

Magic

Of all the wondrous things in the universe, magic is the most deviously curious and fickle. Its mysteries are deep and its origins unknown, but what can be said is that none should cross into the path of magic who is not prepared to lose something along the way.

The Nature of Magic

Fundamentally, all magic is destructive. Even the most skilled mages are still, ultimately, destroying something in reality whenever they use it. For some this implication sees magic as something mortals should never dare to use, but for others, this just makes magic all the more potent, even when the magic turns on them, and turns their bodies to **Corruption**.

Corruption

In general, there are no limits to how much magic can be used. You could cast a million spells in a day, if you so chose. However, the destructive nature of magic is voracious, and even if you are using all your magic purely to destroy the world around you, it may still turn on you.

Whenever you use magic of any kind, there is a chance that you will receive what is called a Corruption. Your magic will begin to eat away at you, and this results not just in debilitating physical and mental detriments, but even the destruction of your own body, as the magic manifests some wicked part of your soul to break your body.

Manifesting a Corruption

Upon experiencing a Corruption, a practitioner must determine whether it is a Lesser or Greater Corruption. This is done by rolling dice to impose penalties on the practitioner's Talents. Specifically, the affected Talent (excluding Luck) is determined by rolling a 1d8, and the penalty is calculated by rolling either 1d4 or 2d4.

The result is subtracted from the respective Talent. If the same Talent is affected by subsequent Corruptions, the penalty die size increases, leading to potentially greater reductions in the Talent's score.

As a result of your Corruptions, your Talents may run into the negative. What occurs when this happens will vary by the Talent in question; the **Talents** section in the **Creating a Character** chapter will cover these in detail.

Defining your Corruptions

What specifically happens to you as part of your Corruption is entirely up to you. Sometimes your eyes might fall out of your head; sometimes, your arm is deformed into a grotesque otherworldly appendage. Other times, your eyes might simply change to some unnatural color. A good rule of thumb is to think of the Talent the Corruption affected; how does one's Intuition becoming corrupted manifest physically? And if your Corruption is Greater or Lesser, how does that change things?

Whatever the answer, keep this in mind: everyone will be able to recognize it for what it is, and not everyone is going to abide a monster, no matter what it looks like.

Healing from Corruption

In general, Corruptions never heal naturally. You will effectively have them forever, if you are unable to intervene through means like special Salves or Elixirs, or through the adoption of the Magical Arts themselves, so that you might make use of them...

Each Class of the Mage Archtype will have their own, unique way of dealing with Corruptions, many of which revolve around embracing them, rather than lamenting the myriad ways your body is being destroyed.

Types of Magic

Sometimes called “Schools”, there are four principle types of Magic: **Arcana**, **Runeweaving**, **Warding**, and **Enchantment**.

Arcana

The purest form of Magic, Arcana is the study of spellcrafting, and as a Skill is how adventuring mages will often contribute to their Party when all other Skills fail, improvising a spell to solve some issue or another. Arcana, unintuitively, is often the most dangerous kind of magic, particularly for the mere dabblers or hobbyists, as it has the highest chance of inducing a Corruption.

Whenever you attempt to cast an **improvised spell** (see Casting Spells), you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you come within 10 or less of the target number you need to reach. If you roll 5 or less, regardless, of your total, you will take a Greater Corruption.

Runeweaving

While magic is fickle and dangerous, it is curiously at its safest when you use it for the one thing it can do. Runeweaving is the practice of magical combat, and involves the manipulation of specific kinds of spells, called **Runes**, allow the mage to wield devastating power. No one can quite say where the Runes come from or what they even mean when they manifest as strange symbols, but their potency is not tampered by a lack of understanding.

But be wary, however, for even those who weave the Runes are not immune to Corruptions. Magic may turn on you for daring to use it at all.

In Combat, you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you roll a 1 when utilizing Momentum for any reason while casting a Rune spell. If you, in the same Action or Reaction, roll 3 1s in a row, you will receive a Greater Corruption.

Warding

Wards are truly a paradox in magic; as seeming variants of the Runes they too seem much less likely to induce Corruptions, but at the same time, they are defensive or even utilitarian in nature. While a boon for would be War Wizards and other such adventurers, it is a perplexing issue for those scholarly sorts that seek to understand what Magic actually is.

In Combat, you will receive a Lesser Corruption if you roll a 1 when utilizing Momentum for any reason while casting a Ward spell. If you, in the same Action or Reaction, roll 3 1s in a row, you will receive a Greater Corruption.

Enchantment and Curses

Arguably the most useful kind of Magic, Enchantment allows the embedding of certain magical effects and, occasionally, spells into objects. While an enchanted sword or ring are common enough, Enchantment has seen extensive use in Warfare, with magic forming the first line of defense for fortifications.

Curses however, are a particularly devious kind of Enchantment that sees the debilitating effects of Corruption embedded into the enchanted object, and while some of the mildest curses only inflict those effects on those who so much as touch the object, the worst Curses are much deadlier, and far more sinister. Both Enchantment and Curses are covered in the **Crafting** Chapter.

Casting Spells

Unlike many games with magic, outside of combat you will be completely **Improvising** a spell whenever you wish to cast one to solve some problem you might be facing. In general, you will not find there are any strict limits to what you can attempt to do with Magic in this way, but as you are Improvising, you are to adhere to the principle of Yes, And, and the agreed upon tone of your group's game, and naturally, you will be highly susceptible to the Corruption.

Once you have announced you are going to attempt a Spell, you should first clarify what it is you are going to do. Do not just say "I cast magic at it" to get out of a jam; be specific, and have logic to what you want to do. And most importantly, as you may already be familiar with from handling **Events** during your travels, do not expect to be able to just conjure fantastical riches out of thin air. You may well be skilled enough to make such things appear, but they will never quite be what you wanted.

And remember, while magic will not always be able to solve *everything*, it can certainly *break* just about anything.

Fighting with Magic

In combat, magic is more specific and slightly limited, yet allows freedom in spell manifestation. You can cast simple spells immediately or build more powerful spells using Momentum or additional Actions, following a sequence from Simple to Intermediate to Complex.

Spells are cast using Damage Dice from your Rod, when utilizing Runes, and Defense Dice from your Garments, when utilizing Wards.

Touch Magic

For those who wish to go without either a Wand or a Stave, they will naturally be without a source of damage dice to utilize for their Spells. Such mages could, however, use their bare hands, and their damage dice will rely upon their **Hand-to-Hand** Damage dice, which is governed by the **Wrestling** Skill.

While such mages will never be without the ability to use their magic, they will be limited in terms of the ranges they can fight at to melee range, requiring physical touch to be able to release their spells. However, one should not fret. Mages who take to this style of magic are often not to be trifled with, and the terrifying Ursh, those bear pirates of the south, are especially dangerous when they've managed to take up magic.

Using Runes to Ward

When you are working to cast a spell, you are not limited in terms of defending yourself, and if you have nowhere else to place it, you might find Warding with it valuable. You may be in the process of conjuring a great Water Wave, but in a pinch, throw it into the air to absorb a Fire Blast.

If you have already begun to cast a spell and you are Reacting, you may use the spell to defend yourself, treating the damage rolled as defense. Additionally, if you are beginning a new spell in Reaction, you can utilize a Rune to bolster your defense if its additional effects are desirable to you.

Welding Spells

As you weave together your spell, you are not limited to simply progressing through the same 3 spells each time; you can combine any Rune or Ward together; your only restriction is that you must follow the sequence Simple → Intermediate → Complex. When you do this with up to 3 different spells, this is called a **Weld**, and when you are utilizing the Elements, you will find that that they can be combined in a myriad of ways to gain a deeper advantage.

Spells

It is said that every aspiring mage typically asks the same question, “How can there so few Spells?” As their mentors would demonstrate, the small amount of Spells that are known are no less potent than a thousand.

This section will cover each Spell in detail as well as how to make the best use of them.

Improvising Magic in Combat

As with magic outside of combat, you will be improvising the effects of your Spells as you fight. However, as each Spell that would be useful to you in Combat already exists as a Rune or Ward, the process is a bit different.

Each Spell should be treated as though it was a prompt, similar to those you might see during your Travels, and one that you must follow much more closely. While you can conjure some truly spectacular things, including those that will make a real difference as you fight, do not expect to try and cast one of the Detonation Spells and somehow heal yourself for all of your Composure and Wounds; that's a fast way to blow yourself up.

Instead, think about the spell and what it means, both individually and as part of its pairing, and let this guide what happens as you cast them. Keep in mind that no matter what the spell does, it can never deal any direct damage greater than what you rolled for Damage.

Collaborating On Spellwork

As with your magic outside of combat, you will be collaborating with your Keeper and your Group on what sorts of things will occur. Depending on your game's tone or theme, you may well be able to do wacky and zany things. In others, though, such things can very easily ruin it for your friends.

If you are unsure if something will fit, remember the golden rule: *talk to your friends*.

Understanding Each Spell

While there are two different sets of Spells, conveniently split in half between the **Runes**, which are more offensive, and the **Wards**, which are more defensive or utilitarian in nature, they will each follow a similar structure.

Each Spell comes as a pair of three separate Spells that naturally build into each other. The first listing in the pairing is the **Simple** Spell, which is always what you will cast first and which can be utilized for its effects immediately. The second is the **Intermediate** Spell, which as noted in **Fighting With Magic**, requires either Momentum or a second Action to progress to, and then finally the third is the **Complex** Spell, typically the most powerful of the pairing.

Combining Spells

As you fight, you are not limited in terms of how you mix and match your spells, so long as they follow the sequence from Simple to Intermediate to Complex. Your only limit is that you can only begin a spell with a Rune if you are attacking, and likewise, you can only begin a spell with a Ward if you are defending.

Additionally, it should be noted that when defending with Magic, any Rune you utilize will only contribute towards your Defense dice, but you may use its effects on your attacker if they are useful to you.

Holding Complex Spells

When you have fully cast a Complex Spell, you are eligible to hold onto it for some time. Inside of combat, this will only be for the duration of the Round, and upon your next Turn, you will have to release it at the cost of one of your Action Ratings.

Outside of combat, however, you can go for longer, but doing so will begin to take from your Composure at a rate of -1 for every 10 Seconds you continue to try and hold the Spell together. If you lose your Composure as a result of this, the spell will automatically trigger its effects on you. If this should happen to result in both you losing your Composure, and getting dealt a total amount of damage greater than half your maximum Composure, you will be killed, *immediately*.

Runes

The Runes are your offensive spells, and will be at their most potent when attacking. All Runes will allow you to immediately roll your Damage Dice.

Conflagration

These Runes conjure an explosive force that is especially effective against large creatures.

1. **Pop**
2. **Burst**
3. **Blast**

Projectile

These Runes conjure a progressively powerful and precise projectile of magical force.

1. **Ball**
2. **Bolt**
3. **Missile**

Resonance

These Runes conjure the devastating sounds of the Elements you channel through them.

1. **Chime**
2. **Peal**
3. **Toll**

Detonation

These Runes conjure a larger and larger font of magical energy that explodes on command, hitting many enemies at once.

1. **Crickle**
2. **Crackle**
3. **Boom**

Deluge

These Runes manipulate your chosen Element into devastating, continuous flow of energy that can hit many enemies at once.

1. **Stream**
2. **Flood**
3. **Wave**

Wards

The Wards are your Defensive and Utilitarian spells, and will be at their most potent when you either need to defend yourself, or when you need to gain an advantage in the fight. If you are Reacting, you can begin to roll your Defense dice.

Mirth

These Wards force your opponent to hear a progressively distracting and terrifying laugh.

1. **Giggle**
2. **Laugh**
3. **Roar**

Glyph

A most versatile set of Wards, they allow you spontaneously create magical objects, markings, barriers and shields and manipulate the shape of your spells.

1. **Scribble**
2. **Doodle**
3. **Sketch**

Tempo

These Wards give you a modicum of control over your target's perception of time.

1. **Tick**
2. **Tock**
3. **Turn**

Sound

These Wards can be used to enhance an ally's or your stealth or disrupt your enemy's.

1. **Hush**
2. **Still**
3. **Silence**

Aviate

These Wards together might grant you a small amount of Unnatural Flight, but can also be used to juggle...

1. **Flutter**
2. **Flap**
3. **Fly**

Magic in Practice

Below you will find a series of examples of the kinds of wondrous and terrible things you could accomplish with your magic.

As the battle rages, Elara extends her hands, as brilliant light and deep shadow emerge with a terrible din. Suddenly, the battlefield transforms—colors drain away, leaving only harsh whites and deep blacks. Confused, the Goblin raiders stumble and misfire, while Elara's allies, now almost invisible in the shifting lights and shadows, strike with deadly precision.

In the shadowy ruins, Thalen chants under his breath, tracing slow sigils in the air. The air thickens around the charging knight, who slows dramatically, his movements becoming sluggish as if underwater. Thalen steps aside easily, avoiding the slow-motion strike and counterattacking with a well-placed thrust to the knight's armor.

As the band of goblins charges through the narrow mountain pass, Maela begins her incantation. With a flick of her wrist, she releases the Pop—a small burst of fire at the goblins' feet, startling them and halting their charge. Sensing an opportunity as they regroup, she escalates to the Flood spell. The small flames sputter and hiss, giving way to a sudden rush of water cascading down the rocks, sweeping the confused goblins off their feet in a powerful, churning torrent.

In the dense forest, Ivar finds himself outnumbered by marauding elves. He strikes a nearby tree trunk with a Chime, sending a disorienting hum through the air that causes the elves to clutch their ears in pain. Capitalizing on their disorientation, Ivar redirects his magic; the ground beneath his feet barely touches as he lifts into the air, carried by a gust that whistles with the continuing eerie tone, allowing him to soar above his foes and escape their encirclement.

During the siege of the castle, Sorcha prepares her magic from atop the battlements. She conjures a series of small, crickling energies that dance around the assaulting soldiers, making them wary and distracted. As the energy grows in intensity, she lifts her Wand and shapes them into a sketch of arcane symbols that embed upon the gateway below; the door will not fall.

Far below the dragon as it prepares attack, Elowen acts quickly to protect their self and their companions. A cool shimmering light builds from their staff as they manipulate their magic with their off hand, circling back and forth as though stroking a cat. As the fire erupts from the dragon's maw, Elowen completes their Ward, enveloping the party in a cool bubble of shimmering light that falters against the dragonfire, but does not fail.