

A photograph of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff in a lush, green forest. The water is captured in a long-exposure shot, creating a soft, ethereal glow. The surrounding vegetation is dense and vibrant, with various shades of green and brown. The overall atmosphere is serene and magical.

The Hidden World

A Game of Magic  
in the Modern  
Age

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# Introduction

This game was written for the 24 hour RPG project. I heard of the project a while ago and thought it was a great way of trying out new RPG ideas. The motivation/inspiration for this particular game came out of a number of things: (1) liking Ars Magica, but getting tired of the complexity and enormous amounts of bookkeeping required by the system; (2) wondering what an Ars game would look like set in modern times, (3) the “high die” version of Risus, and (4) a game like the Pool that gives more power to the players. And here’s the result, such as it is ☺ I wasn’t able to do everything I wanted to; in particular, I started writing it as a “traditional” RPG with the assumption of only one GM - with the intention of going back and writing in an option for more player power - but then I ran out of time! Such is life, I guess.

It’s the best I could do in 24 hours. One thing I learned from the experience: I’m no longer 18; these days, getting only 3 hours of sleep adversely – and noticeably - affects my overall state of well being ☺

Of course, I’d very much appreciate knowing what you think about this attempt, and any advice you have on any aspect of the game; in particular, do you think it’s worth my making a Beta version of it? You can contact me at [dreamofpeace@earthlink.net](mailto:dreamofpeace@earthlink.net).

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## Setting

The world most of us see is only the surface of a deeper world, hidden to the average person. A select few are attuned to this hidden world, either through having inherited a special talent at birth or through mystical training. From remote monasteries and hermitages to the basements and rooftops of apartment buildings in our biggest cities, small communities of mystics continue an age-long tradition of training gifted students to see with arcane vision and to feel with mystical attunement. In time, if a student possesses enough courage and intelligence he earns the title of *Master of the Mystic Arts*.

He becomes a Mage.

Yes, magic exists in our very own world, today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When we were children we could all see magic and the flows of magical energy all

around us, but children speaking of these things are never taken seriously by adults; gradually, we are convinced to ignore and shut down our arcane vision as we grow older. Most adults today can't see magic, even if powerful magic is done right before their eyes. Their minds don't accept it, and so they can't see it. If the magic is especially powerful their subconscious might translate it into something else, like seeing a ghost or an alien, but usually they'll simply ignore it as if it didn't happen, and will feel vaguely disquieted and uncomfortable without knowing why.

A few individuals, however, never learned to shut down their mystic sight, and so see what others don't dare to. Some of these people wind up in mental institutions, diagnosed as schizophrenics or with whatever term the latest DSM manual suggests. A lucky few are able to find a mentor, a mage who has learned to live in the arcane world and who is willing to teach. Others find their



way to remote monasteries, hermitages, or even caves to receive training from the knowledgeable few. However it happens, those who are able and willing to become magi do, and have access to both greater power and responsibility than the average person ever dreams of.



Most mages recognize this responsibility. The White Council was developed as a worldwide body to rule the magical world. Disputes between magi are brought to the Council, and it also sets policies for relations between magi and the mundane world. The Council also has an enforcement arm (known as the Excubitor Candoris, the White Guardians) of magi and mundane helpers to use when necessary to deal

with breaches of magical law and to deal with threats. Mages are expected to spend some of their time in service to the White Council. Part of the Mage's Credo is, "to those whom much is given, much is required". While most magi would prefer to spend their time researching and investigating the magical world, they realize that because of their position and power they should act for the benefit of humanity when the mundane world is unable to do so for itself. Unfortunately, such occasions are all too frequent, and have been becoming more so through the years.

One threat to both mundanes and magi are dark wizards. Some dark mages are people who never had formal training, but learned on their own how to access magical power. Unfortunately, they did so in such a way that it twisted their minds so that they became crazy with power, and they use it to exploit others; a few go on maddened destructive sprees, lashing out at everything they can until they're stopped.

More rarely, some dark wizards are mages who forget or renounce their oath, using their powers to harm others for their own personal gain or sometimes just for the sheer pleasure of it. It is part of the oath of all white magi that they hunt down and capture and neutralize or, if necessary, kill dark mages when their existence and actions are discovered.



Another constant threat magi need to look out for are beings from beyond this world. Our own world is only one of many, and gateways exist between this world and others. Often beings enter this world who are benign (like faeries, nymphs, and the like) but sometimes

they are not. Behind our stories of werewolves, vampires, and other such things lie dark truths about monstrous, malevolent beings from other worlds. Part of a mage's duty is to watch out for such things and stop them before they can do too much damage. Sometimes the White Council assigns mages a particular area (where the veil between worlds is thin) to watch for a period of time, and sometimes mages are asked to investigate mysterious events that might be the work of such creatures.



One story that has kept many magi up nights is the legend of the

shadowbeasts. 1,250 years ago the world was overrun with evil, shape-shifting creatures known as shadowbeasts. The mundane world never recorded this event other than as a time of plague, but its true nature is well known and described in magical history texts. These creatures were as intelligent as humans and somehow resistant to whatever magic was thrown at them.



Bent on destruction, the shadowbeasts slaughtered mages by the hundreds and mundanes by the thousands. With dark powers they devastated the environment, turning large areas of land into deserts; even animals weren't immune from their destructive rampage.

Finally they were defeated by some ingenious method developed by the famous mage Nazruddin al-Safa, and the shadowbeasts were either all destroyed or fled this world for another. However, Nazruddin set down a warning that after 1260 years the shadowbeasts would be able to return. He set down how they were defeated in a set of scrolls and stone tablets, but unfortunately these have been lost. Not everyone treats Nazruddin's warning seriously, but others are diligently searching for the lost scrolls.

To encourage magi to take their duties to themselves and to the mundane world seriously, the White Council has developed an oath for all

magi to take when they graduate from their apprenticeship. As a reward, when a mage graduates from training and swears her mage's oath, she is given a special tool, called a matobe crystal. The matobe crystal acts as a focus and amplifier for magical energies, enabling the mage to accomplish more with her magic than she could otherwise.

When first given a crystal, it is clear like glass. Depending on which magical energies the mage uses the crystal gradually changes color to reflect these. The colors and their associations are: white (purity, cleansing), brown (shamanism), green (nature), red (mimicry, conjuration), blue (healing, electric), yellow (flesh), orange (mind), grey (sympathetic), and black (destruction).

Mages tend to fall into a few different groupings based on their relationship to the White Council, how they trained in magic, and other factors. In general, you have: Dark Mages, Rogues (any mage not currently training in a traditional way, and who hasn't yet

sworn the mage's oath), White Mages (someone who trained through a traditional apprenticeship and has sworn the oath and received the crystal), White Adepts (like White Mages, but trained through a school instead of a master-apprentice relationship), White Wizards (a white mage or adept who is itinerant, going wherever the river of magic takes them), or Masters of Sorcery (the acknowledged world-class masters in their fields).

A few mundanes are able to see into the magical world but either can't or don't want to become mages. Magi are often able to befriend such people, who join the magi in their duties while also receiving some of the benefit of their powers.

Some elements of major governments are aware of the magical world, but knowledge of it is kept a closely guarded secret, usually within government intelligence agencies. Part of a mage's oath is not to interfere with governance of the mundane world, which



reassures most governments (obviously, dark mages aren't faithful to the oath, if they even swear it in the first place). On occasion, however, members of one spy agency or another have tried to coerce individual mages to carry out particular tasks or jobs for them, or have tried other means of influencing or even assassinating particular magi. Usually these attempts have ended with unfortunate consequences, sometimes for both sides, and for the most part the covert agencies have learned to keep to themselves and stay out of the magical world.

They would not be so sanguine if they knew of the secret organizations of magi that, in direct contravention of the White Council's dictates, try to work behind the scenes to covertly change the course of history in directions that suit them. Many a CEO of a powerful corporation or head of a government agency has been influenced – often in subtle ways, without their knowledge – towards actions or policies favorable to

one particular group or another. These secret groups of magi – some call them the Illuminati – will sometimes vie for power with each other and against the White Council, which tries to stop them when it is aware of their machinations.



## Basic Rules

These rules assume you already know what a roleplaying game is. I use standard terms like GM (gamemaster), PC (player character), and NPC (non-player character). Whenever your

character is attempting to do something non-trivial (i.e., where success is not automatic and the results of failure are important) the GM may call for a check.

### **THE BASIC ROLL:**

*Roll a number of dice equal to the value of your character's Profession that is most relevant to the situation, plus any relevant gifts, perks, etc. If no Profession or skill is relevant, use the score for the lowest mundane Profession or skill.*

### **Don't simply total the dice!**

*Instead, the value of this roll is equal to that of the highest single die result; if the high die is repeated, add the high dice together.*

**Example:** John rolls four dice getting a 4, 5, 3, and a 1. The highest individual die is 5, so the total value of the roll is 5. If instead the roll was 4, 4, 3, and 1 then the high die is 4; since there are two of them you add them together, so the total of this roll is 8.

**EXPLODING DICE:** if the same number comes up on all the dice, determine the value as usual and then roll again. Add the value of this second roll to the first. If the same thing happens on the second roll – i.e., all the dice have the same number – repeat with another roll, and so on until the dice finally diverge. If only one die is being rolled, it's the highest value of the die that explodes.

**Example:** Jane rolls 3 dice getting a 5, 5, and a 5 – the total is 15 (since the high die is repeated), and she rolls again (since the same number was on all her dice), this time getting a 2, 2, and a 2. That total of 6 (since the high die, 2, is repeated you add the repeats together) is added to the 15 for a total of 21. She rolls again (since the same number, 2, appeared on all the dice), this time getting a 2, 3, and a 4. The value of that roll is 4 (since 4 is the high die), which is added to the previous total of 21, giving a final total of 25.

**OPPOSED CHECKS:** This kind of check is used when two characters (either both PCs or one PC and one NPC) are actively opposing each other: one character is trying to accomplish a task, and another character is trying to prevent him from doing that. Each participant makes a basic roll. The GM may give bonus dice (usually up to 3) to one side or the other to represent any kind of advantage that side might have. The one getting a higher result wins. *If the scores are tied, make simple totals of each side's dice;* the one with the highest simple total wins.

**UNOPPOSED CHECKS:** The player states what their character is trying to do, and their dice total including Profession, luck points (see below), etc.; the GM determines how difficult a task it is and assigns a number of dice to represent this difficulty. The player and GM then make basic rolls and the outcome is determined just like for opposed checks.

*How does the GM determine how many difficulty dice (DD) to roll for unopposed checks?*

When there are no specific or clear guidelines for the situation, the best thing to do is to use the **Relative method:** the question to ask yourself is, *how difficult would it be for this character to accomplish this task in these circumstances?*

If you want the task to be **easy**, then choose fewer dice than the player has for his basic roll; the fewer the dice, the easier it is for the character. If you want it to be **difficult** – with a 50-50 chance of success – choose exactly the same number of dice as the player. If you want it to be **very difficult**, then choose a greater number of dice: the more dice, the more difficult it is for the player.

Use the **Absolute method** instead when you have clearer or more specific guidelines for the situation, like for magic in this game. The guidelines tell you specifically how many DD to assign

depending on the situation. For example, a basic spell that causes 1 wound has 4 DD; if it's ranged to throwing distance, 6 DD; to hit more than 1 target, +1 DD per target, etc.

**RAISES:** Sometimes your character not only succeeds but succeeds extra well. *Every 3 points above the opposing roll counts as one raise*, or one additional level of success. Exactly what this means depends on the situation, and is interpreted by the GM.

**FUMBLES:** If a roll is a failure and the highest value rolled is a 2, it's a fumble: an especially bad failure where the GM gets to add an additional problem (for example, dropping a weapon in combat or slipping and falling, hitting an innocent bystander or a friend, breaking a weapon or important piece of equipment, etc.). The more ones rolled the worse the fumble.

*Hey – what kind of dice do you use in this game, anyway?*

The answer is, **it doesn't matter!** As long as everyone uses the same kind of dice, everything's cool.

*Look, I don't want to roll huge handfuls of dice! Rolling huge amounts of dice – and then having to figure out the result – sucks.*

So don't – if it looks like so many dice are involved that it'll slow things down, reduce them proportionately on each side, like divide the number of dice by two on both sides, or whatever seems reasonable.

**LUCK POINTS:** The GM will give out 1 or 2 Luck Points (LP) at a time for good, dramatic or otherwise entertaining descriptions and similarly good roleplay. 1 LP can be traded in for 1 die, which can be added to any roll the player chooses, and at any time.

**Option:** any player may award LP to a player (other than themselves) that they feel did something especially good or entertaining. Each player has 4 LP to assign to other players each session. To prevent abuse, this is subject to GM veto.

## Creating your Character

First, decide what kind of character you want to create: is it a mage, or a mundane? If it's a mage, decide on the type or types of magic (see the magic section below) you want your character to be able to do. If a mundane, what skills do you want your character to specialize in?

(1) *For mages only:* Divide 16 points among whichever styles of magic you wish; you may assign them all to one style if you so choose.

(2) Choose one or more **mundane professions** and divide points between them (4 points for mages, 12 points for mundanes (with a maximum of 8 in any one profession)). A mundane profession can be anything from pilot to car mechanic to physician to baseball player, etc.

(3) Choose 4 points of **gifts**, with a maximum of +2 in any one gift; mundanes get 6 points of gifts, with a +3 maximum in any one gift. A gift is basically a mundane attribute where the character is especially highly rated, either naturally or through training. Typical gifts are things like *strong, agile, fast, tough constitution, keen vision, good looking, intelligent, empathic, strong willed, calm*, etc. A gift adds dice to checks when it's relevant.

(4) Choose two **Talents**. A Talent is something specific that your character is just naturally good at. When a Talent is relevant to a check, add an extra die to the roll; if you like, you can also remove any one die of your choice. You

may take one Talent twice instead of two different Talents, so that you add two dice to the roll and may then remove any two of your choice. Talents can be things like *fast reflexes*, *socially suave*, *gifted with swords*, gifted with a specific spell, etc. Talents can't be too general and are subject to GM approval.

(5) Choose other physical or psychological **traits, skills, and perks**. These are basically anything extra you'd like to add to flesh out your character. Psychological traits can be things like "brave", "loyal", "determined", or "wants revenge on X", "is in love with Y", "has a duty to protect Z", or even "hates quiche". Skills can be any individual skill, like scuba diving, rock climbing, wilderness survival, etc. Perks can be special equipment, weapons, magical devices, or the like. Mages have 6 points to divide among these characteristics; mundanes have 8.

You can use psychological traits and skills to add dice to checks when they're relevant; *their value indicates how*

*many total dice can be added to a check each game session using the trait.* So if you have Brave: +3, if bravery is relevant to a check four times in a given game session, you can add one bonus die to three of those checks, two dice to one check and one die to another, or 3 dice to just one of those checks.

(6) Choose a **Flaw**, one negative trait: this can be physical, psychological, magical, or even social. *You subtract dice from a check whenever the flaw is relevant.* Your Flaw should not contradict any of your gifts or talents.

(7) **Story Hook:** Finally, create a story hook for your character. This involves some kind of story-based threat to your character's life, profession, reputation, loved one, important property, etc.

**Example: Timothy Walker, mage. Shamanism (10), Nature Magic (6); Librarian (2), Forest Ranger (2). Intelligent: +2, Strong-willed: +2. Talented at research, and at transforming into an**



animal. Sense of duty to White Council: +3, Hates Dark Mages who break their oath: +3. Walks with a limp: -1. Recently Tim noticed a shadowy figure following him. When he turned to confront him, the figure quickly escaped, but left behind a twisted feather — a feather just like the kind used by a Dark Mage Tim fought years ago.

## Combat

Combat is resolved in rounds. First the GM states what the NPCs are doing, then the characters state what they're doing, and actions are resolved going in clockwise order around the table or by whatever method is convenient. Once all actions are resolved, the round is over; if some characters are still up and fighting, proceed to the next round. All actions are considered to be simultaneous. If someone wants to pre-empt another character's action, they can do so by spending a Luck point (if the opponent is another character who has luck points,

this can in turn be countered by spending a Luck point to make their actions simultaneous again; if this happens, each character may continue spending Luck points until one side gives in or runs out of points).

The GM will give bonus dice to combatants who have a tactical advantage in terms of better weapons, better position, etc. than their opponents.

**HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT:** possible actions include *striking* with or without a weapon, *throwing* an opponent, or *holding or pinning* an opponent, as well as things like drawing a weapon, getting up from the ground, escaping from a hold, etc. These actions are resolved with opposed checks. *If a strike is successful, it causes one wound to the opponent, plus one additional wound for every raise. If a character is successfully held or pinned, they need to escape before doing anything else. A thrown character has to spend the next round getting up.*

Relevant gifts are things like agility (for the initial combat roll) and strength (for damage: see damage section below, also holding or pinning); combat-related talents can be things like fast reflexes, or being talented at striking, throwing, or wrestling (holding/pinning). Also, a weapon bonus – having an especially good weapon – can be an appropriate combat-related perk (example: magically enchanted knife, +3).

**RANGED COMBAT:** possible actions include shooting, throwing something (knife, spear, or something improvised), or dodging or otherwise diving for cover. If the range is close enough for hand-to-hand combat, resolve attacks with opposed checks; otherwise use unopposed checks. Gifts like keen vision and talents like fast draw may play a role here.

*The number of difficulty dice for the unopposed check depends mostly on the range to the target. For close range, +2 DD; near range, +4 DD; medium range,*

*+6 DD; far range, +8 DD; very far range, +10 DD. What exactly close or far range is depends on the weapon (and is determined by the GM): far range may be 60 feet for a knife thrower but 1000 feet for a rifle. 6 DD is a good average if in doubt. For other factors, like lighting, how much cover the target is obscured by, how fast the target is moving or dodging, wind speed and direction, etc. the GM should add 1 to 3 DD for each of these factors that are present, depending on their strength and importance.*

## **Damage**

Each time a character is wounded he must make a *Trauma check*. This is an unopposed check; relevant Professions are combat-related ones or ones that are very physical or athletic in nature, such as body-building. Relevant gifts are things like *toughness* or *tough*

*constitution*, and don't forget any applicable perks.

The DD are equal to the number of *current wounds the character has, plus the opposing character's strength gift (if it was a hand-to-hand strike), plus the weapon's lethality rating* (if a weapon was used).

If the character succeeds, she shrugs off the pain and can keep fighting with no penalty, although the player must still keep track of the number of current wounds. If she fails, *she goes down one level of health, plus an additional level for every raise of the difficulty roll.* The levels of health are: **healthy, stunned, incapacitated, and unconscious.**

**Stunned:** the damage makes itself felt, and the character suffers a penalty (subtract a number of dice) equal to the current number of wounds to all actions, until healed.

**Incapacitated:** he can only do very simple actions like crawl around. Once each round the character can attempt

another trauma check: if successful they can graduate to stunned status.

**Unconscious:** depending on the nature of the damage the character may be dying, at a rate determined by the GM.

*After combat, all damage makes itself felt as under stunned,* regardless of whether the character made all her Trauma checks or not.

## Healing

Healing can either be done magically, or at a rate determined by the GM. A good average is 1 week per wound treated with basic first aid, faster with especially good medical facilities, slower with sub-standard ones.

## Fatigue

Fatigue is analogous to damage, with 1 point of fatigue equivalent to 1 wound. The difference is that characters

recover much more rapidly from fatigue: a few minutes rest for stunned, a few hours rest for incapacitated, and a full night's rest for unconscious.

The exception is when a mage goes unconscious because of a failed spell (see magic section): in this case, the mage falls into a coma, and special healing is required for this (exactly how this is healed is up to the GM, and may require different techniques in different circumstances).

## **Weapons**

Weapons play a role in two ways: first, the GM should take into account the kinds of weapons each character has and give a tactical bonus (in a number of dice, usually from 1 to 3 but sometimes more if appropriate) to the fighter with the advantage; secondly, weapons have a lethality rating (LR), which makes Trauma checks more difficult for the target.

Knives or daggers have an LR of +1 or +2; a machete, +3; a sword, +4. An arrow has an LR of +2, the same as small caliber bullets; bigger bullets like a .45 or .50 caliber round have LRs of +3 or +4. Most blunt weapons don't have LRs, but nonetheless should give a tactical bonus to the wielder.

*Example: Joe, unarmed, is fighting Sam, who has a crowbar; the GM gives Sam a tactical bonus of +2 dice.*

## **Experience and advancement**

The GM will also hand out extra LP at the end of each session. Any 3 LP can be converted to 1 point to be spent on any 1 characteristic.

# Magic

In order to cast a spell, the mage must be familiar with the appropriate style of magic. In general, magic actions are resolved through unopposed checks. If a mage is casting a spell at another mage and the targeted mage decides to defend himself with magic, the attacking mage must beat the unopposed check AND the defending mage's opposed check.

If a mage is unsuccessful in casting a spell, he takes one point of fatigue, plus an additional point per raise of the opposing roll.

The player gets a number of dice equal to her relevant magic style score, plus any relevant talent or perk. The difficulty dice are determined by the GM based on the power of the effect desired, plus modifications for things like casting time and the like. See magic style descriptions below for more detail.

# Spell Power

Trivial (2 DD), Minor (4 DD), Substantial (8 DD), Major (16 DD), Extreme (32 DD), Earth-shaking (64 DD).

## **MODIFICATIONS:**

The standard spell has a range of *touch* (the mage must touch who or what she wants to cast a spell on), a duration of *instantaneous* (the magic itself lasts for only an instant, although mundane effects caused by the magic may remain), *takes about 15 minutes to cast, affects 1 man-sized target* or area, the mage is using her crystal focus, her hands are making gestures, and she's using her voice.

For each of these factors, the greater the difference between what the mage is doing and this standard situation above the more difficult the spell and the more DD are required.

**RANGES:** close range (10 feet): +2 DD; up to a stone's throw (50 feet): +4 DD; up to far range (300 feet): +6 DD; up to anything within sight: +8 DD; out of sight: +16 DD.

**DURATION:** lasting while concentrated on: +1 DD; 1 day (24 hours): +2 DD; 1 week: +4 DD; 1 month: +6 DD; 3 months: +8 DD; 6 months: +10 DD; 1 year: +12 DD; permanent: +24 DD.

**CASTING TIME:** 6 combat rounds: +1 DD; 3 combat rounds: +2 DD; 1 combat round: +3 DD; less than 1 combat round: +4 DD.

*Taking extra time to cast:* +1 to +5 or more bonus dice depending on how long (GM's discretion).

**TARGETS:** +1 DD per target after the first.

**WITHOUT USING A CRYSTAL FOCUS:** +5 DD.

**USING NO GESTURES OR BODILY MOVEMENT:** +3 DD.

**WITHOUT USING VOICE:** +3 DD.

**ARCANE OBJECTS:** various kinds of magical arcane objects (like *magic rings, staves, gems, stones, certain feathers, rare plants, water from certain springs or waterfalls, certain animal parts, etc.*) have the ability to amplify a mage's energies like the matobe crystals do, so these can grant a bonus to a mage's roll. Most of these items provide this magic bonus for only a limited number of times. Usually the only way to cast extreme or earth-shaking spells is with the help of a lot of arcane objects.

Other arcane objects can interfere or block magic, so these add DD instead.

## Styles of Magic

### Mimicry

The art of mimicry is basically a kind of conjuration: a mage gestures as if she has and is using an object, and the effects appear as if she is physically using the object. For example, she can



gesture towards a wall as if she has a paintbrush, and paint will appear on the wall in a manner just like she actually had a paintbrush in her hand; similarly, she can make a gesture as if throwing a baseball, and a baseball will appear going towards her target. The same is true if she makes like she has a gun, knife, binoculars, telescope, etc.

Mimicry differs from other styles in that **the standard time needed for a spell is just one round**; to cast it even faster will add +2 DD. Also, *mimicry requires gestures*: if the mage can't gesture, she can't do mimicry. Mimicry only allows the creation of non-living items.

#### **Example power levels:**

*Trivial*: conjuring light objects you can hold in one hand: spoons, forks, brushes, pebbles, etc.

*Minor*: heavier one-handed objects: sword, handgun, knife, paintbrush, etc.

*Substantial*: two-handed and more complex objects: first aid kit, bicycle,

shotgun, tent, a sandwich, a water bottle, etc.

*Major*: heavier and more complex items like a computer, motorcycle, a gazebo, a large meal, a rifle, etc.

*Extreme*: a car, a small house, an automatic rifle, etc.

*Earth-shaking*: a truck, a train, a bank vault, a large house, a cray supercomputer, etc.

## **Electric Magic**

The most recent kind of magic to emerge, electric magic operates on power sources and electronic devices using the mage's will.

#### **Example Power levels:**

*Trivial*: cause a credit card reader to malfunction; crash a home PC or wipe its memory; fog a camera photograph

*Minor*: cause an ATM to start spitting out cash; cause a surveillance

camera to malfunction; repair most small electronic devices

*Substantial:* cause a credit card reader, ATM, or similar device to recognize you as whoever you wish; listen in on any cell phone calls where you can see one of the people involved in the call; create a small EMP to disrupt any electronic devices in a 10 foot radius; cause a computer or TV in sight to hypnotize a particular target; cause an electronic device to explode or shock anyone holding it, causing two wounds; repair home computers and devices of similar complexity

*Major:* access and edit any electronic records; crash or disrupt a large computer network; cause the computer system of a large department store to do what you want (like turn on the sprinkler system, lock all the doors, etc.); EMP everything in an entire city block; cause a computer, TV or similar object to explode, causing 4 wounds to anyone within 10 feet of it

*Extreme:* cause a city-wide blackout; EMP everything in the whole city; electrocute or otherwise harm everyone within a city block's radius who is near any kind of power source, doing 4 wounds damage; repair any electronic device



*Earth-shaking:* as above, but apply the city-wide effects to a whole state, and the city block's effects to the whole city.

## Flesh Magic

Flesh magic involves using the power of the mind to enhance or transform one's own or another's body, including the ability to enhance or boost one's own or another's physical prowess. Many flesh mages come out of secret martial art traditions, where they learn how to strengthen and transform their bodies in amazing ways.

**HEALING:** *Trivial:* heal a scratch, regrow a finger joint; *Minor:* heal 1 wound; *Substantial:* heal 2 wounds; *Major:* heal 3 wounds; *Extreme:* restore a lost limb; *Earth-shaking:* create a complete clone.

**ENHANCING:** enhancing a physical attribute or skill takes one level of power per bonus die added (remember to add DD for the appropriate duration!).

**TRANSFORMATIVE:** transforms a body part into something else, like a blade, steel plate, tree limb, animal part, etc. *Trivial:* transforms a finger or toe; *Minor:* a hand or foot; *Substantial:* one limb; *Major:* 2 limbs; *Extreme:* half of the body

(usually top or bottom); *Earth-shaking:* the whole body.

**OFFENSIVE** (this could take the form of a martial arts strike, like an "iron palm" or "eagle claw"): causes 1 wound per level of power after Trivial (which only causes scratches, rashes, etc.); extreme removes a limb and earth-shaking kills.

## Mind Magic

Mind magic involves using the power of the will to gain knowledge of or influence the minds of others.

**TELEPATHY AND ILLUSIONS:** *Trivial:* sends 1 thought to the target; *Minor:* send a sound or image to the target's mind; *Substantial:* send an image and sound to the target; *Major:* send a complete illusion of one individual, including image, sound, touch, etc. to target; *Extreme:* send a completely immersive illusion to target, including background and multiple moving individuals.

**READING MINDS:** *Trivial:* reads the one strongest thought target is currently thinking; *Minor:* as trivial, plus can tell if the target is being truthful; *Substantial:* can read all surface thoughts; *Major:* read deeper thoughts the target wants hidden; *Extreme:* read thoughts or memories the target is not even aware they have.

**ERASING MEMORIES:** *Trivial:* target forgets their last thought; *Minor:* causes target to forget one immediately recent memory; *Substantial:* causes target to forget a few minutes of recent memory; *Major:* causes target to forget one memory of mage's choosing; *Extreme:* causes target to forget whole periods of months at a time of the caster's choosing; *Earth-shaking:* mindwipes the target so they have total amnesia.

**WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE:** cause the target to "change his mind" as regards a decision, or change an emotion or attitude; the more entrenched, powerful, or important the decision, attitude, or emotion is to the

person, and the more radical the change, the more powerful the spell must be.

## Nature Magic

Nature mages use their power to conjure or transform the fundamental elements of Fire, Earth, Metal, Air, Water, and Wood.

**CONJURE FIRE:** *Trivial:* light a cigarette; *Minor:* light a campfire (can cause 1 wound); *Substantial:* light a person on fire (causes 2 wounds); *Major:* put a whole house on fire; *Extreme:* immolate an entire city block; *Earth-shaking:* immolate an entire city.

To destroy a quantity of an element, the mage creates an equal or greater quantity of its destructive opposite, or antagonistic element. The elements and their antagonistic relationships are:

Fire destroys Metal, or Air;  
Metal or Air destroys Wood;  
Wood destroys Earth;  
Earth destroys Water;  
Water destroys Fire.

A nature mage can also transform a quantity of an element in several ways, including in size or shape. Example: **Transform Wood.** *Trivial:* lengthen or shorten a wooden object by a few inches, or move the wood a few inches; *Minor:* warp the wood into a new shape, or move it a few feet; *Substantial:* sculpt the wood to roughly resemble something, or move it several yards; *Major:* sculpt the wood into a very fine figure or object with very detailed features, or move it several miles; *Extreme:* plant the wood, and cause it to start growing again as if it were alive, or sculpt a larger quantity of wood (a small orchard); *Earth-shaking:* as extreme, but on a larger scale (over hundreds of miles).

## **Sympathetic Magic**

An ancient, so-called "primitive" type of magic practiced since time immemorial by tribes and villagers throughout the world. Basically, this involves using a fetish doll or figure to influence others or to cause certain events to take place; this is similar to the popular notion of "Voodoo" (yes, I know the popular notion of Voodoo, Voudun, etc. is mostly wrong; I don't mean sympathetic magic to be anything like real Voodoo). Sympathetic magic *requires* that the mage have some kind of object with an arcane connection to the subject of his spell incorporated or attached to the fetish figure, or the magic won't work at all.

## **Shamanic Magic**

Another ancient kind of magic, shamanism involves seeing into the unseen world and manipulating the energies there (and sometimes making bargains or otherwise interacting with the

entities there) to do things like heal, divine things about events or people even though they're far away, to communicate with animals, and to change shape and transform into an animal.

***WELL, THAT'S IT - UNFORTUNATELY I'M OUT OF TIME!***