater than it is in the 20th century.

- All changeling characters should be "native" to the mortal world. Players should not create changelings who remember the Shattering—at least not in their current incarnations.

- The life spans of changelings of this time are somewhat longer than those of humans. Most changelings can expect to live up to 50% longer than the average mortal. They also tend to be somewhat more resistant to Banality than are modern fae. The beginning Banality of all period changelings should be reduced by one, and their starting Glamour should be increased by one. Note that childlings still begin with one point of Banality; their score can never be reduced to zero.

- Almost all changelings suffer from the Flaw *Slipped Seeming*.

Scourgelings



heard the keening first, a ripe wail that cut through the night like a shard of ice. As I gathered my implements and made haste to flee, she shimmered into view like a will-o'-the-wisp.

"Gregori," she said. I chilled. It was my True Name, not the magickal appellation I had used for so long. That single word hung in the air like Damocles' sword.

The apparition raised a slender finger.

I remember nothing more. Nothing. Not even my Shadow Name. Magick is gone from my memory, as if it had never existed.

The Breath of Hell

Although some fair spirits attend a virtuous magus, most Scourgelings live up to their name. When a backlash strikes, the spirits of wrath make a wizard's life... uncomfortable. (See *The Sorcerers Crusade*, Chapters VII and VIII, for details and systems.)



Glittergaze

Willpower 10, Rage 0, Gnosis 3, Power (one for each point in the mage's Scourge Pool)

Charms: Airt Sense, Blind (see below), Reform

Description: A spirit of greed, Glittergaze settles across a mage's eyes and reduces all she sees to a golden haze. A faint shimmer in the air around the wizard's head foretells the Scourgeling's arrival, but only the greedy one can see it coming. Her fellows remain oblivious; as far as they can tell, their companion has been struck blind for no discernible reason. Glittergaze renders her victim literally blind to all but the sight of gold, until the haunted magus forswears her grasping ways and gives all of her wealth to the poor.

Hexawoodle

Willpower 5, Rage 7, Gnosis 4, Power 25

Charms: Airt Sense, Create Wind, Materialize, Reform

Materialized Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Abilities: Acrobatics 2, Melee 3 (Scythe Damage: 7 dice, aggravated)

Description: A bizarre Pagan spirit, Hexawoodle comes riding on a goat-headed man. Tales claim the spirit and his steed were monstrosities created by an

angry witch. She wove grotesque sorceries around a cock, a goat, and two thieves who had tried to rob her. When the spells were done, Hexawoodle and his nameless accomplice rode off into the night, promising revenge.

How a pathetic couple of would-be brigands became a fearsome Scourge spirit is a mystery. However, their success since that night may be measured in corpses. Hexawoodle manifests in a cloud of black fog. The sound of bare footfalls and a high-pitched crowing heralds his arrival.

The steed is disconcerting enough: Perched atop a swollen man-body, a mangy goat-head drools and gnashes its chipped and yellowed teeth. Its rider, Hexawoodle, is both laughable and stomach-churning: A midget body, perched on the goat-man's back, waves a huge black scythe with its elongated arms. These spider-thin limbs contrast the midget's atrophied legs, which wind into the goat-man's flanks. The rider's shoulders bear a huge rooster's head, bright red and trailing a long black plume. Rather than speak, Hexawoodle cackles and crows hatefully. The spirit-twin moves with frightening speed for a misshapen thing. Hopping and leaping, he/they slash at witches with a gleaming black blade, seeking to mutilate rather than kill.

A strike from Hexawoodle's scythe inflicts aggravated damage (equal to his Rage rating). A blow that deals three or more Health Levels (after soaking, if applicable) severs a limb. Hexawoodle grabs that limb and rides off into the black fog if he can. To retrieve the



limb, the witch or her friends must chase the spirit into the fog — a swirling portal into the Penumbra — and catch Hexawoodle or force him to drop the body part.

(A character who loses a limb also loses one aggravated Health Level per turn until she dies or some Life Sphere spell stops the bleeding. Naturally, her limb is forfeit until someone can save the old one or grow her a new one through a remarkably vulgar act of Life magick!)

Hexawoodle can **Reform** (as the Charm) anytime he likes, but must drop any limb to do so. He loves to lure his pursuers into traps, crowing loudly to attract evil spirits and fleeing when some other entity has answered the call. Hexawoodle “specializes” in witches, tending to leave other sorcerers alone.

Implico, the Vanity-Bane

Willpower 4, Rage 4, Gnosis 4, Power 15

Charms: Airt Sense, Blighted Touch, Soul Reading, Tweak Humours (makes the “host” gassy, giddy, nauseous, clumsy or ill-tempered; costs two Power per use)

Description: Woe to those whose vanity exceeds their fortune! This perverse little bastard unbalances the bodily humours of vain magicians, forcing them to make embarrassing blunders at the worst of times.

According to those who study such things, Implico rose from the bottom of Pandora’s chest of woes. Unlike stronger spirits such as Wrath or Fever, Implico simply wafted out in a smelly haze, engulfed poor Pandora and made her fart uncontrollably. Satisfied, he passed into the world of men, dedicated to undermining their pride.

A pompous mage might attract the attention of this mischievous sprite. Implico’s “attentions” are subtle, disguised as rude humours. While other Scourgelings batter and howl, Implico simply “over-tends” the bodily functions. The prouder the magus, the more fun Implico has with him. A refined courtier may vomit in a prince’s chambers. A devilish rake might “take airs” in the midst of passion. An arrogant wizard could trip awkwardly and fall bodily on the Pope. Once the victim has suffered extreme embarrassment, the spirit floats away, invisible and laughing.

In game terms, Implico’s visit persists for one unfortunate occurrence for every point in the wizard’s Scourge Pool. The higher the pool, the more excruciating the mortifications. In his spirit form, Implico resembles a noxious cloud with impish features. He assumes that form only when entering or leaving a “host.” Most times, he nestles in a mage’s body and tweaks humours as he pleases.

The Night-Mare

Willpower 8, Rage 6, Gnosis 10, Power 30

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Endless Ride (forces rider to remain in place — costs 5 Power), Spirit Away, Summon Past Visions (as below — costs 10 Power)

Description: This fearsome horse appears to those who wander among dreams and who perform divinations. Hooves clatter in the distance as a seer slumbers. His dreams form into an endless forest or plain. The mage’s heart races, echoing the thunder of the hooves. As the steed approaches, its footfalls swell until the entire world seems to shake. Bursting from the darkness, this onyx horse slams the magus to the ground, scoops him up and drags him on a seemingly endless journey through the night. Whipping branches, cold rains and hot or icy winds lash the rider. Try as he might, he cannot escape the Night-Mare’s back. No enchantment can save him. An especially foolish or unlucky magus may be dragged *behind* the horse instead.

As the pair hurtles across the nightmarish landscape, scenes from the past, present and future flash by. These tableaux — almost impossible to ignore — depict the tortured moments of the mage’s life. The key to escaping the Mare’s back, it is said, is to close your eyes and weep for past sins. If you’re lucky, the story goes, the horse may take pity on you and slow to a trot. A magus who climbs from the horse’s back and gives thanks to God for this lesson is forgiven. All others must endure



the ride until the horse decides to stop. Some magi, rumors claim, are riding still.

The Night-Mare wears no reins or bridle and is nearly impossible to control. A magus who commands exceptional horsemanship (Riding Skill of 4+) may try to calm the spirit-horse, but all others are helpless. Magick is useless. Back in the mortal world, a spirit-riding magus falls into a deep sleep and may be mistaken for dead. When (or if) he awakens, his body is battered (one normal Health Level for every point of Scourge in his pool, up to a maximum of six) and he is exhausted. Night-Mare riders cannot be rescued; they must save themselves or finish the ride.

Ompnir, Scribe of Flames and Conflagrations

Willpower 6, Rage 7, Gnosis 5, Power 50

Charms: Airt Sense, Appear, Armor, Blast Flame, Create Fires, Element Sense (fire), Materialize, Meld (fire), Reform, Spirit Away

Materialized Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Abilities: Academics 6, Awareness 5, Culture 10 (he's been everywhere!), Dodge 5, Etiquette 4, Intimidation 5, Occult 6, Science (Elemental Sciences) 8, Subterfuge 3

Description: Before the War in Heaven, Ompnir was less an angel than a minor scribe. His duties consisted of endless record-keeping. He rebelled with Lucifer and the others. His punishment was to continue the labor he loathed, but in the service of the Devil.

As God created each thing and Adam named it, the archangels charged their scribes to record each item. Lucifer echoed that process by assigning each thing an "anti-name," an Infernal mockery of its Holy Form. Poor Ompnir was stuck recording and renaming every fire-based phenomenon — an easy task at first, but one which grew as civilization expanded. Some theologians speculate that God scattered Babel to confound demons such as Ompnir. If so, He succeeded — all too well.

Greek Pagans tell a different story. To them, Ompnir was Pirophone, a cup-bearer to Prometheus who was punished by Zeus. Either way, Ompnir *hates* his job and takes any opportunity to torment a magician who's been careless



with fire. A Scourge backlash allows him to manifest in the material world. Woe be unto any magus, especially a Daedalean, if he appears! Ompnir scolds the responsible party; if the mage is lucky, the spirit ends his tirade with a firestorm; if not, he decides to teach the errant wizard a lesson and takes her off as a helper on his rounds. In game terms, he **Spirits** the magus **Away** (as the Charm), sending her to catalog all kinds of fires for one day for each point in her Scourge Pool. When the magus finishes, he strands her at the site of her last annotation. Getting home is her problem....

A minor demon, Ompnir resembles a bald little man, blazing like an inferno and carrying a huge book with flaming pages. When he writes, his quill strikes sparks and the words appear in ashen Enochian letters. He growls when he speaks and harangues his prey before punishing her. Some magi summon Ompnir to ask him about events that he may have witnessed (he's usually there when a fire is burning, after all!). If they've started a fire to get his attention, they'd better make it worth his while....

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