

PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

# HELLFROST

• ARCANES LORE •





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# HELLFROST ARCANE LORE

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# DRUIDISM



Druids manipulate the magical threads woven into the natural world, drawing power from everything from rocks and rivers to flora and fauna. Practiced by four races, the tradition is most commonly associated with hearth and taiga elves. Anecdotal evidence suggests it was the elves who invented druidism, doing so not longer after the birth of their long-lived and truly ancient race.

Druidism is extremely popular among engros, being their favored form of magic. The hearth elf word for the diminutive race is *garraíodoir*. It is often translated into Trader as “gardener” or “farmer.” As evidenced in the Vale, the word is apt, for engros are skillful farmers and gardeners, blessed with green fingers. More accurately, it means “ones who live in harmony with nature.” Whereas humans seek to stamp their authority over the natural world, engros blend their homes to fit the landscape and take only what they need of nature’s bounty.

Frost dwarf druids are rarely seen, but absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Dwarves have always called mountains and hills home, and it is in those terrains that dwarven druids are most likely to be encountered. This is not to say they are common—dwarves are far more comfortable with rune magic and earth elementalism.

Of the various other sentient races, forest giants are the only others to display much interest in learning druidism. The fey are often friendly toward druids, but they have their own forms of magic that are far beyond mortal comprehension.

That humans have never been able to master the art is no great mystery. Humans may appreciate nature (as evidenced by human clerics of Eostre and Ullr) and they may be able to manipulate the four elements, the building blocks of creation from which all things are constructed, but they lack the spiritual empathy required. Far too many consider themselves not as guardians of the wilds, as do the other races, but as its owners.

To blanket all humans as spiritually incapable of understanding the deeper mysteries of nature is an injustice. A small few, specifically the fey-touched (see *Hellfrost*

*Atlas*), can become druids. Whether raised in Alfheim or of fey parentage, they are attuned to the subtle rhythms and threads of magic that bind the natural world.

Druidism requires the deep-seated belief that everything is living—not just animals and plants, which clearly grow, age, and die, but rivers and rocks as well. Do rivers not change course? Do mountains not diminish into hills or shed loose stones by shuddering? That changes if a river’s course or mountain’s height are often imperceptible within a human’s short lifespan, this does not mean they do not occur.

Armed with ancient knowledge and conversant in the secret language of the natural world, druids are capable of conversing with inanimate objects. This is not to say they can hold a conversation with a rock, of course. A cleric of Ullr tracking a foe might pray for his god to reveal a clue or sharpen his senses, and he will look for clues of his quarry’s passage—footprints, broken twigs, threads of cloth torn from clothes, and such like. A druid tracking a foe has access to magic, but he may also place his ear against the ground and listen to what the earth has to say about who has recently passed over it. (There are no game mechanics for this—it is simply a roleplaying tool).

The word druid is Trader and is actually of engro origin, stemming from *draoi* (“natural magic”). Practitioners were known as *draiocht* (“natural magicians”). Perhaps its adoption came about because elves have rarely interacted with other races. Some wags claim the engro word was merely easily to pronounce than its elven counterpart.

That said, its association with elves has always been strong. The ancient Saxa, a highly superstitious people who thought the forest dwelling race a supernatural one, referred to the art as *alfseiðr* (“elf magic”). An Auld Saxa term, it is used only in Royalmark, in poems in modern terms, and in rural communities where the old fears are still strong.

The old name refers to a druid of any race, not just elves, though. *Alf* has come into modern Saxa and Trader



as “elf,” but its original meaning was “supernatural being,” an epithet applied to all manner of beings, including dwarves and fey. Even today, it conjures images of mystery and the supernatural.

As an aside, adding a race’s name before *seiðr* was once a commonplace practice among Saxa. *Ormseiðr*, for example, referred to dragon magic (orm being Auld Saxa for dragon, but used these days to refer only to wingless dragons). The epic poem *The Saga of Redvig Trollslayer* makes mention of *trollseiðr*, though trolls today are rarely, if ever, conversant in magic.

## TENDERS OR PROTECTORS?

Popular stories portray druids in many ways. In most they are seen as defenders of the wild, rugged men and women devoted to protecting wild places and creatures from privation by those who seek only to despoil. In others they are friends to birds and beasts, knowledgeable in the meaning of bird song and the mournful howl of wolves. Some speak of them as wise men, teaching others how to live in harmony with nature so both prosper and neither suffers.

Not every portrayal casts them in a benevolent light, however. Those who have felt their wrath, or listened to too many fanciful and erroneous tales in the tavern, paint them as fanatics who place the needs of plants and animals before the wants of people, or as wild folk who have forgotten the ways of civilization and who, in the worst stories, make strange unions with animals.

No one vision is right. No one vision is wrong.

Druids are not clerics and are not required to obey any tenets or perform specific deeds. As individuals, they may follow their hearts. Some are vegetarians, harvesting only what they need. Some disdain the use of forged metal goods, seeing the extraction of ore as a crime against nature. Some have poor social skills and find solace among animals and plants. Some dislike the hubbub of society, preferring the quiet solitude of nature.

## GUARDIANS OF THE WILD

Many druids have an uneasy relationship with the Guardians of the Wild. True, humans have often treated nature with utter contempt, tearing down forests to build homes, fuel their hearths, and construct their homes, and hunting more than they need or for sport.

Despite men’s attitudes, most druids do not support the Guardians’ methods, though they might support their general cause in protecting nature from further destruction. Kicking a hornet’s nest rarely results in positive results. Indeed, druids living in areas that have suffered attacks by Guardians have been tarnished with a bad reputation. Some have even been assaulted.

The majority of druids seek to educate through words, not punished through deeds. Men are not ignorant savages, and with time humans too can come to appreciate that nature is not a resource to be plundered at will.

## TRAINING

There are entire communities ruled by druids, even populated almost entirely by them. One such place is The Commune (see *Hellfrost Atlas*). Likewise, there are bands of druids who work together under a common title. Druidism is a tradition of magic, though, not a unified organization of mages in the manner of the Convocation of Elementalists.

There are centers of druidic study scattered across Rasilon, but there are no formal schools offering set syllabi. No druid is foolish or arrogant enough to believe that any one view of nature can hope to encompass every aspect. As such, trainee druids are encouraged to learn at the feet of many masters in order to broaden their knowledge and learn through personal experience.

As well as passing on the casting techniques and incantations of druidism, masters teach students about the various flora and fauna. Not only are they taught to identify them and their medicinal properties, they learn about their life cycles and how they fit into the complex jigsaw that is nature.

There is no requirement that a druid must be a herbalist, but most choose to learn hedge magic sooner rather than later. Alchemy is an accepted art, allowing for items of greater power to be created, but it requires expensive ingredients. One of the benefits of hedge magic is that nature has provided a well-stocked laboratory for those who know where to look.

## TRAPPINGS

Druids tap into the elemental threads bound into the natural world. Trappings with mechanics include acid (associated with bogs and marshes), air (associated with the sky), earth, electricity (also associated with the sky), and water.

Trappings relating to flora and fauna have no specific game mechanics, but they add flavor to the game, being ideally suited to druidism. As with all spells, trappings should be assigned a spell when it is chosen. However, for those without any game mechanics, the GM might permit a druid to change his trappings to fit the local environment. Some example trappings for flora and fauna are given below.

*Entangle* might take the form of tangling vines or brambles, but it could just as easily be bears’ arms that grapple and “hug” victims. Casting *obscure* might not involve an area of unnatural darkness, but a dense swarm of ethereal bats, birds, or insects.

*Feast* might conjure a meal out of nowhere, but food might equally be brought to the druid—songbirds may drop fruit and berries, while a bird of prey delivers a fresh rabbit. Yes, the druid has to prepare the poor bunny, but it still saves him having to hunt for his food.

*Armor* may involve the druid’s skin turning to bark or insects swarming over his flesh to provide a protective layer. Branches could animate to intercept blows for *de-*



*flection* or maybe spectral birds flutter around the druid, distracting foes. *Bolt* launches shafts of sharpened wood or snapping wolf's heads. It might equally involve bear claws that swipe at foes. Sharp thorns might sprout from a weapon imbued with *smite*.

Casting *bridge* might invoke a fallen tree or intertwining vines. If the spell is intended to cross water, fish or stepping stones may rise from the water.

In all instances it is important to remember that plants and animals used as trappings are not physical entities—a swarm of insects summoned by casting *obscure* can be *dispelled*, but hitting them with a *burst* or *blast* will have no effect.

## LANGUAGES

When it comes to learning useful languages, druids have plenty of choice—possibly too much, in fact.

Regardless of race, the elven tongues are the *lingua franca* of their kind, replacing Trader as the common tongue. Hearth Elven is spoken in the Hearthlands and Taiga Elven in the Winterlands. That said, no druid is under any compulsion to learn either, and ignorance of them does not reflect on a druid's dedication to nature or his magical talents.

Arboreal and Fey are popular. Forests are a natural lure for druids, being the places most likely to be despoiled and containing a plethora of animal and plant life. Many species of fey inhabit forests, making Arboreal a good choice, but they can also be found in mountains, streams, and bogs.

As hostile as they are toward the civilized races, beastmen, have been known to treat druids cordially, and on very rare occasions with open friendship. The same applies to the barbaric centaurs, though to a lesser degree. Druids who seek to foster peaceful relations with these races, or at least persuade their captors they should not be eaten out of hand, will do well to master the guttural Beastspeech.

"Know your enemy" is an old adage, and a wise one. Orcs present the biggest threat to forests, while mountains and hills offer ideal locations for their lairs. Druids who expect to frequently engage the destructive race will benefit greatly from being able to understand their enemy's speech.

## ATTIRE

Ask a human who has never seen a druid to describe one and he is likely to mention flowing robes or animal-headaddresses. Many druids do done such robes for ceremonial reasons, as do clerics of Eostre and Ullr, but it is not everyday attire. Druids spend much of their time in the wilds, exposed to the raw elements.

Life can be comfortable for those accustomed to the vagaries of nature and who are conversant with its abundant larder, but even druids must take precautions. A sensible druid wears nothing more elaborate than a set of hard-wearing clothes (or armor), a heavy cloak, and a pair of sturdy boots.

## RELIGION

Druids respect and admire nature, but they do not worship it. Everything within nature may be living, but nature itself is not an entity—it has no feelings, no desires, no persona. Unimaginably complex, as deadly as it is beautiful, nature is naught but the handicraft of the gods. Little surprise then that druids are drawn to the deities that govern the natural world, the most obvious being Eostre (both aspects) and Ullr.

Eostre is by far the most popular, especially among those who consider themselves tenders of the wild. Ullr is favored by druids who, whether through personal choice or circumstances, have adopted the role of guardian. Other popular deities include Ertha, Freo (druids frequently travel), and Neorthe. Druids accept that the sky is as much a part of nature of the earth, and most are opposed to slavery and totalitarian regimes, but few turn their attention to Thunor.

While only lay members of the cults of Eostre and Ullr, druids share many of their ideals. They frequently participate in ceremonies and festivals. In areas where there are no clerics, druids who understand the rites stand in as priests. These rituals are far less effective under their guidance, but some worship and veneration is better than none at all.

Druids often form friendships with members of local temples and shrines, assisting the clerics in their holy duties when their goals are the same, freely swapping information, and selling herbal remedies and alchemical devices.

## NEW POWER EDGES

Druids have access to many of the standard Power Edges. Presented below are a number of new Edges specific to heroes with Arcane Background (Druidism).

Several Edges share the same common name—Nature's Pact. Druids with a deep bond to one type of terrain (see Terrain Focus below) can, with time, develop an even great tie to aspects of their environment.

### NATURE'S PACT: CLAWS OF THE MOLE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Strength d6+, Druidism d8+, Terrain Focus: Underground

The druid's nails become thick and hard (but do not count as claws) and the webbing between his fingers extends up to the first finger joint and hardens.

He gains the Burrowing monstrous ability. His burrowing Pace is equal to half his normal Pace. Note that this gives the druid no special ability to sense what is happening on the surface—if he wants to see where people are standing he needs to poke his head through the surface. Neither does it grant any ability to see in darkness.



## NATURE'S PACT: EARS OF THE BAT

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Notice d8+, Terrain Focus: Underground

Bats, subterranean-dwelling servants of Niht, have hearing so acute they can snatch a fluttering moth on the wing in absolute darkness.

The druid halves all penalties for bad lighting, but only within 10" and only if his opponent can reasonably be assumed to be making some noise, even if it is below the range of normal human hearing. A stationary golem, for instance, would be as difficult to detect as without this Edge as it doesn't breathe. The half penalty modifier applies equally to detecting and attacking invisible creatures.

## NATURE'S PACT: EYES OF THE OWL

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Notice d8+, Terrain Focus: Forest

Owls are recognized as superior nocturnal hunters. In Rassilon, it is believed they hunt through sight, being able to see in poor lighting conditions as easily as a human does in bright daylight.

The character's eyes change to a bright orange and reflect light at night. The druid ignores the penalties for Dim and Dark lighting. He still suffers the full penalties for Pitch Darkness.

## NATURE'S PACT: FANGS OF THE SNAKE

**Requirements:** Heroic, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Terrain Focus: Forest or Marsh

The druid's canine teeth grow larger and can deliver mild venom with a successful bite (Str+d4 damage).

Anyone Shaken or wounded by the druid's bite must make a Vigor roll (no modifier). Failure means he takes w wound and is Exhausted (should he survive). Success leaves him Exhausted. A raise causes him to be Fatigued. Fatigue levels from multiple bites are not cumulative.

## NATURE'S PACT: FORTITUDE OF THE BEAR

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Spirit d8+, Vigor d8+, Druidism d8+, Terrain Focus: Forest, Hills, or Mountains

Often called the King of the Forest, despite also been native to hills and mountains, bear's are depicted in poems are being creatures of great fortitude.

The druid has +2 to rolls to resist Fatigue and +1 to natural healing rolls. The latter bonus stacks with the bonus from his Terrain Focus Edge when it applies.

## NATURE'S PACT: LUNGS OF THE FISH

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Swimming d8+, Terrain Focus: Freshwater or Seawater

The druid is equally at home in water as he is on land.

When in his favored terrain, his Pace is equal to his Swimming die. Additionally, he cannot drown and is resistant to pressure caused by deep diving.

## NATURE'S PACT: TENACITY OF THE BOAR

**Requirements:** Legendary, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Spirit d10+, Vigor d10+, Terrain Focus: Forest

Boars are normally mild-mannered animals, but once angered they are tenacious foes, requiring great effort to take down. The druid has taken on that aspect of the boar.

If the druid is Shaken, further Shaken results have no further effect—they do not cause a wound. A side-effect of this is that a druid engaged in melee cannot voluntarily leave combat until either he or all adjacent opponents are dead.

## NATURE'S PACT: (TERRAIN) BORN

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Druidism), Agility d8+, Druidism d8+, Terrain Focus: Forest, Hills, Marsh, or Mountains

The druid suffers no penalties for Difficult Ground caused by his favored terrain. This has no effect on spells that mimic such terrain, such as *bamper movement* producing thick vines or thick bog. When using the Overland Pace system, he treats such terrain as one category lower.

## TERRAIN FOCUS

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Arcane Background (Druidism), Druidism d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+

Most druids see all of nature as their domain. Others favor one specific type of terrain, drawing increased physical power and physical fortitude from the deep bond they develop with their home.

A hero who takes this Edge must select one terrain type from forests, freshwater, hills, marsh, mountains, plains, saltwater, or underground. The latter applies only to natural caves, not mines or "dungeons." While within his favored terrain, or within 6" (12 yards) of natural bodies of water, the druid has +2 to Druidism rolls, +1 Toughness, and +2 to Survival rolls.

Additionally, a druid who spends four consecutive days in his favored terrain has +1 to natural healing rolls at the end of the half-week.

Focusing on one specific terrain type produces benefits, but it also diminishes the druid's connection to the rest of the world. The normal modifiers for Druidism are changed as follows.

Mod	Locale
+0	Completely natural terrain different to the druid's focus (cave, forest, swamp)
-1	Rural (outside in a village, a worked cave, a mine)
-2	Urban (inside a village building, anywhere in a town or city, within other enclosed, artificial structures)



# ELEMENTALISM



Mages can be a proud and arrogant lot. Any discussion between practitioners of different traditions that strays into the topic of which art was developed first is almost guaranteed to end up in an argument, especially if the participants are druids and elementalists.

No scholars of arcane lore doubt that elementalism is older than recorded history and that it has always been commonplace. The original Auld Saxa word for it was *seiðr*, a word that simply means “magic.” The term was prefixed by the word for each element (*eir*, *ertha*, *fyr*, and *waeter*). As new forms of magic were developed, some might say discovered, elementalism was renamed *verdenseiðr*, which translates as “world magic.” The term comes from the common belief that the world is made up of the four elements.

While they might be vocal supporters of the belief that elementalism is the oldest art, few really care that much—their art remains the most widely practiced, and that counts for a lot.

## THE FIRST ELEMENT

Regardless of whether he is a member of the Convocation or an independent magician, every elementalist has studied under a master. Used in this context, master simply means an elementalist who has mastered an element—it has no bearing on the number of elements he knows, nor his experience with spellcasting.

Which element an apprentice learns first is not always his choice. Some masters subject apprentices to a battery of tests. The results of the test are often irrelevant—the master is more interested in the student’s temperament. According to research conducted and codified long ago, temperament reveals to which element the apprentice is most closely naturally aligned.

Those who believe they have free choice in their first choice of element are deluding themselves—their decision is subconsciously guided by their nature.

Those who adopt air as their primary element tend to be flighty and curious by nature. They are naturally imaginative and creative, but keeping them focused on the task at hand is tricky, for they are easily distracted.

Students of earth are ponderous of mind. They are not stupid—they simply take their time before making a decision. Stubbornness is a common trait, with practitioners being reluctant to change their minds, even if their decision ultimately proves a poor one.

Fire mages have short tempers and a reckless streak—they throw themselves at tasks without planning ahead, venting their frustration at failure with fiery words at anyone unfortunate enough to be in their path.

Practitioners of water are staunch traditionalists and deeply conservative. Like rivers, they are set in their ways and lack imagination—they do what others have done before because they know it works.

Naturally, there are varying degrees of temperament and people are complex, rarely easy to neatly categorize according to philosophical ideas—few elementalists, save perhaps those who only ever deign to master a single element, are ever living paragons of their first element. A water elementalist may well lack imagination, for instance, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t also have a sharp tongue or a cautious nature. That he chose water first is, in the eyes of elementalists, merely a sign that it is his dominant personality aspect.

## ELEMENTAL OPPOSITION

The universe may be made up of the four elements, but this does not mean they exist in blissful harmony. Elementalists refer to the conflict as elemental opposition. The rules governing the interaction of the elements are extremely simple—fire opposes water, air opposes earth, and vice versa. The principal is not restricted to



the unseen threads of magical energy—any fool knows that fire of sufficient heat boils away water and a sufficient quantity of water can douse any fire. In that regard it is part of the natural order.

During the earliest days of the art, elemental opposition proved a major problem. All elementalists struggled to master opposing elements, especially the one opposed to their first element. To begin with, mastery of all four elements seemed impossible.

Diligent research and constant experimentation finally unraveled the mystery of elemental harmony. This breakthrough issued in a new era of elementalism, for only then did the first arkhwisards come into being. The Convocation of Elementalists' recorded history clearly shows that it was they who brought the elements into peaceful magical union. Other lore, however, claims that the Convocation was only made possible because elementalists had already unlocked the secret.

This not to say the process is easy. Every elementalist knows that the elements struggle against each other, no matter whether they are in opposition or not. Various analogies have been used over the centuries, though none are perfect. A common analogy involves four slots. When an elementalist learns a single element it fills one slot. Nature abhors a vacuum, though, and the element overflows into the empty slots. Since all four slots are identical, there is harmony and balance.

When he masters a second element, however, the two compete to become dominant, fighting to fill the empty slots. The situation grows only worse when he masters a third element, for now all three work against each other. Only when he masters the fourth and final element is order once again restored, for each slot is now full.

Other popular analogies involve filling jugs with liquids and juggling balls that vary in shape and size. Arkhwisard Vinkingsa, a survivor of the sack of Imperial City, was a cat lover. His analogy involved four kittens, each possessed of great curiosity but no love for its peers, and four baskets. One kitten could go where it wanted among the four baskets. Two or three would fight to claim at many baskets as possible. All four achieved harmony once they realized the other baskets were occupied because that forced them to stay in their own basket.

## OPTIONAL

Elemental opposition has no direct impact on game play—as noted above, mages have learned to overcome opposition, even if they must still cope with harmonizing multiple elements. At least in the canon. For GMs who wish to add it to their game, we present two optional methods.

**Elemental Restriction:** The first element a mage selects is the one to which he is most attuned. With this optional rule, its opposite element *must* be the last one he selects. This restriction is caused by his primary element clouding his ability to study and master its opposite. Only with extensive time and research, represented by it being the last element he can learn, can the elementalist overcome this mental blockage.

**Harmful Effects:** An elementalist targeted by a spell with a trapping in opposition to an element he has mastered suffers a –1 penalty to rolls to resist the spell's effect and has –1 Toughness against damage-causing spells. However, if the mage has also mastered the opposite element, he suffers no penalties—he has an understanding of how the elements oppose each other and can instinctively throw up defense measures.

Despite the introduction of cold, coldfire, and ice as trappings, not to mention the Hellfrost effect, they are not in opposition to fire, or vice versa. This is one of the many mysteries that elementalists, not to mention general student of the arcane, continue to ponder concerning the Hellfrost.

**Example:** *Ulfric has mastered two elements—air and fire. When targeted by any spell with an earth or water trapping he suffers the elemental opposition penalties.*

*Later, Ulfric masters earth. Since he now knows both earth and air, he ignores the opposition penalties for these elements. Unfortunately for him, he remains susceptible to water spells.*

## A FIFTH ELEMENT?

The notion of the existence of a fifth element has kept students of arcane lore busy since the advent of elementalism. Much lore has been lost, but every elementalist's library contains at least one book on the topic, such is the popularity of research. The big unanswered question is what is the nature of the fifth element?

Before the Blizzard War, the popular consensus was that it was a spiritual element. Even those who agreed it existed argued over its nature, though. Some philosopher-mages argued that whereas the four primary elements were material and thus could be altered or destroyed, the fifth element was pure and incorruptible. Others insisted it was divine, the spark that elevated men above the beasts, or was the medium through which the gods imparted miracles, thus rendering it inaccessible to elementalists.

A new idea entered elementalists' consciousness in the years after the Blizzard War—the mysterious fifth element was cold. Many scoffed at the claim, but it was not without archaic precedent.

Among the ancient texts were fragmentary notes that spoke of the elements as having four additional properties—hot, dry, wet, and cool. Fire was hot, but it was also dry. Earth, on the other hand, was dry and cool.

At the time, those who supported the theory agreed that these secondary qualities were lesser versions of the four elements introduced as taints, a claim that supported their corruptible nature. Fire was primarily hot. That it was also dry comes from it being tainted with the primary aspect of earth. The theory went that fire requires fuel to burn, fuel is part of the earth, and thus fire is a mix of fire tainted with threads of earth.

Initially, cool was considered to be a taint caused by air. The appearance of the Hellfrost coupled with the sudden and unexplained creation of hrimwisardry, an art



that manipulated cold, caused followers of the secondary quality theory to ponder the true nature of cool.

If cool was indeed part of air, did it follow that cold was now to be considered part of air as well? On the other hand, if cold truly was a new element and the source of cool, then what secondary quality did air produce and how had untold numbers of elementalists failed to recognize it? More than a few elementalists spent the rest of their lives trying to solve the conundrum without success.

The debate still rages over where cold should be placed in the grand scheme of things. For the most part, elementalists stick to their tried and tested view of the universe—the fifth element is spiritual and cold plays no part in it. Their argument hinges on the fact that if cold were the fifth element, it is physical and corruptible, and therefore they would have discovered its existence long ago. A growing number, however, believe that their long-held view may be erroneous. Only decades of further research have any hope of settling the matter.

## ELEMENTAL PLANE

The standard cosmology of the universe, as determined by mortals, consists of multiple planes. Three of them, the mortal realm, Alfheim, and Godsheim, are stacked one above the other in an unchanging order. Since Scaetha guards the gates of the Abyss, and must therefore have relatively easy access, the accursed realm is widely considered to be on the same level as the celestial realm. Surrounding these is the elemental plane.

Ignoring the current debate as to whether or not cold is the fifth element, elementalists agree the elemental plane is comprised of four primary realms—air, earth, fire, and water. Use of the word “plane” when describing the elements has caused headaches for more than one apprentice, for it is in fact a sphere.

The primary elemental realms are not disparate islands floating on the surface of the sphere—they exist alongside each other. The standard model says that air sits opposite earth and fire sits opposite water. Most often a two-dimensional circular compass pattern is used to show their correlation, with air to the north, fire in the west, earth at the south, and water in the east. In practice, elementalists usually place their primary element in the north. What fills the position is irrelevant, of course—the compass can be rotated to any one of four positions and current belief is that the entire elemental realm actually spins.

The realms’ borders are not static. Like patches of color on a soap bubble, their nebulous borders ebb and flow into each other. Where their major borders meet are the border elemental realms. Air and fire create haze, fire and earth create lava, earth and water create mud, and water and air create mist. Some texts describe these as secondary elemental realms.

Since the realms are fluid, even the opposed elements

## ELEMENTALISM & JINN MAGIC

Elementalism and jinn magic use the same game mechanics, and yet they are different forms of magic. Several key points have hampered discussions between the Convocation and jinn mages.

- \* Elementalists consider the elemental realms leftover energy from the creation of the world. Jinn mages don’t believe in the elemental realms. The nearest equivalent they have is Jinnistan.

- \* Elementalists see elemental loci as places where the four realms overlap and touch upon the mortal realm. Jinn mages see loci as areas that resonate with energy left behind by the jinn.

- \* Elementalists cast spells by directly manipulating threads of energy emanating from the elemental realms. Jinn mages summon a lesser jinn and bind it into short-term service. Both sides do agree on one general point—magic comes through force of will.

- \* Elementalists are not direct servants of the gods, but they still pray to the gods (and have a separate and powerful goddess of magic, Maera). Jinn mages accept the existence of gods as isolated aspects of Asha and Druj, but they do not pray to them as individual entities.

can touch each other, though only at the top and bottom of the sphere. These areas as known as transitory, though there is much heated argument as to whether or not they always exist, or tertiary elemental realms. Fire and water clash to make steam, and earth and air form dust.

## ELEMENTALS

Elementals are more than just living embodiments of their element—they are sentient beings. Though they do not speak to mortals, they are neither deaf nor dumb, as evidenced by their being able to follow orders when invoked through *summon elemental*.

Likewise, they rank above animals in terms of intelligence. True, earth elementals are at the lower end of the intellectual scale, but they are capable of logical reasoning. Magimentals have minds with greater intellectual capacity than most mortals, not that any mortal has been able to fully deduce this.

A small few elementalists hold that elementals do not talk to mortals because they are superior beings. They can be bound through magic and compelled to obey orders, but this does not mean they have to like it. Those voicing such beliefs are often subject to ridicule. Do the gods, superior to all, not talk to mortals through dreams? Do their heralds not converse in the tongues of mortals?

The most widely held belief is that there is simply no common frame of reference. A fire elemental might be sentient, but it is a living flame—a mortal can no more



hope to understand the crackling of his hearth than he can relate to the elemental.

One recent suggestion is that elementals cannot actually understand human speech, at least not in the conventional sense. Their obedience to verbal commands stems from the mage manipulating the threads of the magic that bind them, albeit temporarily, to the mortal plane on a subconscious level. If true, there is the possibility that each type of elemental has a spoken language mortals have failed to recognize. Perhaps the scraping and grinding of an earth elemental is more than random noises created by its moving. Maybe a fire elemental's hiss and crackle is an attempt at communication.

*Speak language* has proven ineffectual at opening dialogue. Some argue this is proof enough that elementals, while intelligent, do not communicate even with each other. Others argue that *speak language* only taps into languages previous generations of mages have learned. Mortals can speak to demons in their native tongue, as an example, because, at some point, a mortal learned the language. In doing so he left resonance in the magical threads.

As to the origin of elementals, all are agreed they are servants of the gods, albeit among the lowest, and actually breed, though perhaps not in a manner identical to humans. Proof of this can easily be found in the teachings of the Norns. The Three Sisters have an inherent hatred toward any creatures not born, for they play no part in their complex tapestry. Demons, golems, and undead are hunted and exterminated, but the Norns have shown absolutely no animosity toward elementals.

## ELEMENTAL LOCI

The primary elemental realms do not just surround the mortal world—they interact with it. It is important to note that fog, storms, tidal waves, earthquakes, and other natural effects are not seen as being caused by the interaction of the elemental realms and the mortal realm—these are the work of the gods, albeit those associated with the elements.

At times, the elemental realms touch the mortal realm. This interaction creates an elemental locus, a point of raw elemental power. Many elementalists consider these sites to be gateways, as evidenced by the presence of elemental beings nearby. The belief is not universal—elementals found near loci could just as easily have been spawned by locus, rather than passing through it from the elemental realm. Regardless, while loci offer a slim glimmer of hope, mortals have yet to find a means of entering the elemental realms.

In an attempt to increase their power, elementalists have tried to create elemental loci. This often involves repeatedly casting spells at a given point in the hope of somehow attracting the appropriate elemental realm like a magnet attracts metal. Every attempt has met with utter failure. Similarly, no mortal has ever managed to *dispel* or *negate* a locus. Even the smallest is too powerful for mortal magic to affect in any meaningful way.

## CATEGORIES

Elemental loci are categorized into two types. The first are transitory. They might exist for a few blinks of the eye or for many centuries, but eventually they vanish. Proof of this is well documented, both in historical records and through active research—searches for elemental loci mentioned in ancient manuscripts, and one visited even by living elementalists, have found no sign of the locus.

The second type are permanent loci. This name may yet prove to be a misnomer. Just because an elemental locus has occupied the same spot for hundreds or even thousands of years is not proof it will not one day disappear. As a rule, elementalists apply this title only to loci that have continually existed since the Convocation of Elementalists was born, for it was they who created the first official catalog, and performed the first true study, of loci.

## INTENSITY

Elementalists refer to the physical size of each region within a locus as its intensity. There is no arcane symbolism behind the name—it is simply their preferred term for a region's diameter.

The Catalog of Elemental Intrusions (intrusions being the archaic term for loci), the great record of all known loci dating back over a millennia, divides loci first by their elemental correlation and then by intensity, starting with that of the core.

Every locus has a set of three ratings. These relate to the specific intensity of the three regions that make up the locus. The core is designated by the letter "A," the inner reach is "B," and "C" denotes the outer reach. Each letter is immediately followed by the respective diameter in yards. The example locus in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* has a full designation of A4-B8-C12. That is, the core is 4 yards across, the inner reach measures 8 yards across, and the outer reach is 12 yards across.

Such information is vitally important for those who plan on studying or using a locus. While most loci have a neat, and thus far unexplained, ratio of 1:2:3, this is not universal—a mage who misjudges what region he is in risks more severe repercussions should he suffer the debilitating effects of the Siphoning.

Study has shown that longevity and intensity have no correlation. What has been proven is that small loci are far more common than enormous one.

## NEW POWER EDGE

### ELEMENTAL UNION (SPECIFIC ELEMENT)

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Arcane Background (Elementalism), Elementalism d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+, *elemental manipulation*, cannot have Elemental Mastery

Not every elementalist holds that reaching the status of



arkhwisard is a representation of true elemental mastery. Some believe that arkhwisards lack a deep understanding of any one element, yet alone meaningful knowledge of all four. Those who elect to restrict their art to a single element are able to form a union with the element that seeps into their very core.

A character who takes this Edge must select the element that matches the one element he has mastered.

**Air:** The mage's Pace is increased by +1. His running die is increased by one step (typically to d8).

**Earth:** The mage has +1 Toughness.

**Fire:** The mage is immune to background heat of any intensity, as if shielded by a permanent *environmental protection (beat)* spell.

**Water:** The mage has +1 to make, maintain, and escape grapples. This includes rolls to resist *entangle* and *hamper movement*.

In all instances, the mage has +1 to Elementalism rolls and can cast *elemental manipulation* once per round as a free action (meaning he can cast a second spell in the same round). Devotion to his one element, however, means the mage can never take Elemental Mastery.

## THE CONVOCATION OF ELEMENTALISTS

Even though they lack much understanding of the magical arts, most citizens can reel off the various types of wizard found wandering the land. While racial bias exists, few can ignore the fact that one name stands out above all others—the Convocation of Elementalists.

### HISTORY

Elementalism is an ancient art. Some suspect it was the first form of magic known by the races of men, for it manipulates the basic building blocks of creation present in all things—the four elements.

One legend claims the four elemental gods—Ertha, Kenaz, Neorthe, and Thunor—each selected one mortal and taught him how to bind the magical thread relating to their element, thus establishing the four branches of elementalism that remain in use to this day. That the gods actually appeared in person is doubtful, for such an act would break the Compact. Skalds and sages agree it is more likely that they worked through dreams.

Before the foundation of the Convocation elementalists were a reclusive lot. Most only ever mastered one element, and those who grasped the fundamentals of others were loathe to share their secrets. Masters took apprentices, forcing them to swear sacred oaths in the name of Maera and Hothar never to reveal their secrets. Practitioners of each element considered theirs the dominant one, looking down on the others as inferior. Such was the animosity that elementalists openly attacked those who disagreed with them and those they saw as

potential rivals. As a result, elementalists had a bad name with the masses.

That the Convocation was founded –611 is common knowledge to all elementalists. The accepted day, the first Monandaeg of Werremonan, remains a day of celebration for the order.

The roots of the order, however, lie several decades further back in time. Tired of the infighting, four masters of their element gathered in secret to trade knowledge. Through patience and diligence each slowly acquired the others secret, eventually mastering all four elements. Although the title was not used until much later, they became the first arkhwisards.

When the four openly revealed their abilities they met stiff resistance. Many elementalists considered their mastery of multiple elements as the supreme heresy, for in their hands all elements were equal. But this was the great secret of the art, the wisdom others failed to grasp down the millennia—the elements are indeed separate forces, but each is part of a greater whole.

Many flocked to their banner, keen to expand their understanding of magic. Others pitted themselves against the heretics, putting aside old grudges and rivalries in the face of a common enemy. The bitter struggle that followed is known in the Convocation as the War of Unity.

In the end, the arkhwisards and their apprentices were victorious. The four great mages approached the defeated faction as one, and spoke to them at length about unity and brotherhood, and common understanding and shared wisdom. Those who still refused to bow before them departed into the wilds of the far north and were never seen again. Those who saw the wisdom in the words pledged allegiance. Thus was born the Convocation of Elementalists.

The four original arkhwisards declared themselves the supreme council. They quickly wrote up a body of laws by which all elementalists loyal to the order were to live their lives. While members would be forced to give up a certain amount of freedom and accept the orders of their superiors, so long as they were not against the interests of the Convocation, in return they could draw upon the resources and camaraderie of the Convocation. No more would elementalists be loners.

Even today, elementalists who will not sign up are largely considered outcasts, unwelcome at any Convocation facility. Noted exceptions exist, though. Neither the frost dwarves nor elves, races whose understanding of elementalism had always taught the four were one, were prepared to accept the authority of mages whose knowledge was like that of children. Unwilling to declare war against these elder races, the Convocation widely choose to alter their laws to exclude the dwarves and elves from compliance.

### THE ELEMENTAL ORDERS

The Convocation represents the elements unified as one force; yet, each element form retains a very strong individuality within the organization's ranks. Like the



elements they study, members are grouped as belonging to one of four elemental orders.

Every elementalists begins by mastering one element. Regardless of how many he later goes on to master, he is always associated with the first element he learned, known as his prime element.

The Convocation's laws require all members to wear robes matching the color associated with their order. Air mages wear white (or light gray), earth mages brown or green (personal preferences are allowed), water mages blue, and fire mages wear red. As a mage masters more elements he is required to introduce extra colors into his robes. However, the order in which he learned the elements must always be made clear by giving preference to one's prime element, then one's second, third, and fourth. At one stage the rulers tried to impose strict percentages based on mastery levels, but this proved unworkable and was quickly dropped.

This law extends only to dealings with other elementalists, and truly applies only within a Convocation facility. The world harbors many dangers, and advertising the fact that one is a mage with certain gaps in his knowledge is foolhardy. When traveling, most elementalists don standard traveling clothes, perhaps keeping a handkerchief dyed in the appropriate colors handy for quickly identifying themselves to their peers.

The rise of hrimwisardry in the aftermath of the Blizzard War threw the Convocation into chaos. After five centuries, the chaos has yet to be ordered. A growing number of elementalists now hold that coldfire, a phenomenon previously unknown, is in fact a unique element. Hrimwisards are thus not a new form of mage, but proponents of a previously unknown branch of elementalism.

Many, though, still regard this as heretical thought, for it has long been established that everything is comprised of four elements, not five. Furthermore, hrimwisards have proven incapable of mastering other elements and manipulate magic in an entirely different manner.

## TITLES

Members of the Convocation are granted titles based on how many elements they have mastered. This in turn determines their status, and who their superiors and inferiors are. Which elements they have mastered are determined solely by the color of their robes.

When an elementalists masters his first element he is awarded the title of Aprentis (Apprentice). As a fully-fledged member of the Convocation, he is now entitled to leave his master's side and make his own way in the world. When he does, he takes the title Pryniple (Principle), denoting that he is a recognized master of one element. Since player characters will be going adventuring and know only one element, this is the default starting title.

An elementalists who has mastered two elements is called a Magus, and Maegister (Magister) once he has mastered three elements. An elementalists who masters all four elements takes the title Arkhwisard (Archmage).

Ranks grant authority over others, but the matter is

complicated by one's elemental orders. Regardless of the title they hold and elements they have mastered, all those who hold the same title are seen as equals. Among his peers, a mage must earn respect through his actions, not demand it because he holds a title.

An elementalists may give orders to a mage of a lower title, but only so long as he has mastered the element. Hence, a Magus who knows fire and water has no authority over a water elementalists. Two notable exceptions to this rule apply.

First, members of the ruling council are senior to everyone else except each other. Second, apprentices are not required to obey any mage other than a member of the Four or their own mentor.

## OFFICES

Titles denote an elementalists's understanding and mastery over the four elements, but there is more to the Convocation than merely casting spells. Among those who crowd its halls and towers are alchemists, librarians, and arcanologists. Some work on their own pet projects, others serve an arkhwisard in his research into the mysteries of the elements, while most act as teachers, passing on their knowledge to other elementalists, and occasionally non-wizards. These luminaries hold titles known as offices.

Offices grant a mage certain perks and give him the respect of his peers, but mostly they are a way of earning money on the side.

In order to qualify for an office, an elementalists has to meet certain minimum standards. No die roll is recovered, but the character must visit a major center of Convocation—simply acquiring the necessary skill and Edge requirements does not grant automatic entitlement to hold an office. The aspiring elementalists is thoroughly tested, a process taking 2d4 days, before being granted his new office.

While an elementalists may hold only a single title, there is no limit on the number of offices he may hold.

**Advocate:** *Prerequisites:* Knowledge (Law) d8+.

Despite centuries of cooperation with mundane authorities, the Convocation prefers to look after its own. When an elementalists is put on trial, whether by his peers or temporal authorities, he has the right to be represented by an advocate. Advocate's are not supplied free of charge, though—the accused must still pay for their services.

**Arcanologist:** *Prerequisites:* Elementalism d10+, Investigation d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+.

Arcanologists study magic, specifically the four elements. Although they can cast spells, their work is largely theoretical. The great debate occupying many is whether or not ice is truly a unique element, and if it is, how does the Convocation open access to the elemental realm.

**Herbalist:** *Prerequisites:* Hedge Magic, Knowledge (Alchemy) d10+.

The Four has tried to eradicate this office many times, but it has never succeeded. While most elementalists see hedge magic as a natural science rather than an arcane art, others believe that the study of plants and their properties could be of benefit to the order.



**Inquisitor:** *Prerequisites:* Investigator, Investigation d10+, Notice d8+, Streetwise d10+, mastery of Eir, *speaking language*.

Although members of the Convocation are subject to the laws of the land in which they reside, the order has its own laws beyond the bounds of nobles and judges. When an elemental is suspected or accused of a crime against the Convocation, inquisitors are dispatched to determine whether or not the mage must stand trial. Despite their reputation, inquisitors are not judge, jury, or executioner—there are information gatherers.

**Librarian:** *Prerequisites:* Investigation d10+, 6+ languages or *speaking language* spell.

Librarians are experts in research and reference. Skilled in handling fragile manuscripts, they are allowed limitless access to the order's many libraries.

**Master Alchemist:** *Prerequisites:* Alchemy, Elementalism d10+, Knowledge (Alchemy) d10+.

Alchemists are experts in creating alchemical devices. While most are teachers, they are entitled to earn a living manufacturing and selling alchemical devices. Under the Convocation's ancient laws, only an elemental holding this office may sell devices to non-elementalists, and even then only in accordance with strict rules. Any breach of the rules is punishable by loss of position.

## THE FOUR

Formally known as the Council of Four of the Convocation of Elementalists, the ruling body is simply known as the Four both inside and outside the organization.

As the name infers, there are four seats, each representing one of the four accepted elements. Council members are always arkhwisards, but may only stand for a vacant seat matching their prime element.

Originally, each member of the Four held his seat for life, appointing his successor as he saw fit. Unfortunately, poor choices and rife nepotism combined with pride, arrogance, and greed led to those lives being cut short by unfortunate "accidents" and open assassination. So bad was the problem that at one stage becoming a member of the Four was seen as a guaranteed death sentence.

In order to stop the ranks of the arkhwisards being thinned by early deaths, changes were implemented. Each member is now elected by those of his elemental order, whose interests he represents within the Convocation, and serves for four years. So long as he receives the popular vote, there is no limit on the number of terms an arkhwisard may serve.

In order to prevent tied votes, each member of the Four serves as Primus for a single year. In the event of a tie his vote counts double, thus giving him the casting vote. His position gives him much respect among lesser elementalists, but no added authority or perks.

The current members of the Four are Arkhwisard of Eir, Urit Biscali (male Anari), Arkhwisard of Ertha, Galwinith Treelimb (female hearth elf), Arkhwisard of Fyr, Davina ap-Meredith (female Anari), and Arkhwisard of Waeter, Marmaduke Bentwhistle (male engro).



## EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

The Convocation has its headquarters in the Imperial City, where the Four reside, though it maintains a strong presence in Aspiria, among other places. In theory, the authority of the Four is absolute, extending across the entire continent. In practice, the reach of the Four is finite, limited by the range of *voice on the wind* spells and the speed of messengers.

Elementalists in distant realms are not averse to considering themselves independent of any central authority. In most instances the Four ignores minor breaches of protocol, but when an elemental grossly exceeds his authority or endangers the reputation and wellbeing of the Convocation, they are quick to act. Most times a stern rebuke or a visit from an inquisitor is enough to bring the wayward son back in line, but the Four is not above using physical and magical violence to enforce its rule.



## HOLDING SESSION

The Four do not sit in permanent session. When all four members are in Imperial City they sit each Monandaeg. All meetings begin with each member repeating the Convocation's sacred motto—the four are one—reaffirming their loyalty to the organization and all it stands for. Early proceedings are open to any elemental, for all save apprentices are entitled to address the council. Tradition dictates that arkhwizards speak first, then magisters, and so on down the chain. Once all business is brought to their attention, the council chamber is cleared so the Four can discuss the issues raised.

## LAW & ORDER

Although some critics argue otherwise, the Convocation does not consider itself above any laws. An elemental who commits a crime against an outsider is answerable to the relevant authorities. The Convocation reserves the right to judge members of the order who commit crimes that harm or hamper only other members of the Convocation. In order to ensure the ends of justice are being served, the local ruler is entitled to have a witness present at any trial.

The organization's laws state that three judges, all of whom must hold an equal or higher title than the accused, must try a mage. Furthermore, in order to prevent favoritism, none may have the same prime elemental order as the accused or the main defendant. Advocates may be hired from any elemental order.

Punishments are typically fines or imprisonment for lesser offenses. Imprisoned elementals are kept bound and gagged. Persistent offenders are expelled from the organization, either for a fixed duration or permanently. During this time the elemental is denied access to Convocation facilities and will be shunned by his former peers. The Convocation does impose the death penalty, but it requires the approval of the Four.

## PLAYING AN ELEMENTALIST

The Convocation has no particular focus beyond the study of magic, the continuing improvement of its members, and ensuring their welfare. Because of this, there is no such thing as a typical elemental.

While one of your superiors may occasionally call on your services, something membership of the Convocation requires of you, unless you tie yourself to a facility by signing on as a member of staff, something likely only to occur in campaigns centered around a fixed point (such as one city or geographic area), this is only going to occur when you pay a visit to a Convocation center of learning, and that is something that can be easily avoided for long periods. Except when under orders you are free to act as you want, for the Convocation demands nothing of its members as a matter of course. So long as you're not dragging the organization into any scandals, your superiors won't interfere in your activities.

## COMBAT ADVICE

While you have just one element mastered your combat options are very limited. While fire offers the best damage-causing offensive capabilities both ranged and for close quarters, especially against many Hellfrost beasts, the penalties incurred by the Hellfrost effect can seriously hamper a mage operating in the Winterlands. Water is often regarded as the weakest combat form since it gives no protective spells for low Rank casters. However, it is the only element that allows *healing*, and the list does include three other useful spells—*bolt*, *entangle*, and *stun*. The last two are very handy for handling multiple foes. Its big weakness is that it grants neither *armor* nor *deflection*.

Later on, as you grow in both versatility and mastery over more elements, the number of spells open to you becomes staggering. Fortunately, those you already know don't need to be learned again—you simply learn a new trapping you can apply. This makes elementalism the most powerful combat art, for when you discover a creature is immune to one element, you can simply switch to another trapping.

A mage's biggest weakness is actually his magic. In the heat and excitement of battle it is easy to get lured into casting spell after spell, and every spell you cast risks the Siphoning.

## ADVANCES

Whatever role you intend to fill, both in terms of combat and as a member of society, invest wisely in defensive abilities. Wizards are powerful, and it is a foolish enemy who allows a mage to go unmolested for long. The very act of casting a spell is going to single you out for special treatment. If you're not interested in picking Combat Edges like Block and Dodge, a few defensive spells coupled with Concentration should enable you to avoid damage and maintain your magic after taking a hit.

Mastering a second element opens up an entirely new spell list, but it also incurs a penalty to your spellcasting rolls. There is no way to avoid this penalty for those who wish to expand their spell lore or climb the ranks.

## NPC REACTIONS

While the general populace is naturally wary of those who wield magic, they rarely fear or shun them out of hand these days. Unless an individual has a bad reputation, or the local elementals have been running amok, they begin with a Neutral reaction toward members of the Convocation. Most other wizards are Neutral, seeing the organization as just another group of mages.

Elementalists who have avoided becoming members of the Convocation have little love for those who would seek to impose authority over them. While some are Neutral, barely sparing the mage a second glance, most are Uncooperative. A few, especially those who have suffered persecution, are Hostile.



# HEAHWISARDRY



No sage doubts that heahwisardry is an old art, though whether it was the first magical art studied by humans is less clear cut. Mention of wizards sporting staffs can be found in fragments of texts that predate the Convocation by a millennia, but it cannot conclusively be proven they practiced heahwisardry. Never the most popular art, and with many records destroyed, the true origins of heahwisardry shall perhaps never be known.

Heahwisardry is a Classical Anari term and translates quite simply as “high wizardry.” Modern proponents of the art are prone to claiming this relates to its ancestry and position as a superior form of magic. Scholars, however, claim it relates to it being a high ceremonial form, focusing as it does on a vital material component—in this case the wizard’s staff.

The great majority of modern heahwisards are of Anari stock, but it was not always so. Snippets of manuscripts written down in Auld Saxa centuries after the events refer to *galdrastafr* (“magical staff”). Modern Saxa poems and songs that make reference to use the modern term, *galdragandr*. Those who wielded staffs to perform magical invocations were known as *galdragandrmadbr* (“magical staff man”) or *galdragandrkona* (“magical staff woman”). Again, whether or not this was heahwisardry is highly debatable.

Heahwisardry is certain an archaic arcane art. This is most apparent through the ponderous casting process a mage must endure to invoke his power with any degree of control. It was this that almost led to its extinction, for elementalism proved far easier to wield and thus swiftly overtook it as the favored tradition among humans.

The Blizzard War was a pivotal moment in the history of heahwisardry. With just 35 masters and an equal number of apprentices remaining, the Blizzard War and the social breakdown that followed could have easily have spelled its end. As it was, the Norns had any fate in store for the surviving 12 apprentices. Instead of being consigned to history as a mere name, its practitioners have not only made it more popular than at any time in its history, they have also risen to become the ruling elite of an entire nation.

## NON-HUMAN HEAHWISARDS

In order to take Arcane Background (Heahwisard), a hero needs only the Noble Edge and to have been born in the Magocracy. There is no requirement for him to be human. Since members of different races, save for frostborn, cannot breed, one may ask how it is possible to have a non-human heahwisard.

Fostering is not uncommon in the Magocracy. Most often is involves heahwisard families swapping children either to foster alliances or prevent treachery. While uncommon, nothing prevents a human family fostering a child from a dwarf, elf, or engro noble family and raising it according to their customs.

Fostered children can never rise above the rank of Mage-Knight unless they pledge allegiance to their adopted house (which makes them an official house member with all the rights and responsibilities that entails). Furthermore, unless they marry and have children, any lands bestowed upon them are theirs to rule only until their death, at which point it reverts to their feudal superior. In essence, the non-human heahwisard is only a temporary steward.

Playing a non-human heahwisard can be a novel experience—the character is one of only a handful in existence. It also comes with a serious drawback—becoming a heahwisard requires two Edges, the most a non-human character can begin play with.

## ● SCHOOLS OF MAGIC ●

Save for those with the Black Sheep or Magic Forbidden Hindrances, all heahwisards have attended one of the Magocracy’s many schools at some point. The *Hellfrost Atlas* has more information on basic schooling and what it entails.

Those over the age of 14 and who have undergone the Staff Day ritual (see *Hellfrost Atlas*) are deemed to have



successfully graduated. Heahwisards with the Apprentice Hindrance, whatever their Heahwisardry die, either quit school of their own volition before graduation or were forced to abandon their studies. As a general rule, a Young heahwisard who chooses to go adventuring has forsaken his studies, though he may return to finish them at some later date.

Magocratic schools are divided into two categories—elite and common. The elite schools, of which there are just three in the entire realm, accept only the brightest students into their hallowed halls. Common schools exist in every settlement with a population higher than 1,000. They accept any heahwisard, caring nothing for titles or intellectual capabilities, but offer only rudimentary teaching. They also have less arduous examinations, making it very hard for a student to fail. These schools are typically named after the settlement in which they are found, though some take after their founder or the ruling house.

A heahwisard is under no compulsion to attend a school in his home province. Indeed, heahwisards strive to send their children to elite schools simply because they are more prestigious. In some instances, generations of the same family may have attended the same school, meaning the scion has the added weight of maintaining the tradition on his shoulders.

Attending a school outside one's home region brings certain benefits and drawbacks. The obvious benefit is that the heahwisard is introduced to peers outside his own house, thus extending his range of future allies (and enemies, of course). This is also a drawback, for while students of the same school are under no legal obligation to aid fellow alumni, assistance is expected. In a land where houses engage in political battles, a heahwisard may find himself being called upon by a member of a rival house. Of course, politics isn't just about backstabbing—favors play an important role. A canny heahwisard will always remember the favors he has done for his old school friends, and rest assured that one day he will ask for the scales to be balanced.

As part of his background, a heahwisard can now select his *alma mater* from the list below.

## NOTES

**Location:** The settlement and province in which the school is located.

**School Motto:** Every school has a motto. This typically relates to the courses it teaches and the mentality of its alumni.

**Sash:** All students sport a distinctive sash. Alumni typically wear this as part of their formal dress robes, for it says as much about their nature as does their house.

**Notes:** Background information relating to the school.

**Graduate Requirements:** Heahwisard characters cannot simply pick the school from which they graduated. In order to graduate, a character must meet certain requirements. A character who wants to come from a prestigious school will have to meet more requirements than one from a common school.

Schools are not entirely focused on the magical arts. A student is also expected to be conversant in the folklore, heraldry, history, and law of the Magocracy. Since these are governed by Common Knowledge for one's homeland there is no specific requirement.

Despite the list of requirements, being a graduate bestows no game benefits—it is simply part of the heahwisard's back story. It might also be a hook for a future adventure.

**Special:** Characters who meet the graduate requirements receive an additional benefit. Most often this is an Edge with a reduced Rank requirement. He must meet any other requirements as normal. This is only available during character generation—a character who wants to learn it later must take them at the normal Rank or attend the school during play. A heahwisard who takes the special bonus has graduated with honors.

Note that the opportunity to acquire Seasoned Edges during character generation in no way allows a character to take more than his standard allotment. In some cases it is impossible for a player character to be an honor graduate without using up his maximum allotment of three Edges. Non-human heahwisards, who do not start play with a free Edge, can never be honor students. NPCs, of course, can flaunt this as much as they like as they do not obey the rules for creating player characters.

**Schooling:** The courses available for heroes who wish to attend the school during play. A hero does not need to meet the graduation requirements to complete his schooling—he is taking individual courses as an adult student rather than the full curriculum followed by children. As such, he does not count as a graduate of that school, no matter how many courses he takes. Since he is not a graduate, he can never benefit from the special bonus enjoyed by true alumni, nor has he any right to don the school's sash after finishing his course.

In all cases, admittance to these courses is open only to characters with Arcane Background (Heahwisardry).

## ACADEMY OF HEAHWISARDRY

**Location:** Kingshall; **School Motto:** Power is everything; **Sash:** Multicolored with 12 gold stars.

**Notes:** The Academy, as it is more commonly known, is the most prestigious school. It accepts only the cream of the nobility, those being the scions of the Mage-Counts and higher. Money cannot buy admission, nor does natural aptitude with magic lessen the entry requirements. This naturally means the school has very few students at any one time. This brings with it two main benefits. First, the student receives more personal training. Second, it gives him boasting rights among his fellow heahwisards.

Those who attend its majestic halls are trained to be masters of magic and men. Within its opulent dining hall, busts of alumni who went on to become Mage-King stare down with sightless eyes and stern features at the latest intake of students. Since it is most often first born children who are sent here, those likely to inherit higher titles later in life, study of heraldry and law form an important part of the core curriculum, as does stewardship.



Heahwisards place great importance on noble titles and magical prowess in that order. While the Academy can do nothing about the former, it ensures students are equipped with the latter. As well as practical applications, such as mastering spells, it ensures they have a good grounding in the theory of the arcane arts.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d8+, Heahwisardry d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+, the character's parents must be Mage-Counts or higher or he must have the Old Family Edge.

Add Knowledge (Stewardship) d6+ to the above if the GM is using the **Resource Management** rules from *Hellfrost Expansion 1* in his campaign.

**Special:** A graduate can take Augment Staff as a Novice Edge during character generation.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Heahwisardry, Knowledge (Arcana); *Edges:* Augment Staff, Concentration, Focus, Leadership Edges (any), Spell Finesse; *Languages:* Classical Anari.

## DRAGOMILOV ACADEMY

**Location:** Dragomir, Principality of Dragomilov; **School Motto:** Through power, obedience; **Sash:** Black with a silver raven clutching a staff in its claws.

**Notes:** House Dragomilov has always resented its main school being referred to as the second best, but there is little it can do to supplant the Academy of Heahwisardry. Many attempts have been made over the centuries to replace it as the top school, but all have met with failure—its name and reputation are simply too enduring and being in Kingshall is a lure the rather drab town of Dragomir has no hope of competing with.

While it offers a similar range of subjects to the Academy of Heahwisardry, it places a great emphasis on teaching students to rule. More specifically, it instructs them in how to use fear as an effective tool of governance, both in dealing with unruly peasants and interactions with junior heahwisards.

The school has been linked to the darker side of politics (i.e., assassination and blackmail) on numerous occasions, despite these topics never appearing on any official curriculum, accusations it vehemently and very publicly denies. One scandalous rumor insinuated the school was funding research in how to animate the dead through heahwisardry. Mage-Inquisitors personally appointed by the Mage-King to investigate the claims have revealed nothing untoward in the academy's teaching methods or its fields of magical research.

Many of House Dragomilov's rivals treat the support with quiet skepticism—not only is Mage-King Adolphus VII a member of House Dragomilov, but he is also an honor graduate of the academy.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d6+, Spirit d8+, Heahwisardry d8+, Intimidation d6+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+.

Add Knowledge (Stewardship) d6+ to the above if the GM is using the **Resource Management** rules from *Hellfrost Expansion 1* in his campaign.

**Special:** A graduate who takes *fear* as one of his

## GOING TO SCHOOL

The desert continent of Al-Shirkuh boasts many universities, centers of higher learning offering a wide variety of basic and specialized courses. In Rassilon, such places are extremely rare, with most formal education being conducted at the cult of Hoenir and then only at a rudimentary level.

**Curriculum:** Every school teaches at least one skill. Some offer a wider range of skills, Edges, and/or languages. A pupil has up to four options when enrolling. A hero may only take one course at a time, regardless of his Smarts die.

**Basic Course:** Pick one of the school's skills. When taking it as a new skill, the hero learns it at d6, instead of d4 as normal.

**Advanced Course:** Pick one of the school's skills. The hero treats the skill's linked attribute as one die higher (max. d12+1) for his next advance.

**Specialist Course:** Pick one of the school's Edges. The hero may lower the Rank requirement by one step or one of the Trait requirements by one die type.

**Language Course:** Some schools require a student to speak a language before they can take a course. Naturally, they also teach that language. Learning the language is treated as a raising a skill lower than its linked attribute. This means a hero can learn the language *and* raise a skill lower than its linked attribute in the same advance.

In all four cases the character must devote his next advancement to his chosen subject or all benefits are lost. A hero who wants to benefit multiple times must enrol on successive courses.

**Cost:** Education is not free, and learning takes time. A basic course takes one month, an advanced course two months, and a specialist or language course three months. The character must devote 8 hours a day, six days a week to study at the university. The financial cost is 750 gs for a basic course, 1250 gs for an advanced course, and 2500 gs for a specialist course.

starting powers may take Spell Finesse with regard that power as a free Edge.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Heahwisardry, Knowledge (Arcana); *Edges:* Augment Staff, Concentration, Spell Finesse; *Languages:* Classical Anari.

## SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY

**Location:** Heath, Dukedom of Eastheath; **School Motto:** Peace through understanding; **Sash:** Silver, emblazoned with the mage's house emblem.

**Notes:** The Council Elect handles matters that concern the Magocracy as a whole, but in matters of trade, each province is responsible for its own treaties and contracts,



both internally and externally. In older times, most houses would appoint a merchant or cleric of Var to handle their affairs. As trade boomed, many realized they could cut out the middleman and provide a role for younger offspring.

With their lands bordering Angarion, Coglelund, and Vestmark, it was the Dukes of Eastheath who hit upon the idea of a school purely for heahwisards interested in diplomacy. At first considered a tradesman's school, it was duly ranked among the common schools. Over time its focus has shifted to cover all aspects of diplomacy and politics, elevating it to elite status.

In terms of political teaching, it dedicates more time to the subject than the famed Academy of Heahwisardry. However, it places much less emphasis on magical lore.



Indeed, many students leave barely able to cast spells and with next to no understanding of magical theory.

During their penultimate year, students are sent to Kingshall to serve as an unpaid junior assistant to a member of the Diplomatic Corps, the body of heahwisards and commoners tasked with negotiating deals that affect the entire Magocracy. The Corps has no authority to finalize deals—that honor lies solely with the Council Elect. Instead, it acts as a go-between, discovering what foreign powers want, passing on the Council's decision, and drawing up the final contract ready for the Mage-King to sign into law. They are also responsible for reporting breaches of contract.

In his final year, a student is assigned to a heahwisard visiting realms beyond the Magocracy. His companion is not a mentor, merely a traveling companion who has volunteered to protect the child. During his travels the young student is expected to learn something of foreign lands, master new languages, and forge friendships.

Depending on the needs of his house, a graduate might find himself posted to a different province as a junior diplomat, assigned to cast proxy votes in the Council Elect, or consigned to forging trade agreements with foreign nations and mercantile companies.

The latter, while quite dull, is at least an opportunity to accumulate personal wealth through bribes or acquiring favors in return for granting trade contracts. So long as the heahwisard is not overly greedy and his decisions do not harm his house, his feudal superiors are likely to overlook his making a little extra cash on the side.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d6+, Heahwisardry d4+, any one Knowledge skill from Area (pick one), Heraldry, or Law d6+, Persuasion d6+, Streetwise d6+, must speak Trader and at least one language from Auld Saxa, Engrosi, Hearth Elven, or Saxa.

Add Knowledge (Stewardship) d6+ to the above if the GM is using the **Resource Management** rules from *Hellfrost Expansion 1* in his campaign.

**Special:** A character who takes the Connection Edge during character generation receives a second Connection Edge for free. At least one of these must be to an organization or group in a foreign country.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Heahwisardry, Knowledge (Area); *Languages:* Any.

### COMMON SCHOOLS

**Location:** Any settlement with a population in excess of 1,000 souls.

**School Motto:** Players are encouraged to create their school's motto. Examples include "Mastery of others begins with mastery of oneself," "Excellence through magic," and "Knowledge from magic."

**Notes:** Despite their name, these schools may have no more than a single instructor and a handful of pupils. Others may be larger, but the quality of their teaching staff is not as high as the elite schools, nor is the knowledge of graduating students. Despite this, they are the schools most heahwisards attend.

In terms of character generation, common schools are



the most boring. However, they also allow the greatest leeway in the skills the character must begin play with. More importantly, for some characters at least, they allow him to become an honor graduate of one of the advanced schools, something not possible if the heahwisard is an honor graduate from one of the elite schools.

**Graduate Requirements:** Heahwisardry d6+.

**Special:** None.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Heahwisardry, Knowledge (Arcana).

## ADVANCED SCHOOLS

Heahwisards who wish to focus on matters beyond politics and governing a domain are required to do so after their basic education. Since the elite want their children to follow in their footsteps rather than waste their time on flights of fancy or personal pursuits, only a small number of advanced schools exist. For reasons long forgotten, most are known as colleges. They follow the rules and guidelines above, save in three minor ways.

First, they award graduates a badge rather than a sash.

Second, they have an additional enrolment requirement. Unlike the schools of magic, the colleges are open to anyone who can afford the fees or who receives financial support from his family, cult, or another organization. In certain instances, the GM must adjudicate as to whether or not a character meets the requirements.

Third, while there is no limit to the number of advanced schools a hero may attend during character graduation, so long as he meets the graduation requirements, study takes time. A full course takes a certain number years, which is added to the character's starting age.

### COLLEGE OF ADVANCED MAGICAL STUDY

**Location:** Kingshall; **School Motto:** Knowledge gives strength to the arm; **Badge:** Maera's holy symbol.

**Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Heahwisardry), cleric of Maera.

**Course Length:** 5 years.

**Notes:** Most heahwisards are encouraged to crave political power and govern parcels of land for the betterment of their house. Some, though, wish to master a deeper understanding of the greater mysteries either in lieu of or before turning their attention to more worldly matters. Located in the Grand Temple (see *Hellfrost Atlas*), the college caters for just such souls.

The syllabus covers nothing concerning practical application of magic, instead focusing purely on the theoretical at an advanced level. Pupils learn about the nature of the elemental realms and the Abyss, research the alchemical properties of plants and minerals, study arcane runes and other forms of magic, try to understand the nature and workings of the Siphoning, and learn about the entire pantheon of gods.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d8+, Investigation

d6+, Knowledge (Alchemy) d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+, Knowledge (Religion) d8+

**Special:** A graduate with d10+ in Knowledge (Alchemy), Knowledge (Arcana), and Knowledge (Religion) who takes the Scholar Edge during character generation applies the +2 bonus to all three skills.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Knowledge (Alchemy), Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (Religion); *Edges:* Scholar (only with regard the above skills); *Languages:* Classical Anari.

### DUELISTS' COLLEGE

**Location:** Kingshall; **School Motto:** Honor, Magic, Victory; **Badge:** A gold staff.

**Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Heahwisardry).

**Course Length:** 2 years.

**Notes:** A year after Mage-King Adolphus V sanctioned and codified mage dueling, he promptly announced the foundation of an academy devoted to the art. Students are typically scions down the pecking order, those with little or no hope of securing lofty titles.

The school trains students in the basic principles of mage dueling—how to defend and attack—as well as mental and physical strength. The nuances of dueling are something a heahwisard must master for himself.

Since there are rules allowing mages to appoint champions in their place, this is the role for which most students train. Students take to the Arena (see *Hellfrost Atlas*) on Monandaegs as part of their training. Here they hope to win public acclaim, which promotes their house, and more importantly, catch the eye of potential patrons. Those who cannot find employment as duelists are well prepared for life as adventurers.

For obvious reasons, instances of the Siphoning are higher among students than those of other schools. While students do not study the subject to any great degree, the school provides sizeable donations to the College of Advanced Magical Study to investigate the phenomenon.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d6+, Spirit d6+, Vigor d8+, Heahwisardry d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+, one power from *armor* or *deflection*, one power from *burst*, *bolt*, or *stun*.

**Special:** A character can take Augment Staff as a Novice Edge during character generation. However, he may only pick the Spell Store ability and then only with regard one power from *armor*, *bolt*, *burst*, *deflection*, or *stun*. Naturally, he must know the power to be stored.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Heahwisardry; *Edges:* Concentration, Focus, Level Headed.

### MAGOCRATIC INSTITUTE OF ALCHEMICAL PRACTICES

**Location:** Tharkness, Principality of Tharkness; **School Motto:** Perfection through diligence; **Badge:** A chalice crossed by two staves.

**Course Length:** 6 years.

**Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Heahwisardry), cleric of Maera.

**Notes:** The Institute, to use its shortened name, did not always focus on alchemy. Founded some 35 years after the Dragomilov Academy, it quickly discovered it could not compete against the already established school in attracting the best and brightest young heahwisards. Keen to increase its wealth, House Tharkness instead opted to reduce its status to a college (while retaining its original name) and focus on one specific aspect of heahwisardry ignored by the other schools.

Students of the elite schools thumb their noses at the Institute. High-ranking heahwisards rarely lower themselves to creating their own alchemical devices, preferring to hire staff to create them on their behalf or purchase them from the Magic Market (see *Hellfrost Atlas*). Without the Institute, of course, there would be far fewer trained heahwisard alchemists for them to hire or buy from. Snobbery aside, the Institute is popular with heahwisards of low title looking for a means of earning a decent income.

The Institute has been granted a concession with regard the Magic Market. Usually, stall licenses are sold to individuals. The Institute, however, has a general license, meaning that any student is permitted to sell alchemical devices there. Only students on the honor course, adults attending to learn the art of alchemy, and alumni are granted this privilege. The pupil is entitled to retain 25% of the profits from the sale of his devices—the school, and therefore House Tharkness, takes the rest.

This extra income makes no difference to heahwisards during character generation—the character's family deducts an equal amount from his starting funds as a means of recouping some of the exorbitant cost of his education. A player who wants to simulate a more generous family can do so through using Hindrance points to acquire more money. After play begins, the graduate is legally required to donate 10% of any earnings made from selling alchemical devices at the Institute's Magic Market stand to the school to help support its upkeep.

Alumni have access to the school's alchemical laboratories. Well stocked with the best apparatus and ingredients money can buy, using one of the laboratories grants +1 to Knowledge (Alchemy) rolls when constructing alchemical devices. Alchemists are required to pay 10 gp per hour, plus the cost of any ingredients.

**Graduate Requirements:** Knowledge (Alchemy) d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+.

**Special:** A graduate can take Alchemy as a Novice Edge during character generation.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Knowledge (Alchemy), Knowledge (Arcana); *Edges:* Alchemy; *Languages:* Classical Anari.

## STAFF COLLEGE

**Location:** Aranor, County of Wyse; **School Motto:** Never defenseless; **Badge:** Crossed staves.

**Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Heahwisardry).

**Course Length:** 1 year.

**Notes:** Magic is a heahwisard's most powerful weapon, but the vagaries of the Siphoning mean there may be times when he has no access to his powers for several days. In order that a heahwisard is not totally defenseless during such dark times, the Counts of Wyse founded a college devoted to the principles of staff fighting.

The college is not truly a martial one—students learn only the basic maneuvers. They also undergo physical training regimes to prepare them for the rigors of hand-to-hand fighting, something at which few heahwisards have any expertise.

Heahwisards can, of course, wield any weapon. The college focuses on fighting with a staff purely because no heahwisard would be caught without his to hand.

**Graduate Requirements:** Agility d6+, Strength d6+, Vigor d6+, Fighting d6+

**Special:** A graduate may take Augment Staff as a Novice Edge during character generation, but only the Damage or Deflect ability.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Fighting d6+; *Edges:* Augment Staff (Damage and Deflect only).

## WAR COLLEGE

**Location:** Llan, County of Llan; **School Motto:** Strength in defense; **Badge:** Crossed staves over a round shield. Graduates receive a silver badge and honor graduates a gold one.

**Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Heahwisardry), cleric of Tiw, or rank of sergeant or higher in a house's army.

**Course Length:** 3 years.

**Notes:** Despite the accusations flowing from Angarion, the Magocracy has never been an aggressor. That doesn't mean the nation does not have any enemies—orcs plague the mountainous regions, the elves of Angarion are growing ever more belligerent, trolls harass Eastheath, and there are other dangers lurking in remote areas.

Having learned the hard way that being a politician and being able to govern an estate do not make one a leader in battle, the Magocracy founded a military academy. At first the college catered to heahwisards who craved military command. As this fell out of favor, so it opened its doors to professional soldiers destined for command positions. Their fees were invariably paid by their house in return for permanent allegiance.

Despite there being no great battles left to wage within the Magocracy, and with Knights Hrafn now filling many command posts, junior heahwisards have once again begun to fill the college's halls and training fields. Many see attendance as an ideal step before entering into a life of adventure far from the Magocracy.

**Graduate Requirements:** Smarts d6+, Spirit d6+, Fighting d6+, Knowledge (Battle) d8+

**Special:** A graduate may take Born in Battle (see *Hellfrost Expansion*) as a Novice Edge during character generation.

**Schooling:** *Skills:* Knowledge (Battle); *Edges:* Leadership (any).



# HRIMWISARDRY



The aftermath of the Blizzard War was a time of great strife and confusion. No records remain telling of whether hrimwisardry came about at the start of the Blizzard War or manifested with the rise of the Icewall and the creation of the Hellfrost.

This is not to say that earlier generations of mages knew nothing of magical threads relating to cold and ice. Cold-fire may be a recent phenomenon, but there has always been an arctic region and Thrym has always been the god of winter. What makes hrimwisardry unique is that mages who merely work with conventional cold magic are not cold to the touch, have no special resistance to frigid temperatures, and do not grow stronger in power as the ambient temperature drops.

The specific origins of hrimwisardry remain a mystery to this day. One line of thought claims the specific threads of energy practitioners manipulate have their origin in the Hellfrost core or Thrym's celestial realm. More potent than regular cold and ice, they alter all who embrace them. Another states that hrimwisards are possessed, permanently or temporarily, by invisible, ethereal spirits sent to the mortal world by Thrym. This would explain their frigid skin and natural protection acquired as they awaken their power (see below).

A related theory, equally lacking any supporting evidence, is that hrimwisards are actually fiends in mortal guise. Proponents of this outlandish creed claim the fiends first kill and subsequently adopt the form of a normal mortal, hence why no one has noticed their presence. Those who hate frostborn often spout this theory as defense for their racism.

Whatever the source of their power, hrimwisards are treated with suspicion by even open-minded folk and open hostility with by close-minded souls. Like frostborn, many of whom adopt this art, hrimwisardry is a reminder of the worsening winters.

Since the art was totally unknown before the Blizzard War, there is no Auld Saxa or Classical Anari word for hrimwisardry. The name is a Trader word, being a mix of modern Saxa (hrim; "ice") and Anari (wisardry; "magic").

## THE AWAKENING

Becoming a hrimwisard is not as simple as picking up a book or fanning a latent flame through experimentation. To become a hrimwisard requires not only embracing cold, but infusing oneself with its icy touch.

The adoption of hrimwisard is always a conscious choice. Frostborn are born with a weakened version, but even they must make the decision to open their heart, mind, and soul to its raw power. One can never fail to notice when one has adopted hrimwisardry.

It begins with feeling cold, colder than one can ever imagine. From a tiny seed it extends outward, wracking the body with a sensation of pins and needles so intense it inevitably results in uncontrollable screams of agony and causing shivers so powerful the apprentice believes his bones may break. At the instant it reaches its climax, when many would gladly welcome death, it suddenly transforms into a sensation of blissful joy. At this point the person is a hrimwisard, fully in tune with the cold now suffusing his being.

Although the young mage remains susceptible to damage from offensive spells invoking cold, ice, and coldfire, ambient cold will no longer trouble him, not even the flesh-blackening cold of the Hellfrost. A side effect of this protection is that his skin is noticeably cold to the touch, something that cannot be easily disguised. Many hrimwisards revel in their new ability, discarding clothes in the depths of winter as readily as others do during the hottest days of summer.

Heat, on the other hand, is no longer the hrimwisard's friend. He doesn't suffer heat lethargy in warm temperatures, as do frostborn, frost dwarves, and taiga elves, in warm ambient temperatures, but warmth does make it harder for him to such the cold from the land that he needs to empower his spells. Fortunately for him the use of heat and fire magic is diminishing, for powers with such trappings cause him enhanced damage.

## RELIGION

It is all too easy to tar all hrimwisards with the same brush. When it comes to religion, the average citizen invariably believes all hrimwisards worship Thrym. Worship of Thrym, as opposed to appeasement, means supporting his goal of bringing about the Fimbulvindr. Some hrimwisards do believe that the future is destined to be blue-white and bitterly cold, and the sooner it arrives the better. After all, they are equipped to cope in such circumstances. Many, though, are merely making the best of a worsening situation by studying an advantageous arcane art.

It is fair to say that very few turn to Kenaz as their patron deity—what sense is there is fighting against the source of one's power? This doesn't mean hrimwisards do not patronize the benevolent deities. A mage does not preclude one being a healer and honoring Eira, a warriors favoring Tiw, or even a champion of good calling upon Sigel or Scaetha.

## NEW POWER EDGES

**Note:** Frostborn have an innate version of Arcane Background (Hrimwisardry). A frostborn can take the Edges listed below without the Arcane Background, but the Rank requirement is increased by one step. For instance, taking Embodiment of the Glacier requires him to be Heroic. He must meet all other requirements as normal.

### EMBODIMENT OF THE AVALANCHE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Hrimwisardry), Strength d8+, Hrimwisardry d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The hrimwisard has learned to draw in the cold from the surrounding air in order to transform his body. When the temperature is freezing or lower, the hero becomes a near-irresistible force of nature, swatting aside all in his path and resisting all attempts to block his progress.

He gains a two dice increase in Strength (+1 for each step above d12), but only for the purpose of making and resisting Push maneuvers.

### IMPROVED EMBODIMENT OF THE AVALANCHE

**Requirements:** Heroic, Embodiment of the Avalanche

The hrimwisard is treated as being two Sizes higher for the purposes of causing knockback and resisting it. This functions as per the *Hellfrost Bestiary*. Knocking someone back is not always advantageous (such as if the foe has First Strike). The hero can voluntarily pull his blows to avoid causing knockback.

### EMBODIMENT OF THE BLIZZARD

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Arcane Background (Hrimwisardry), Agility d8+, Hrimwisardry d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The mage becomes the living embodiment of a raging blizzard.

When used, the hrimwisard spins and dances about, attacking every opponent in his path like a deadly cyclone. On the tabletop, the character makes a running roll and must move that many inches. He may not double back. Every target adjacent to the mage's path, starting with his initial position, is attacked at -2. One small downside to this Edge is that every adjacent target must be attacked—whether friend or foe. Individual targets may only be attacked once while using this Edge. It cannot be combined with Sweep.

### IMPROVED EMBODIMENT OF THE BLIZZARD

**Requirements:** Heroic, Embodiment of the Blizzard

As above, except the hrimwisard's attacks do not suffer the -2 penalty.

### EMBODIMENT OF THE GLACIER

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Hrimwisardry), Vigor d8+, Hrimwisardry d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

When the temperature is freezing or lower, the hrimwisard's flesh immediately hardens.

The character has +2 Armor, a result of his skin and flesh hardening. This is natural armor and thus does not stack with worn armor.

### IMPROVED EMBODIMENT OF THE GLACIER

**Requirements:** Heroic, Embodiment of the Glacier

As above, except the hrimwisard's natural armor is now +4.

### EMBODIMENT OF THE ICICLE

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Hrimwisardry), Fighting d6+, Hrimwisardry d6+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+

The hrimwisard has learned how to focus the cold of the surrounding air into his hands. When the temperature is freezing or lower, the character can use an action to grow tough, sharp icicles from his knuckles.

The hrimwisard inflicts Str+d4 damage with his bare hands and never counts as an unarmed defender. The icicles are part of his body and so cannot be disarmed.

### IMPROVED EMBODIMENT OF THE ICICLE

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Embodiment of the Icicle

As above, except the character's fists now inflict Str+d6 damage.



# RUNE MAGIC



Which magical art is the oldest among the races is subject to much debate. Many sorcerers claim elementalism came first, for the four elements are the building blocks of the entire universe. The elves claim it is druidism, for the fey realm existed before that of mortals. Others say it was song magic, believing that the universe was forged through words of power rather than molded like clay. Even today, words have power.

The honor actually goes to rune magic, an art practiced by the first humanoid to inhabit the mortal realm—the giants. Supporting evidence is scant, alluded to only in the oldest surviving songs and poems (that some giants continue to wield the runes is not common knowledge).

Dragons, who predate giants, do little more than raise a knowing eyebrow at such lofty claims. Since no other race understands their peculiar form of magic and dragons are not predisposed to small talk, the majority of mages care little for their thoughts on the topic.

Today, rune magic is strongly associated with frost dwarves. Until the Blizzard War, however, this was not widely known—their ancestors were even more insular, revealing nothing of their ancient traditions and magical lore to outsiders.

What of the other races? Few giants recall the power of the runes. Scholars widely believe the giants are pale shadows of their distant ancestors, diminished in physical stature, intellect, and magical power. Rune magic is not an easy art to master. As the giants became weaker, so they adopted forms of magic easier to master. Fragments of poems speak of Saxa having once known the runes, though whether this is factual or poetic license is impossible to determine.

The modern frost dwarf term for a rune mage is *vitki* (pl. *vitkir*). It translates into Trader simply as “wise one,” but has its roots in the Giant word meaning “one who knows secrets.” Despite its general meaning, *vitki* is never used to describe scholars—it relates solely to rune mages, with other words being used to describe general wisdom or higher learning.

## ● MASTERING RUNES ●

There are no colleges or schools devoted to rune magic, nor do experienced *vitkir* teach runes to pupils. Likewise, while every rune has a physical shape, simply knowing it does not convey magical knowledge—carving their shape, as rudimentary as it is, is merely the focus around which the strands of magic are woven.

The runes exist only in the depths of the universe as nodes of magical energy, as they have always done. In order to learn them, a rune mage must open his mind and gaze deep into the endless void.

In the beginning, when the first curious mages sought out the secret of the runes, they discovered that being in a state close to death, where the mind was beginning to break the ties that bound it firmly to the body, provided them the best opportunity. Methods such as hanging, burial, poisoning, and stabbing were commonly employed. Many perished in the quest for arcane knowledge, their bodies succumbing to their physical injuries or their minds lost in the unfathomable expanse and unable to find their way home. Those who survived awakened with knowledge of the first runes forever burned into their minds.

Thankfully, modern students undergo only ritual death, for they are searching for runes others have already found. This is most often achieved through drugs that numb the body and stimulate the mind.

Masters tell aspiring students where to search for specific runes, but they can do no more—a pupil must still reach out with his mind and grasp the rune for himself, picking out its distinctive shape from the miasma of magical threads that lurks beyond the sight of mortal eyes. When a mage has no access to a master, he must venture into the void without guidance. Again, this is not as difficult as it was for the first rune mages—those who have gone before leave signs that others can follow. With or without guidance, this is not as easy as it might sound.



It thus explains why rune mages can learn only one rune per character Rank (or every 20 XPs above Legendary).

In game terms, a rune mage who wishes to learn a new rune need do nothing more than take the New Power Edge. It is assumed that he has been mentally searching for the rune during his sleep or between adventures. Only when he takes the Edge, though, has his quest been successful.

## TRAPPINGS

Aside from the Coldfire-Rune, which was discovered glowing blue-white in the void either just before or just after the Blizzard War (accounts vary), the known runes have no defined trappings. Instead, each rune mage assigns trappings when he masters a rune. Whether this means there are in fact dozens of runes similar in shape but with subtly different powers or if some part of the subconscious mind fixes trappings to the runes is something no *vitkir* has been able to deduce with any certainty.

## THE LOST RUNES

Modern frost dwarves acknowledge 21 unique runes. While it pains them to speak of such things, they know that through the destruction of their ancestral halls or their entrapment behind the Icewall, they have lost much knowledge concerning the runes of power.

Proud of their ancient traditions, and mindful of what they have lost, many dwarves find mentioning the runes by their specific names painful. Instead, these lost runes are known among *vitkir* simply as The Nine. Skalds often apply more poetic names, such as the Nine Shadows, Niht's Runes (so-called because they are hidden), and the Cloaked Runes.

### THE NINE

Detailed below are the missing runes. They function exactly as the runes presented in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* with the noted exception that they cannot be chosen just by taking the New Power Edge.

Discovered after Hela's madness, the Death-rune is anathema in dwarf society. Those who have learned the forbidden rune are shunned and treated as having the Outsider Hindrance among other dwarves. Dwarven *vitkir*, skalds, and theologians are largely in agreement that the rune did not, indeed could not, exist before Hela unlocked the gates of the Abyss and created the first undead. This has led many to believe that the runes are in some way associated with the gods, though there are disagreements over the specifics. The Armor-Rune, for instance, has no defined trappings.

**Bind-Rune (S):** *Banish, entangle, hamper movement (see Hellfrost Expansion 2)*

**Death-Rune (V):** *Enhance undead, strength of the undead, zombie*

**Distance-Rune (N):** *Farsight, telekinesis, teleport*

**Fear-Rune (N):** *Boost/lower trait (Spirit and Intimidation only), fear, nightmare*

**Home-Rune (S):** *Feast, refuge, sanctuary*

**Movement-Rune (N):** *Leaping, wall walker, water walk*

**Trap-Rune (N):** *Boost/lower trait (Lockpicking and Notice only), lock/unlock, glyph*

**Vigilance-Rune (N):** *Bodyguard, sentry, wandering senses*

**Wind-Rune (S):** *Fly, knockdown, zephyr*

## FINDING A LOST RUNE

The dwarves may have lost the secret of some runes, but that does not mean they have forgotten their names or cease to quest for them. Indeed, striving to recover a lost rune is considered a most noble and worthy quest.

Details of the lost runes have been included specifically so GMs can add them to their campaigns. That said, the recovery of ancient knowledge should never be a simple matter—if it were that easy, these runes would have been found centuries ago.

One method of finding them is to enter a trance and plumb the depths of the universe, allowing one's unconscious mind to search the dark and secret recesses of creation. Such an endeavor is not for the faint-hearted, nor is it conducive to adventuring—the universe is vast and filled with terrors that even the gods fear. Some *vitkir* have devoted much of their life to this method and they have little to show for it save for emaciated bodies, feeble minds, and haunted eyes.

For heroes, a more likely path is to explore ruined dwarven halls, especially Karad Khan or those beyond the Icewall, for fragments of writing that hint at where in the universe to search. The crumbling ruins of giant holds may also hold the secret, for giants still use the runes. The quest should be long and arduous to make it meaningful. Likely the hero will be far above the required Rank to learn the rune were it part of the standard repertoire. He is, however, the only living *vitki* to know that rune. Through his actions, he has also forever altered the face of Rassilon.

Finding and learning of a lost rune should not be treated casually—simply allowing a rune mage to take the New Power Edge and leaving it at that robs the character of a major discovery. Any rune mage who discovers a lost rune should be rewarded with 40 Glory—his name will be known far and wide, especially among dwarves; fellow *vitkir* will flock to him to learn the secret; skalds will wish to write of his heroic exploit; and nobles will wish to heap him with material rewards, especially if he agrees to teach the rune to their rune mages first.

Equally, having a hero find more than one lost rune cheapens the rune's status. Remember, these runes have remained lost for at least five centuries despite dozens, possibly hundreds, of quests to unearth them. We suggest that no character ever find more than two lost runes during his long life.



# SONG MAGIC



Elementalism is arguably the most common arcane art, but song magic is the most popular among common citizens. Workers of magic they might be, but song mages are also entertainers and historians. Whether a master poet patronized by the nobility or a singer of bawdy drinking songs, song mages receive a warm welcome in communities across the land.

In addition to the material in this chapter, song mages will benefit from the **Stories & Storytellers** section of *Legendary Endeavors*.

## ● EDUCATION ●

Many of the songs and poems used to weave song magic are known to common skalds, as well as ordinary citizens. The words themselves have no magical meaning—that secret is something the song mage must learn.

A small few are born with the gift. Without training, their powers manifest as unexplained events and strange coincidences. Naturally, these occur at times when they were singing or reciting childhood rhymes, though this often goes unnoticed by concerned parents and superstitious neighbors. Some of these individuals eventually become recognized for what they are, the child then being apprenticed to an itinerant song mage or sent to a distant place of learning to refine their art. Others never master their full potential, proceeding through life with a talent they cannot fully explain.

Most song mages have no such inherent gift. Like the greater majority of other mages, they learn at the feet of a master. In this case, it is an experienced song mage who instructs them in how to weave the threads of magic into their words and who sets them on the road to acquiring new spells through experimentation.

There is more to song mages than casting spells, though. In order to truly earn the title one must spend years learning reams of lore and mastering riddles. Song mages are rarely blessed with eidetic memories and few

could ever hope to master every word of one epic, yet alone a repertoire of stories and songs, lists of notable names and dates, and similar information. While they require a good memory, much of what they recite is learned through mnemonics, simple tricks, and memorizing just the most important facts. This is equally true of conventional storytellers. Thus, while the minutiae change from telling to telling, often deliberately to suit audiences, the core facts remain the same.

## INSTRUMENTS

Song mages may harness the power of magic through their voices, but they are also expected to be able to play musical instruments.

Music is not played for its own sake. Instead, it is used to help keep the rhythm of the story. Altering the speed not only alters the tempo of the tale, but it can be used to dramatic effect. When describing a battle, for instance, the beat is faster, matching the heroic struggle. When describing a journey, the beat is steady and regular, giving the impression of movement. Casting spells also requires the correct rhythm if the magic is to be woven correctly.

Since they must speak to cast spells, song mages favor strong instruments and drums. This does not preclude them from playing other instruments for mundane purposes—some merely play a tune, allowing the audience to do the singing or speaking.

## ● RELIGION ●

Song mages live in three worlds, being practitioners of magic, recorders of lore, and tellers of tales. Depending on which aspect they consider most important, they tend to follow Maera, Hoenir, or The Unknowable One respectively.

This is not to say these are the only gods they follow—as with all other beings, one's chosen path in life

plays an important role. Thus, a song mage who enjoys the thrill of battle may honor Tiw, while one devoted to fighting evil may favor Scaetha or Sigel.

## TRADITIONS

The Anari have the least number of song mages today, yet ironically it was they who codified the art. Across the empire they founded many centers of song magic learning known as colleges. None of these survived the collapse of the empire and the century of chaos that followed the Blizzard War, though memory of them was not entirely erased. The Three-Notes Academy in Scathmoor, founded over 200 years after society recovered and today the spiritual home of all song mages and skalds, was directly modeled on the colleges of old.

While the multitude of colleges are long gone, their methods of teaching survived, passed down from master to apprentice by generations of magicians. Depending on its size and the masters available, each college taught one or more traditions. These traditions focused on a particular aspect of song magic, as well as mundane stories and songs. In modern times, many song mages are generalists, but enough hold to the old traditions to keep them alive.

Traditions are not formal organizations like the Convocation of Elementalists. Members might treat each other as brothers and come to each other's aid out of a feeling of camaraderie, but they are under no obligation, nor can they be commanded to do so. Similarly, there are no formal ranks within a tradition—one is either a member or one is not.

A character wishes to belong to a tradition can belong to only one—the years of dedicated training required preclude membership of others. The traditions are not Edges. Instead, when a character learns Arcane Background (Song Magic) he may pick one tradition from the list below. At the GM's discretion, any storyteller or skald can also select a tradition. Naturally, he ignores any rules relating to magic.

A hero who takes up song magic after play begins does not suddenly awaken one day to find himself a popular storyteller and magician. As with any Arcane Background, his learning the art can be explained away as something he has been constantly practicing during downtime. Similarly, even without a master to teach him, knowledge of a tradition comes about as a result of his focusing on one aspect of the craft during his studies.

### NOTES

**Other Names:** Names, like the seasons, are prone to change with time. Over the centuries, the traditions have gone by other names.

**Requirements:** Each tradition focuses on one aspect and a student who graduates will have a minimum level of training. Characters who wish to take a tradition must meet the listed requirements.

**Signature Power:** Generalist song mages have free choice in their starting powers. A member of a tradition, however, must take the listed spell as one of his three starting powers. Note that in some cases the spell is of higher Rank than Novice.

**Benefit:** Every tradition grants a specific bonus.

**Restriction:** Years of focus on one aspect of the art comes with drawbacks. Some traditions require a song mage to take a Hindrance (this counts toward his starting limit), while most give a flat penalty of some sort.

Any modifiers to Charisma are cumulative with the +1 bonus possessed by all song mages. For instance, a song mage of the courtly tradition has +2 Charisma when dealing with nobles but +0 Charisma when dealing with members of other social strata.

**Favored Songs:** This entry lists the typical songs, poems, and stories the song mage masters. It is not a strict requirement, but will help when selecting specific stories using the rules in *Legendary Endeavors*. As a master of these types of tales, the character has +1 to Knowledge (Folklore) rolls when recounting them.

**Example Songs:** Named stories and songs from *Legendary Endeavors* that would count as part of a specific tradition. Tales often have multiple aspects, and thus may appear in more than one tradition.

**Notes:** Any other pertinent information.

## BATTLE

**Other Names:** Heroism, Valor, War.

**Requirements:** Fighting d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Warrior's gift*.

**Benefit:** +1 to Common Knowledge and Knowledge rolls relating to the history of warfare and famous commanders; +1 Charisma bonus when interacting with warriors.

**Restriction:** Song mages find it hard to relate to people who have not faced death in combat. They have a -1 Charisma penalty when dealing with non-warriors.

**Favored Songs:** Many tales contain combat. Those of this tradition have warfare or epic combats as the primary focus.

**Example Songs:** *The Battle of Black Water, The Battle of Bones, Bron, Hammer of the Orcs, The Last Stand, The Lay of the Hrimtbursar.*

**Notes:** The notion of warrior-skalds is nothing new. Throughout history song mages and their mundane counterparts have accompanied armies into battle to inspire soldiers to greatness and demoralize the enemy through their songs, record the outcome firsthand, or serve as messengers, conveying orders through musical instruments or magic. The most famous member of this tradition was Draymar Thoriksunu, though students of the dirge tradition argue he was one of their number.

In order that they can accurately recount the dangers and glories of battle and make the images conjured in their audiences' minds-eyes as realistic as possible, song mages of this tradition learn how to fight.

Members of this tradition are the most likely to attach



themselves to aspiring heroes, hoping to capture their worthy deeds and immortalize them.

## COURTLY

**Other Names:** Lordship, Nobility.

**Requirements:** Knowledge (Heraldry) d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Speak language*.

**Benefit:** Cultured and well versed in etiquette, they have a +1 Charisma bonus when dealing with nobles. Their knowledge of noble families gives them +1 to Knowledge (Heraldry) rolls.

**Restriction:** Members of this tradition are used to the refinement of noble courts and the best life has to offer. They tend to be rather haughty toward those of lower station. They have -1 Charisma penalty when interacting with non-nobles.

**Favored Songs:** Stories and songs focus on the activities of noblemen, portraying them as mighty heroes in battle, bringers of prosperity in times of peace, and as champions of the people.

**Example Songs:** *The Aetbling's Tale, Hammer of the Orcs, The Whispering Huscarls.*

**Notes:** The courtly tradition, as the name implies, focuses on the needs and wants of nobles. Students are expected to know the names and insignia of every major noble house, as well as many minor ones. They are also versed in how to behave correctly in front of nobles and what manner of speech to use.

## DIRGE

**Other Names:** Death, Grief, Lamentation, Mourning.

**Requirements:** Intimidation d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Fear*.

**Benefit:** +1 to Common Knowledge and Knowledge rolls relating to the reign of the Liche-Priest and all types of undead.

**Restriction:** Practitioners tend to be a dour and broody lot, always seeing the tankard as half empty and getting emptier by the minute. They have a -1 Charisma penalty among everyone save the equally morbid clergy of Scaetha and the Deathbringer mercenary company.

**Favored Songs:** Not surprisingly, song mages favor tales of woe, songs of mourning, and stories with no happy ending. The dark decades that marked the era of the Liche-Priest are a favorite topic.

**Example Songs:** *Bjornwulf, The Last Stand, The Lay of Gedwynne, The Lay of Sigel, The Sack of Asper, The Sorrow of the Frost Dwarf and the Seven Wights.*

**Notes:** Life is not a bed of sweet-smelling roses, there is rarely a happy ending, and the shadow of death hangs over all beings, even the gods—everyone loves hearing about a victorious hero, but even their stories must end at some point. Through mastery of their mournful stories they know what scares mortals and are adept at instilling fear with a few well-chosen words.

Least welcome of all song mages, dirge singers nevertheless serve an important role in society. Not only do

they keep alive knowledge of events others would rather forget, but it is they who compose mourning songs for heroes and nobles.

## GOOD CHEER

**Other Names:** Comedy, Humor.

**Requirements:** Healing d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Succor*.

**Benefit:** Jovial and good-natured, song mages are inherently optimistic, seeing hope where others see only despair. They have +1 to resist Fear and Intimidation.

**Restriction:** Song mages are experts at making people laugh and smile, but poor at offending them. They have -1 to Intimidation and Taunt rolls.

**Favored Songs:** Members favor rousing songs that make the listener feel good, popular ditties with comedic overtones, and songs where good triumphs over evil.

**Example Songs:** *The Battle of Black Water, The Fruitless Search, Hyacinth's Bucket, The Lay of the Hrimtbursar.* They would also know a Rassilon version of *The Flatulent Thief*.

**Notes:** Hardship is part of life, but that doesn't mean one should dwell on problems. Members of this tradition are masters of raising morale in times of adversity, bringing a smile to the faces of the despondent, and casting everything in a positive light. Their metaphorical tankards are not just half full—they are brimming over!

## LORE

**Other Names:** Knowledge, Revelation, Wisdom.

**Requirements:** Any two Knowledge skills d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Detect/Conceal*.

**Benefit:** Students focus on scholarship over showmanship. They have a further +1 bonus to all Common Knowledge rolls, as well as Knowledge rolls relating to history, folklore, and such like.

**Restriction:** Followers of this tradition focus less on interaction with people. They lose the Charisma bonus common to other song mages.

**Favored Songs:** The great majority of any storyteller's tales relate to historical events. Those favored by the practitioners of this tradition focus on quests to uncover lost lore, events from the truly distant past, and less common knowledge.

**Example Songs:** *The First Age of Spring.* Stories such as *How Bear Lost his Tail* (see p. 28) would also count number among their repertoire.

**Notes:** All song mages are historians in part, but those of this tradition have made it their primary focus. Their stories can be dramatic, comedic, or sorrowful, even epic in scope, but they are recited more in the manner of a tutor instructing students than an entertainer looking to please an audience.

As well as recounting tales other storytellers often ignore, they are the most likely to devote themselves to hunting down forgotten stories or obscure legends in order to bring them to new audiences.



## HOW BEAR LOST HIS TAIL

Long before even the elves walked the land, Eostre created a creature she called Bear. Feeling pleased, she showed the beast to the other gods and asked them to provide gifts. Tiw looked upon the timid creature and bestowed strength and courage. Dargar, his unruly son, gave bear a ferocious temper, claiming that strength alone was no gift. Eira, ever wary of Tiw and Dargar's warlike ways, countered these by making bear protective but not aggressive. Kenaz gifted bear a fur cloak to keep him warm in winter, for until then Bear was naked. Enraged that Bear would not be frozen should he enter his realm, Thrym cursed Bear, forcing him to fall asleep each winter. Ertha came to Bear's rescue and offered him sanctuary beneath the earth so he would be safe while he slept. Eostre Plantmother said Bear would be a vegetarian, but Neorthe gave Bear permission to eat fish.

Pleased with the gifts, and not too annoyed by the curses, Eostre let Bear loose into the world. Bear was an expert fisherman, for his tail was long and luxuriant in these days. He dangled it in the river, and when a fish nibbled at it he flicked his dinner out of the water. Bear regularly boasted he was the best fisherman in the entire world.

The Unknowable One, who had declined to give Bear a gift, was out walking one day when he heard Bear boasting of his fishing prowess to his friend Beaver. The trickster approached Bear, loudly mumbling to himself.

"What's wrong?" asked Bear.

"It is Pike," the god replied, throwing down his fishing rod.

"He has outsmarted me again."

"What is Pike?" asked Bear, for he had never heard of the creature before.

"Oh, he's a sly devil," the Unknowable One said, his face glum. "He's a big fish that lives in the river beyond the hills. No one has ever caught him. I think the Norns have decreed him to be uncatchable."

Bear roared with laughter. "Don't you know who I am?" he grinned. "I am Bear, the best fisherman in all the world. Take me to this river and I will catch this devil fish for you."

So the Unknowable One led Bear over the hills to a wide river. Bear sat on the riverbank and dangled his tail into the water. Suddenly he let out a loud yelp, for Pike had noticed the lure and bitten Bear's tail clean off, leaving just a stump. The Unknowable One fell into fits of laughter, tears of mirth rolling down his face.

"You tricked me!" Bear roared, rising to his full height. The god wiped his eyes and smiled. "Aye, and now you have no tail with which to catch fish."

"But I like fish" bear said glumly, his rage replaced by the sudden thought he may never eat his favorite food again.

"What am I to do now?"

"If you want to eat fish, learn a new trick," the god said. "And mind your pride, next time." With that, the Unknowable One left. Bear never did manage to learn a new trick. Instead, he just stands in the water and opens his mouth, hoping fish will jump into it. He eats well enough, but he was never so good a fisherman as when he had his tail.

## RIDDLING

**Other Names:** Conundrums, Enigmas, Puzzles.

**Requirements:** Knowledge (Riddles) d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Confusion*.

**Benefit:** +1 to Knowledge (Riddles) rolls.

**Restriction:** Song mages tend to be enigmatic, rarely saying exactly what they mean. They have the Quirk (Never gives a straight answer) Hindrance.

**Favored Songs:** Members of this tradition rarely entertain through poems and songs, preferring to employ riddles. When they must tell stories, they are nonsense poems or ones involving enigmas that unravel slowly as the tale progresses.

**Example Songs:** None, although they would know a Rassilon version of *The Purpose of the Pauper and the Porpoise*.

**Notes:** Next to storytelling, riddles are the most common form of entertainment, uttered by lofty nobles and grubby peasants alike. They are more than verbal tricks and mind games, though. For countless centuries they have been as a means of instruction, as well as settling disputes between individuals and nations.

Rather than learning songs and poems, students of this ancient tradition master riddles ranging in difficulty from ones designed to stump children to ones that would cause a sphinx riddle master to scratch its head.

## TRAVEL

**Other Names:** Journeyman, Wanderer.

**Requirements:** Knowledge (Area: pick one of choice) d6+\*, Survival d6+.

**Signature Power:** *Wilderness step*.

**Benefit:** The character treats his Pace as being one point higher for the purposes of calculating Overland Travel Speed. The bonus applies to any group of 10 or fewer people of which the song mage is traveling with.

**Restriction:** Members crave the sights and sounds of the open road and the passage of miles beneath their feet. Prolonged dormancy causes them to become depressed and listless. After a half-week (four days) spent in any settlement, the song mage awakens each day Fatigued. This is removed after a night's unbroken sleep.

**Favored Songs:** Poems and songs tell of epic journeys and quests through strange lands.

**Example Songs:** *The Pilgrim's Tale*.

**Notes:** Even across a flat plain, travel can be monotonous and dangerous. Song mages of this tradition have mastered songs that allow them and their comrades to maintain a steady pace by regulating their breathing and marking a rhythm for their feet (or those of their mounts).

Always on the road, song mages who follow this tradition are adept at coping with life away from the comforts of the hearth and home.

\* A song mage can choose his own homeland, which is covered by Common Knowledge. In this instance he is expected to know it like the back of his hand, and so requires Smarts d8+ instead.



# OTHER MAGIC



Compared to Al-Shirkuh, Rassilon has few arcane arts. The desert realms have their share of problems, but nothing that has compared to the destruction inflicted by the rise of the Liche-Priest and then, only a few short years later, the Blizzard War. Much arcane lore was lost and very little has been recovered. To date, only three lesser arcane traditions are known, and there are few, if any, practitioners remaining.

## ● GLAMOUR ●

**Detailed in:** *Hellfrost Expansion 2*

The nature of reality has perplexed philosophers and sages for time eternal. Some argue reality must have existence or substance to the five senses. Others take this further, claiming that reality encompasses ephemeral things such as emotions, fears, and dreams. Glamour magic combines the material with the ephemeral, altering perceptions of what is real and what is not. It is often summarized as the arcane art of trickery, illusion, and shape shifting.

Because these are traits commonly associated with the fey, glamour is also known as fey magic. That link is reinforced by the fact that only elves (who are themselves of fey origin and retain strong ties to their otherworldly cousins) and those touched by the fey have mastered it.

## ORIGIN OF THE ART

“From whence came glamour?” is a question asked only by arcanists, those devoted to the study of magic. The common story is that a mortal stole the secret from the fey, but this does not explain the restriction on who may wield it. Nor does it explain why the fey do not use this form of magic—their magic might be vaguely similar, but it is beyond the comprehension of even the elves.

Quite possibly it was the handiwork of the Unknowable One. One obscure tale says that he used tricks and illu-

sions to taunt Hoenir, thus making them part of reality. Another claims he used the magical threads as a towel or bandage, imbuing them with his trickster nature. Many practitioners do honor the Unknowable One, but this is not universal. More likely, though long forgotten, is that the elves created it after their fall from Alfheim. This would explain its similarities to the fey’s unique magical arts and the boon of more reliable casting mages enjoy when in Alfheim.

## ILLUSION IS REALITY

The key to understanding glamour magic is to remember that it concerns itself with the alteration of the perception of reality. This is most obvious in spells that involve shape changing or invisibility. In terms of game mechanics, these powers function exactly as they do for any other spellcaster. The rationale behind them is very different, though.

Glamour mages do not actually change shape or vanish into thin air. Instead, they alter the world around them into believing the wizard has changed shape or gone invisible, even though he hasn’t. By altering reality, the mage is now able to do things that would not otherwise be possible. For instance, a mage who *shape changes* into a bird can actually fly, but only because the world believes he can fly because it sees him as a bird. Were one to cast *detect arcana*, one would see not a bird, but the mage flapping his arms. It’s more a point of trappings than a game mechanic to worry about.

One cannot “disbelieve” illusions any more than one can disbelieve a wall into not existing. Once an illusion is cast, such as through *charismatic aura* (which might make the target more attractive to viewers) or *fear*, it becomes part of reality, despite remaining immaterial.

Illusions have restrictions, though. A victim might believe he is on fire (a possible trapping of *fear*), he might even die of fright as he smells his flesh burning, watches his skin melt, and feels searing pain, but he suffers no actual physical injuries from the illusory flames.

## ☉ SOLAR MAGIC ☉

**Detailed in:** *Hellfrost Expansion 2*

Solar magic is extinct—no practitioner has existed since the destruction of the Selari culture during the Blizzard War. While little is known about daily life, the Selari recorded much about their religion and sole arcane art. It is thus possible that, given sufficient time and diligent research, the spark may yet be rekindled.

Whereas other mages draw energy from the magical threads that emanate from the moon, solar mages were unique in that they manipulated the threads that spill out from the sun. How they achieved this is part of the mys-



tery surrounding them, for no mages before or since have managed this feat. This is not to say solar mages worked their art with ease, for few ever mastered many spells.

Unlike the lunar threads, which pass through and bind to all matter, solar threads can be blocked. They do not pass through solid rock or ephemeral clouds, and even standing in shade weakened them. In order that they might work their art indoors, solar mages developed sympathetic resonance.

The theory is remarkably simple—any mundane object that sheds both light and heat has sympathy with the sun and thus sheds similar magical threads. In order to benefit, the solar mage had to be within the brightest illuminated area. Many images of solar mages show them carrying lanterns or torches.

Written records, backed by visual evidence, indicate some mages had mastered a more efficient way of harnessing sympathetic resonance through the creation of specially enchanted sunstones (see **New Relic Type** in *Hellfrost Expansion 2* for conventional sunstones). Known as “beacons,” these stones stored sunlight that could then be emitted on command. The creation process has been lost, though likely it exists in some forgotten Selari ruin.

Unfortunately, beacons were attuned to their creator, meaning those that have been found are little more than arcane curiosities. Images show them worn on diadems, the stone sitting in the center of the forehead like a third eye, or worked into ceremonial staves or wands.

## NEW POWER EDGE

### BEACON STONE

**Requirements:** Heroic, Arcane Background (Solar Magic), Knowledge (Alchemy) d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+, an enchanted sunstone worth

The mage has created a beacon stone. The stone is automatically attuned to its creator during construction (no benny need be spent) and cannot be used by another person. When the caster speaks a command word, the gem glows with the intensity of a *light* spell.

In order to emit light, the stone must be regularly charged. For each 15 minutes exposed to the direct rays of the sun, the beacon stores one hour of light. Cloudy conditions or similar increase the exposure time to 30 minutes per hour of illumination. The maximum hours of light a beacon can store is equal to the mage’s arcane skill die type at the time of the stone’s creation.

This Edge may be taken more than once. Each time it is taken the solar mage gains another beacon.

**GM Note:** The Heroic requirement signifies the difficulty in relearning a long-lost art. Should a school of solar magic ever develop in your campaign, the requirement should, eventually, be lowered to Veteran and then to Seasoned as the practice is better understood. Similarly, the skill requirements can be lowered to d8+ at Veteran and d6+ at Seasoned.



## SOUL BINDING

**Detailed in:** *Hellfrost Expansion*

No mortal doubts he has a soul, but where he believes that merest spark of the divine resides in the mortal shell depends on his culture or race rather than his religion.

Dwarves say it lies in the hands, for these are the tools of creation. Whether he wields the crude implements of a miner or the delicate instruments of an artisan, it is the soul that guides the hand. Engro believe it exists in the mouth and that its nature is revealed by one's words rather than deeds. On death, it leaves the corpse with its final breath, hovering nearby until it is collected for judgment. Elves hold that it fills the whole body, being a spiritual double that mirrors the flesh in appearance. Frostborn have no racial bias, instead following the beliefs of their parents. Among most humans the soul is said to rest in the heart, hence why evil people are described as having a black heart and good people a pure heart. The Tuomi are unique, not only in their claim that soul exists in the head, but in their belief that with the correct rituals it can be imprisoned there after death.

### ORIGIN OF THE ART

Widely attributed to the Tuomi, soul binding is an ancient arcane art. Heads have always been important to the Tuomi. Their rich oral history makes frequent mention of warriors collecting the heads of their enemies as trophies in the belief that the owner of such a head would inherit some of his foe's strength.

Today soul binding is a black art, but that was not always the case. With no writing, the transmission of knowledge required word of mouth. In most instances this presented no problem, as scholars would pass their wisdom to apprentices. If a scholar died suddenly, however, decades of lore could be erased in an instant. To ensure that wisdom was not lost, so the story goes, Hoenir taught mortals how to preserve it in severed heads, the vessel that holds the soul (at least among Tuomi).

The first heads were not those taken from unwilling victims, but volunteers who donated them on their deaths for the greater good of their community. Similarly, the first soul binders were not branded vile mages, but seen as respected archivists who collected and stored information so that it might be retrieved later. The modern cult of Hoenir is vehement in its denial of such heretical claims.

While the earliest tales speak of "binding the soul," there is no actual evidence this was, or indeed is, truly the case. Were it true, then mortals would have a power that rivaled that of the gods. Modern arcanists have long theorized that the art either binds nothing more than a residual memory or ensnares some of the magical threads that flow through every person in much the same way as an alchemist does. The former is considered the most likely, as the "souls" of victims with Magic Forbiddance can still be bound.

At some point the art became anathema. Many stories lay the blame at the feet of Dargar or Hela, who corrupted practitioners. There may, however, be a far more mundane reason. The use of writing is a relatively new phenomenon among the Tuomi (it was adopted after the Anari invasion of western Rassilon) and this may explain the origin of the art—the adoption of writing removed the need to store knowledge in severed heads.

Cast out from their communities for what were now considered barbaric practices, soul binders continued to practice their art in secret. Knowledge for the greater good was replaced with knowledge for personal power. Volunteers were replaced with victims.

Soul binding is outlawed in every civilized realm, but it has not been eradicated. Even those who hunt only barbaric creatures, such as giants and orcs, are viewed as little better than necromancers. Those found guilty of being a soul binder can expect only death. To ensure their peers cannot benefit from their wisdom by enchanting their head, their heads are first severed and then pounded to bloody pulp.

### WHOSE HEAD CAN I USE?

Soul binders can use the head of most creatures in their art. Those they cannot enchant belong to demons and elementals (whose material forms quickly decompose into nothingness or mundane elements), fey (whose souls are too unearthly to dominate through the art), and golems (whose rebellious spirits require too much effort to control). Furthermore, the heads of creatures with animal (A) intelligence cannot be used.

### NEW POWER EDGE

#### GREATER SOUL BIND

**Requirements:** Veteran, Arcane Background (Soul Binding), Smarts d8+, Spirit d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+, Soul Binding d10+

A few soul binders know a secret technique that allows a severed head to retain some of the wisdom it had in life and even talk.

Instead of selecting a spell, the caster may instead choose to retain all of the victim's languages Knowledge skills. He also retains his Smarts die for the purpose of Common Knowledge rolls only. The die ratings for these Traits are fixed at the point of death—the victim can never learn more and thus the Traits can never be increased. The mage can access the head's knowledge simply by asking it a relevant question, as if he were talking to a living scholar. The head does not engage in small talk or general conversation—all it can do is answer questions concerning its Common Knowledge or Knowledge skills.

Although the head no longer holds a spell, it is still enchanted and thus still counts toward the mage's maximum total.



## OPTIONAL RULES

The following rules are optional. Both change how magic works, and we suggest they are not added to an existing campaign.

### MAGIC AND THE MOON

It is no great secret that the phases of the moon were going to play a part in the core *Hellfrost* rules. However, because of the way the magic system works, its inclusion did nothing more than add yet another modifier to track. What with the Hellfrost effect, many spells allowing optional modifiers, wounds and Fatigue, Maintenance penalties, plus elemental loci, this was deemed an unnecessary, if flavorsome, complication. Despite not being canonical, the effects of the moon on magic (not miracles) are included here for completeness.

Tracking the phases of the moon during play is very easy—they are included on the Hellfrost calendar, which is available as a free download from the *Hellfrost* brand page of the Triple Ace Games' website.

Phase	Effect
Full	+2 to arcane skill rolls
Three-Quarters	+1 to arcane skill rolls
Half	No modifier
Quarter	-1 to arcane skill rolls
New	-2 to arcane skill rolls

### SPELL MAINTENANCE

Invoking powers comes with risks, but even a Novice mage or cleric packs an impressive punch. For those who think spellcasters are too powerful for their campaign, we present an optional rule concerning spell maintenance. This alternate system applies equally to mages and clerics.

Instead of being able to Maintain a maximum number of spells equal to half her arcane skill die, a Novice spellcaster can maintain just a single spell. Those who wish to maintain more must invest in a new Power Edge—Enhanced Maintenance.

#### ENHANCED MAINTENANCE

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Any)  
The spellcaster has learned to weave multiple threads of magic or concentrate on multiple miracles simultaneously. He increases the number of powers he can maintain by one. Note that this does not negate the cumulative -1 penalty to arcane skill rolls for each spell currently Maintained.

Enhanced Maintenance may be taken more than once, but only once per Rank (including Novice). A spellcaster who takes the Edge five times can, at Legendary, maintain a maximum of five spells.

## NEW EDGES

Although they are listed in the section on lesser forms of Arcane Background (Magic), the following Edges are, barring specific requirements, open to any characters with an Arcane Background.

### BACKGROUND EDGES

#### LUNAR HERITAGE

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Any magical)

Despite the heavens rotating in an orderly fashion and the same constellations hanging in the sky, the denizens of Rassilon have no zodiac. They do, however, hold that one's personality is in part shaped by the phase of the moon under which one is born. The wizard has a particular affinity with that lunar phase.

He must pick one lunar phase from full, three-quarters, half, quarter, or new. For any phase except full or new, the mage must also decide if the moon is waxing or waning.

During that specific phase of the moon, which lasts for four days each month, the mage treats his arcane skill die as one die higher (+1 point above d12) for the purpose of casting spells and resisting disruption. He also reduces the penalties for Maintaining spells by one point during the four days.

### POWER EDGES

#### MASTER ALCHEMIST

**Requirements:** Heroic, Alchemy, Knowledge (Alchemy) d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+

The character has mastered many obscure elements of alchemy, allowing him to create alchemical devices more quickly and with fewer ingredients.

Creating an alchemical device takes the master a number of hours equal to the spell's Rank (Novice would require one hour, Seasoned two hours, and so on). The cost of ingredients is reduced to 25 gs per Rank of the spell.

#### SPELL FINESSE

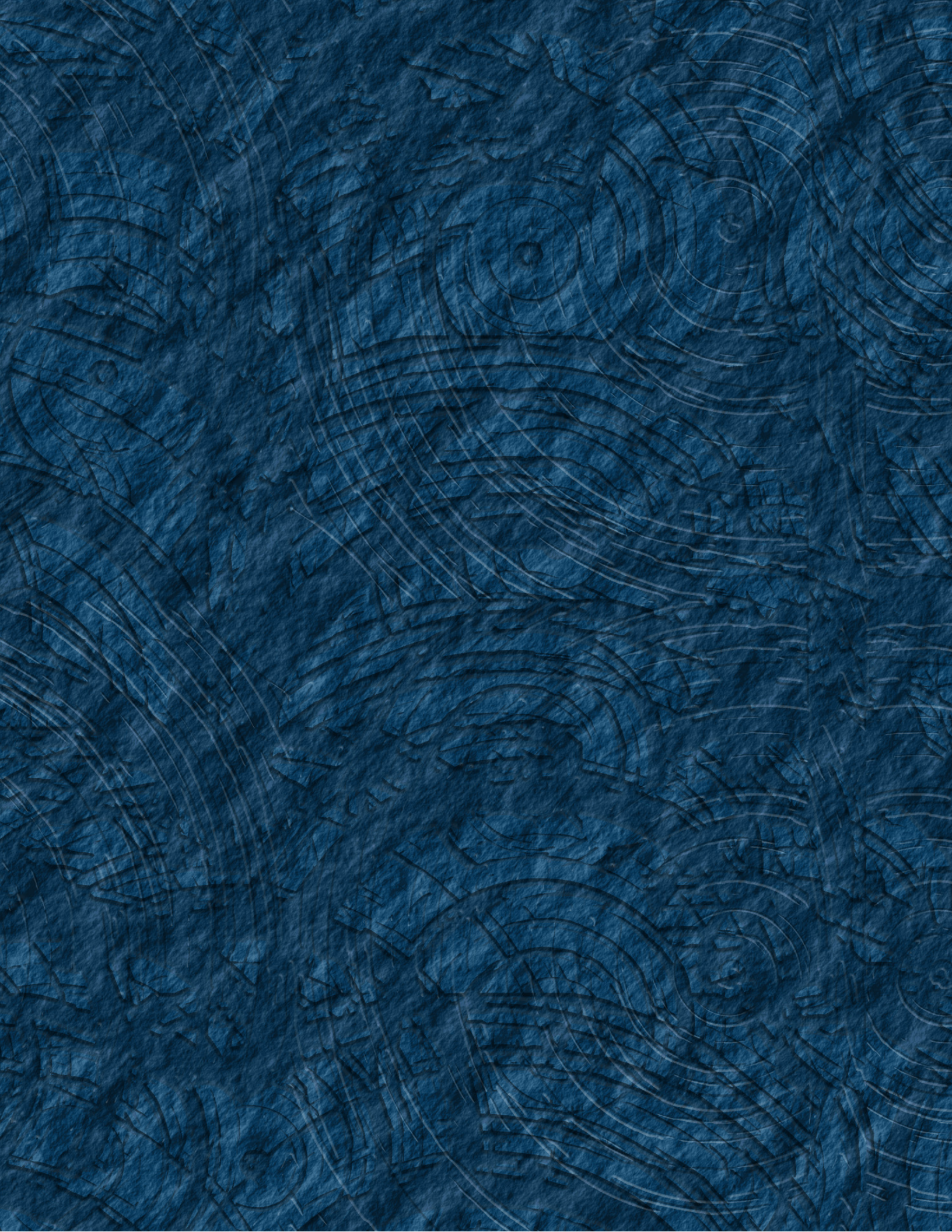
**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Any except Rune Magic), arcane skill d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The following new enhancements are available.

- **Alchemical:** When using his chosen spell to create an alchemical device, the caster treats his Knowledge (Alchemy) die as being one die higher (+1 point above d12).

- **No Maintenance:** The selected spell must be one that can be Maintained. The caster incurs no Maintenance penalties for Maintaining that spell.







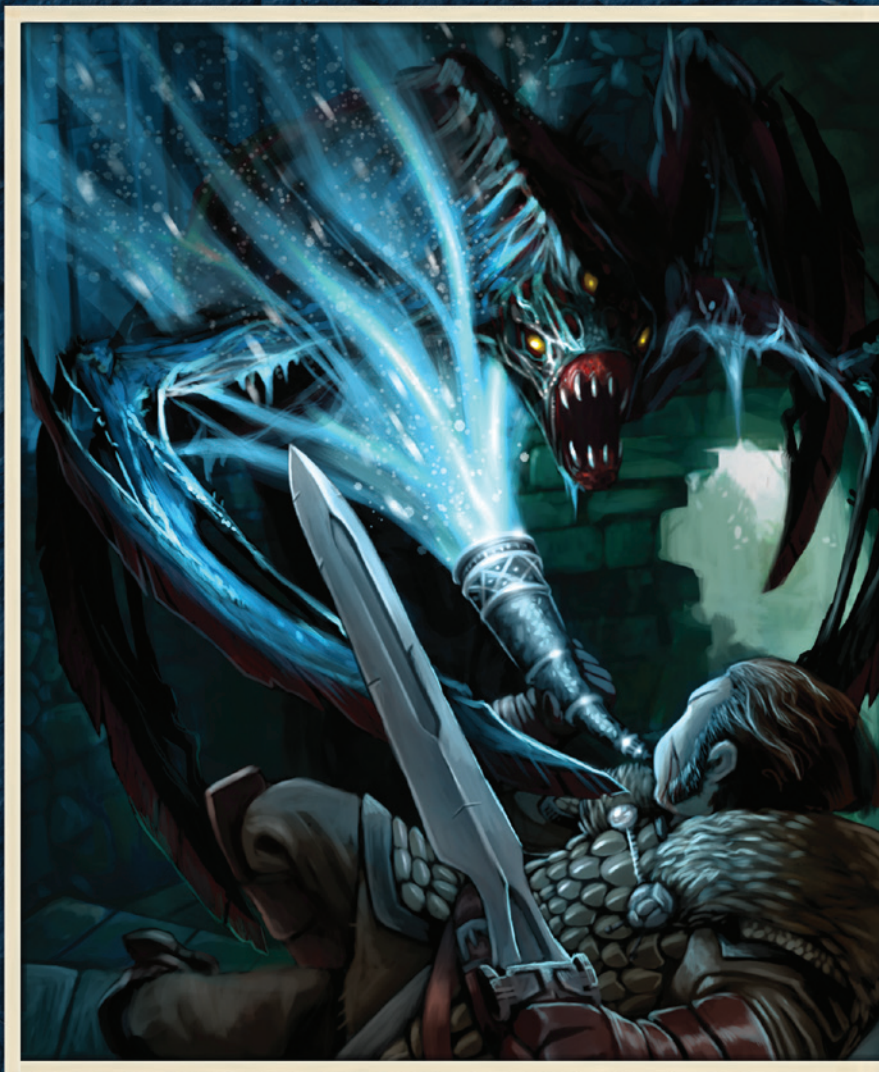
# PUT SOME MAGIC INTO YOUR GAME

Rassilon is a world of magic.

Tendrils of magical energy emanating from the moon touch every creature, granting them the potential to weave, focus, and manipulate magic. All practitioners share an understanding of how to manipulate the threads of magic, but each arcane tradition is unique in its approach to the art.

This guidebook expands the major and minor magical traditions of Rassilon, delving deeper behind the scenes and presenting new rules.

Within this tome of arcane lore you'll find information on druidic pacts with nature, the Magocracy's famed schools of heahwisardry, the elementals planes and their unearthly occupants, the nature of the lost dwarven runes, song mages' storytelling traditions, and more!



This book is designed for both players and GMs.

*Hellfrost Arcane Lore* is a guide book which expands upon the magical traditions of Rassilon for the epic Hellfrost setting and designed for use with the award-winning *Savage Worlds RPG*.



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