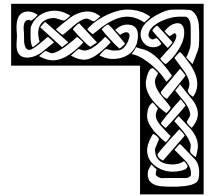


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*I shall not see a world that will be dear to me.
 Summer without flowers,
 Kine will be without milk,
 Women without modesty,
 Men without valour,
 Captures without a king..
 Woods without mast,
 Sea without produce.*

Morrigan



Record of an address by Brother Justin Rosemary

As your village is seldom visited by members of my Order, your elders have asked me to address you while I am here. It is always a privilege to help the young to find their place in the world. You may have heard much of what I say before, but please be patient for the benefit of those who have not. You will have your chance for questions soon enough.

Our lore tells us that our world has passed through many ages. The time before our time was the Age of Madness, and the world was wider than today. People made complicated tools called machines and depended on them for all manner of things. To make these in great numbers people surrendered the ideals of craft and worked without pride in places that sent poisons into the air, water and land. There had been very great wars, and nations tearing themselves apart as neighbour fought neighbour. Some people did not have the food, water and shelter they needed, while others had more than they could ever use and hungered for more. Forests were cut down, and whole kinds of plants and animals died. It was our own forefathers that did this.

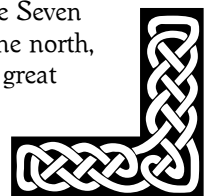
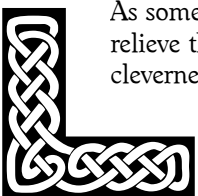
There were voices of warning, and many who tried to show a better way. Their voices were heard, and others joined them - but many clung to wealth and power, or simply hid from change. In the end it was too slow for the patience of Gaia.

In any system, when pressure builds to a certain level it must be released and a new balance found. As some had predicted, Gaia acted ruthlessly to relieve the discomfort, unimpressed by human cleverness. The Shrug came. The waters rose,

more even than the warnings had guessed, and the seasons and weather changed. Like a building with a bad foundation, their society slipped. Machines lost the power that drove them, and blight, sickness and hunger walked the land. Madness and violence truly gripped the people, and they clawed over each other to hold on to what had been - which brought it, finally, tumbling down.

However, the seeds of a new way had already been sown. Some had a clearer vision of what was coming, and prepared for it. At that time there were ways to communicate over great distances, and people across Albion were able to lay plans for the coming disaster. Chief among them was Ramage, a man of great learning and vision. He saw that when the machines fell it would be like it was before they came, so the new world would have to combine the skills of the past with what had been learned about living in harmony with Gaia. He found his inspiration in an ancient time he loved, when people lived with honour and close to nature. So they worked, our Fathers and Mothers, as the past fell and burned around them. They went about in secret, gathering allies and saving those with the skills they would need. And in time, when the frenzy had subsided and those who had survived looked for guidance, they came forth as the Druid Order and forged the people anew. Two hundred years have passed since then, and we continue to watch over Albion.

This land has changed since our forefathers knew it by its other ancient name of Britain. The Seven Kingdoms bear their old names: Alba in the north, a wild country, home of the clans and the great





forest of Caledon; Northumbria, rain-soaked and bearing beauty stamped with blight; Mercia, with its forests and market towns; flooded Anglia with its marshes; ever thirsty Kent with its vines and fruit trees; Wessex, from its desolate moors to the palm trees of its coasts; and the green valleys of Cymru in the west.

Not all places are good or safe. The lone traveller risks wild animals and robbers, who prefer taking from others to working for themselves. These are more substantial than the legends and fancies of strange creatures and spirits that haunt the countryside. The ruins of London in the south, bordered by three kingdoms but claimed by none, where rulers once dwelled, belong now to a wild and dangerous folk. There are other such places, and also Wastelands, where the sickness in the land itself will lodge in your bones. Out at sea are the walls of mist from which none return. The sensible traveller stays safe by avoiding these places and sticking to the greenways, rivers and canals in the company of others.

Hospitality is a great virtue that binds us together. Parents send their children for fosterage with the skilled and wise, building bonds of friendship. Each town and city has a hostel where travellers can rest on their journey and bring news of other places. News also travels with the bards, who carry the stories and songs of our people. Our laws protect safety and honour, and those who break them are fined according to their offence. Those who are sick or injured are cared for - each area has its own hospital. Some people choose not to live under the protection of the Order. This is their choice to make, but we hope that they will come to change their minds, for their children's sake. Some, of course, are simply not suited for civilised society.

Many skills were nearly lost during the Age of Madness. We formed Guilds to guard the most vital and pass them on to new generations, for example the Smiths for work in metal, and other professions came to work this way too. Merchants

have similar bodies called Chambers of Commerce. Most young people embark on an apprenticeship with the aim of becoming a journeyman, able to practice in their own right, and eventually a master of their trade.

One of the main causes of the Age of Madness was technology getting out of control. "Technology" means the application of skills, but to the people then it meant the making and use of the machines I mentioned earlier. People became so reliant on it that they would do what best suited the machines rather than what was proper. Our "technology" depends on watching the way nature works and applying its principles to make the best use of what Gaia provides us with. In growing, for instance, we put plants together that will help each other grow and imitate the layers of a natural forest, from lowest to highest. We do not want to go back to the machines and repeat the mistakes of the past. Curiosity and inventiveness are natural, but they can be applied to better ends.

There was some surprise when, after a number of years under the Order, it became clear that what could only be called magic was creeping back into the world. Actions would occasionally have unusual consequences, a few people began to discover strange new abilities, and there were reports of creatures that had never been seen before. The nature of magic and the reason for its appearance were not well understood. Some of my learned colleagues assert that it cannot be completely understood, by its very nature, but while I respect their opinions I must point out that by study we have already learned a great deal about it, and will surely learn more. It is clearly bound up with the great Web that connects all being and acting. It is certainly true, however, that magic can be dangerous, and it should only be used by those with the proper qualifications.

We have built peace, in harmony with Gaia. There are some who think to break this peace, but their efforts will come to nothing as long as we remain vigilant.

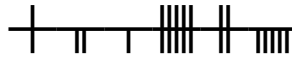


The Prophecy of Ash

The Shrug breaks the surface

*A new world has always come from
the ninth wave*





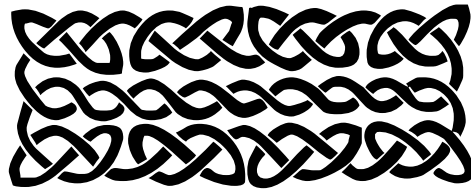
What is a role-playing game?

Most role-playing games (RPGs) start with a section like this, and some of them are quite long. This one isn't. A RPG is basically a fun way for a group of people to play "let's pretend" using a particular set of rules and background/setting/game world.

The **players** (real people) each have a **character** (an imaginary person), with information about how good that character is at doing various things. The character is in a setting detailed by the **Game Master (GM)**, who describes events to the player. The player says what the character does, and the GM says what happens as a result. This often involves rolling one or more **dice** (the singular is

"die"), based on information about the character, to see whether the action succeeded. As the characters interact with each other and their setting a story is woven in which the players participate through their characters.

Player characters are often referred to as **PCs**, and non-player characters (the people they meet, controlled by the GM) as **NPCs**. A **session** is a real-world measure of time when the players get together to play, perhaps over an evening. A **scene** is a game-world measure of time when the characters pursue a set of actions at a particular location. A **story** or **adventure** is a set of scenes; a set of stories is sometimes called a **campaign**.



What is this game about?

Things which are concealed and things which are revealed.

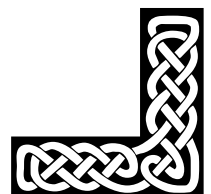
The physical setting has ordinary splendours. There are mountains, valleys, rivers, seas, dark forests, lonely moors and bustling towns. Its fantasy is not one of spectacles like fortresses in huge spires of rock or cities built in trees. Neither is it a large place with features of extraordinary size.

The people get on with their lives - for the most part in pretty ordinary ways. Everyone knows stories of supernatural things like strange creatures, magicians and heroes who perform remarkable feats, and they enjoy hearing them and passing them on. But when you enquire about the origins of these tales, they usually come from a

distant family member or a friend of a friend. Only a few people have witnessed such things firsthand.

Yet magic does slumber beneath the land and is occasionally woken. Fundamentally the game is about what people do, and through this wonders can be manifested and the land itself can be changed. The gifted few can shatter a rock with a spear or summon the wind with a song. The destined few will encounter creatures of the otherworld and become champions of humanity. The despised few will blight the land and twist the spirit of the people.

The role of your characters is to be the flash that illuminates what people are capable of, what's really going on in the world, and the road their society will travel into the future.





Trader

Traders earn their living by buying and selling the goods produced by others, often transporting them between different settlements. Many specialise in a particular market, such as leather goods or ironwork. In larger settlements they band together as Chambers of Commerce to serve their mutual interests. They often have a lot of property and influence. Certainly their status in society is high, but some nevertheless regard them with suspicion - there are stories of unscrupulous merchants profiting at the expense of others, even though most are honest. The Druid Order knows the role that unregulated commerce had in the Age of Madness, but recognises that trade between settlements is vital. For most Traders motivation comes down to wealth - the difference is in why they want it, how much they want and what they'll do to get it.

Skills

- 2/4 Persuasion
- 1/3 Socialising
- 2/3 Language (pick one, often English for trade)
- 1/2 Legend
- 1/1 One skill related to a chosen market, usually a Craft or Lore
- 0/1 Oratory
- 0/2 Trickery
- 0/2 Other Languages (up to 2 per programme)
- 0/2 Gaming
- 0/2 Horsemanship
- 0/1 Observation
- 0/1 Watercraft
- 0/1 Another skill related to a chosen market

Special

- Boost - Ingenuity, Presence.

Equipment

Pick two of the following: up to 2 Quality 4 items, a horse, a small wagon. (The GM should discourage the latter if the story's going to be sea-based!)

Warrior

These are the combat specialists of Albion. They are actually quite rare, as the land is mostly at peace and the only official positions available are among the King's Guard of a settlement. Some become wandering sell-swords or bandits. Warrior training can be useful in the Watch, but this is generally seen as a step down.

Reputation is important to them, and they can go to extraordinary lengths to make a name. Some are motivated by a higher cause; others just seek a secure position with food and lodging. As a group they have great camaraderie, but are competitive about whose deeds and prowess are greatest.

Warriors are expected to show excellence across a wide range of abilities - someone who's very strong but also very stupid, for instance, is not an ideal battle companion. They often seek out remote teachers to help them master skills and feats - some of these preserve knowledge from pre-Shrug combat schools. Most Warriors learn to fight with sword, spear and shield (and they are expected to be able to do so), but different weapon combinations are possible.

Skills

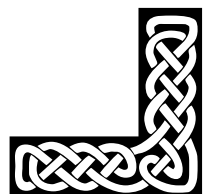
- 2/4 Fighting: pick a primary weapon
- 1/4 Fighting: pick another
- 1/3 Fighting: Unarmed
- 1/2 Socialising
- 2/4 Athletics
- 1/3 Horsemanship
- 0/3 Fighting: pick up to another 2
- 0/4 Intimidation
- 0/2 Music (pick one)
- 0/2 Oratory
- 0/1 Medicine
- 0/2 Gaming
- 0/1 Woodcraft

Special

- Feats - up to 3 levels, maximum 2 per Feat, usually linked to Fighting or Athletics. Make your own up or pick from the list of examples.
- Boost - Vigour, Agility.
- Spells - one simple Spirit Charm from the Body Realm, if the character found a teacher willing to pass on such a secret.
- Thread - Valour or Harm.

Equipment

Two Quality 4 weapons, or one Quality 5.





Albion



Character Name
Mitch Brophy

Player Name

BACKGROUND
Birthplace: Woodland
Parents: Thief
Fosterer: Magician
Occupation(s): Entertainer
Rogue
Goals:
- Have a good time
- Don't get caught

ATTRIBUTES

	Poor	Average	Talented	Exceptional
Vigour				
Agility			/	
Deftness				
Wisdom				
Ingenuity			/	
Presence				
Awareness			/	

SKILLS

FIGHTING
 Knife ----- ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Unarmed ----- ☐☐☐☐ 1
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----

INTERACTION
 Intimidation ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Music: ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Oratory ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Persuasion ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Socialising ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Trickery ☐☐☐☐ 2

LORE
 Animal Lore ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Earth Lore ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Esoteric Lore* ☐☐☐☐ 1
 Language: English ☐☐☐☐ 1
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Legend ☐☐☐☐ 1
 Medicine ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Plant Lore ☐☐☐☐ 1
 Science* ☐☐☐☐ -----

MAGIC
 Arts*: ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Dreaming* ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Meditation ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Ogham* ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Spirit Magic* ☐☐☐☐ -----
 World Magic* ☐☐☐☐ -----

GENERAL
 Athletics ☐☐☐☐ 1
 Craft: ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Gaming ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Horsemanship ☐☐☐☐ 1
 Observation ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Sleight ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Stealth ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Theft ☐☐☐☐ 2
 Watercraft ☐☐☐☐ -----
 Woodcraft ☐☐☐☐ 1

----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----
 ----- ☐☐☐☐ -----

SPECIAL

Charm: Cat Feet (Spirit)
 Charm: Impression (Spirit)
 Quirks:
 Lucky (like a free Destiny/ scene)
 Fame (Shame) (Shame 3)
 Attractive Appearance (Adv for social)
 Secret (sort out with GM later)
 Equipment:
 Clothes
 Knife
 Travel gear
 Conjuror's props
 2 knives (Q4)
 Nice clothes

Energy (1) Blessing Curse

Honour  Shame 3

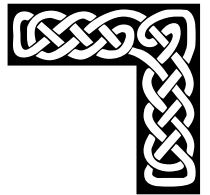
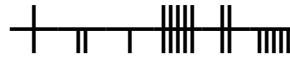
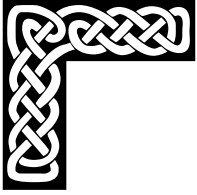
Initiative +5 In. penalty Destiny 1

Combat actions	Roll	Base Damage
Knife	5	1
Unarmed	4	0

Resistance	Roll	Auto
Physical	2	
Mental	2	

Hurts Physical, Mental

Injuries Physical, Mental
 Healing limit:



THE WEB

"All things are connected. Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth."

"Mankind does not weave the Web of life, but is merely a strand in it."

Ancient Druid sayings



Justin Rosemary once called it "meta-ecology": the idea that the connections between things and events go beyond what we can observe in the physical world to much deeper levels. The universe has its own view of the properties of objects and people and what the interactions between them can and should be. This is one of the meanings of the phrase, "the fitness of things". The Druids name this network after the web of a spider, which is the best illustration for teaching purposes. It is the very structure of the world.

The Web is real - though what that means, exactly, exercises the minds of sages. World Magic draws upon its strands to shape energy into new patterns. The interwoven shapes of knotwork designs are used to visualise the energy flows.

The way the Web works is dynamic: it influences events, but events also influence it. A sufficiently powerful event can cause a **reweaving**, changing the relationships between things and events. One way to think of this is as justifying what happened, adjusting the theory to fit the facts: if this person just did this thing, they must be able to do it, so the previous story about what they could and couldn't do needs changing. This operates according to magical logic rather than scientific repeatability: if a character kills a giant with a mighty blow while fighting in a stream, the Web might shift so that in future events favour them when fighting giants, or when fighting in streams. This can also work in reverse - if a character fails spectacularly badly at something, the Web may "invent" reasons why this should be so. Instead of justifications, you can think of notable events leaving imprints or echoes in the Web. Some of these explanations could be taken to mean that the Web thinks and makes decisions. It's generally agreed that this is not so, though many sages would say that it is in some

sense alive and perhaps even has awareness - or that it is life and awareness.

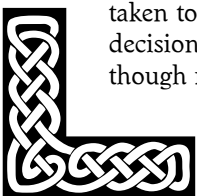
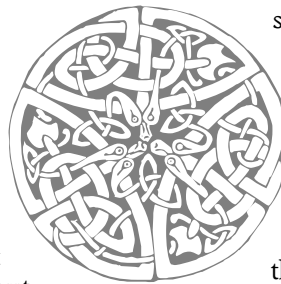
The most important quality of the Web is **rigidity**, which changes with place and time. Where it is very rigid, events are locked down and predictable. Where it is very flexible, events and properties are open to change: ordinary actions can produce marvellous results, wonders may be seen and World Magic becomes easier. The Web becomes more flexible at in-between places and times, like twilight and the shore where the sea meets the land. The Web can also become damaged or even broken, which leads to unpredictable events and makes it easier for creatures from other worlds to gain entry. The usual cause of this is irresponsible use of magic.

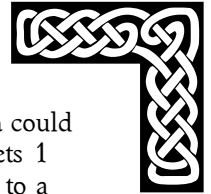
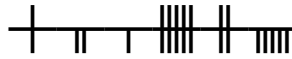
Threads of gold and silver

Delving into the nature of the Web is hard. It cannot be observed directly, except in visions, and is a highly abstract subject. Those sages that do discuss it often agree that there are certain especially important strands, describing them according to their visualisation. The most commonly passed on versions are the veins and arteries of the Web, or the threads of gold and silver among the mundane. We shall just call them Threads. They include Valour, Generosity, Craft and The Land.

Threads run everywhere, and the ideal of "the fitness of things" is that they should be strong and healthy so that the qualities they embody thrive. However, they can become frayed or even broken, and places where this happens have a wrongness about them. The sages say that in the Age of Madness the Threads suffered great damage, and some places still bear the scars.

Threads can also attach to people, known as "Threadbearers". This is rare, usually occurring only in those who have dedicated themselves to a certain occupation and way of life that brings them into strong accord with a Thread. They carry it with them, and may draw upon it for aid in appropriate situations, but must make sure they continue to act in accord with it. A person carrying a healthy Thread can help to heal a place where that Thread is damaged.





Basic combat example

Here's a work-through using just the basic combat rules (with players who were used to the system there'd be other stuff going on). Our example character, Mitch Brophy, has turned down the wrong alleyway and come face to face with a heavily built chap with an evil grin. This is Bert "Masher" Jones. He works for one of Mitch's past associates and has been instructed to deliver a message, mostly consisting of lots of pain. Fight!

Mitch's combat stats look like this in abbreviated form: Init +5, Knife 5/1 (the number of dice to roll, followed by the base damage), Phys Res 2, Energy 1.

Masher wields a gnarled wooden club - a primitive weapon, but he knows how to use it. He has Talented Vigour and Club 2. His combat stats are Init +2, Club 4/2, Phys Res 3, Energy 2.

Round 1. Mitch's player rolls 3 for initiative, giving a total of 8. The GM rolls 4 for Masher, totalling 6. The countdown starts: 10, 9, 8... Mitch can act, but the GM rules that he has to spend a Free action drawing his knife, while Masher knew he was coming and had his club ready. Even so, Mitch can get a Full action on 7 just before Masher, and attacks. He rolls his 5 dice, getting 6, 5, 5, 3, 3 - the 6 explodes but fails, so that's 3 successes. Masher defends, but because he's not ready to act yet it's rushed, so he loses a die and only rolls 3: 4, 4, 2, which is 2 successes. One of Mitch's successes gets through. Adding his base damage 1, Masher has to resist 2 damage. With his 3 dice it's 4, 3, 2, so that's 1 success. He takes 1 damage, which is a Hurt. Masher's initiative drops by 1.

It's his turn now, though. His initiative total was 6; with the Hurt it's now 5. His club whips round with 4 dice, getting 3 successes. Mitch is ready, so he can defend normally with 5 dice: 3 successes lets him just avoid harm. The countdown continues with nothing further happening.

Round 2. Initiative: Masher only has +1 now, and he rolls a measly 1 for a total of 2. Mitch, on the other hand, rolls a glorious 6, for a total of 11 - he'll be able to act on 10 and 1. So when the phases start at 10 he's right there to follow up on his previous attack. It's not a great roll - just 2 successes. However, as Masher can only rush a defence up to twice his total which would be phase 4, the attack's too fast for him to defend at all and he's stuck with both attack successes plus

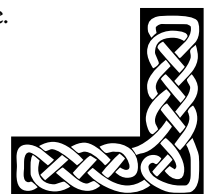
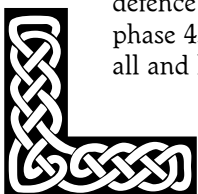
the knife's base damage, a total of 3 which could leave him Injured. His resistance only gets 1 success - not great, but it knocks it down to a Hurt. His initiative drops again.

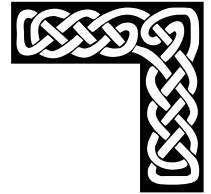
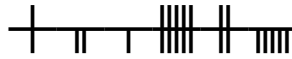
The count continues all the way down to 1, because now they both have actions then. Mitch's initiative modifier is higher, so he has the advantage and presses his attack. At least Masher can now defend normally; with his 4 dice he gets a decent 2 successes. Mitch's 5-dice attack gives 3 successes, so Masher's facing 2 damage. His resistance gives 1 success. The GM decides that he's becoming enraged at being whittled down by this runt, and spends an Energy point to get rid of the remaining point of damage.

Round 3. Mitch's initiative is 9. Masher's bonus is completely cancelled by the Hurts now, but he rolls a 6 - at least he'll get a defence. At the count of 9 Mitch attacks with an impressive 5 successes. Masher's defence is a solid 3, leaving 3 damage. The GM groans, expecting another Hurt, but the 6's go a bit mad and he gets 5 successes on his resistance!

Masher shrugs off the scratch and the evil grin returns. The count goes down to 6, and he swings the club with all the force he can muster, using his remaining Energy point for 5 dice of attack. Mitch is faced with 4 successes, and only gets 2 on his defence: 2 get through, making 4 damage. Mitch resists with 2 dice - and gets a total failure! If it were 3 damage it'd be worth spending his Energy point to avoid an Injury, but it won't help here. His initiative drops by 1 (so no more second actions) and he's at a penalty for actions.

Round 4. Initiatives are 8 for Mitch and 4 for Masher. Mitch is worried now, and he spends his Energy point on the attack: his normal 5 would be down to 4 for the Injury, but this puts it back to 5 again. Masher can just manage to rush a defence, down one die to 3: for suspense the GM rolls it first, and Mitch's player knows he has 1 success to beat. The attack gets just 1 success. Mitch's player decides it's a good time to use the *Lucky* Quirk that gives him a free re-roll, rather than wasting that Energy point (otherwise he could use a Destiny point). The 6's smile and he gets 6 successes! So 5 get through, plus 1 for the knife. Masher's resistance lets him down, with just 1 success: he takes 5 damage, leaving him Injured and Unconscious as the knife slips into a soft spot. Mitch hears people coming to investigate and leaves the scene as quickly as possible.





SPELL MAGIC

*He alone can read the signs
And he can read them well
But where he gets his power
There's no-one here can tell*

Ride to Hell, Horslips

Basics

Combat and magic are perhaps the two central pillars of the fantasy genre, giving rise to the phrase “swords and sorcery”. While combat offers characters the opportunity to vanquish a foe through heroic physical feats, magic opens the door to a world truly different from our own - a land where mysterious individuals pursue unguessable purposes, and where “mere” humans possess the ability to manipulate reality on a grand scale or a subtle one. Like combat, magic requires special rules, which is why it has a section of its own.

To work magic, first you have to become aware of energy flows that most people never notice. Then you learn to manipulate them, using your own will and life-force as levers, into ever more complex patterns. (The characteristic Celtic knotwork designs, with their intertwined threads and symbolic beasts, are used to visualise and record spells.) When the pattern is right you push energy through it to set the effect in motion. An accomplished caster can do all this in a split second and produce a significant effect without breaking a sweat, but beginners have to be less ambitious. Magic has risks too: if you lose control of the power you're manipulating it can have serious consequences.

Magic is not an everyday occurrence in Albion - that's what makes it magic. Although people know that these things occur, obvious magic is a cause for wonder. Those who can use it are both common, in the sense that most villages will have one or two people who know one or two simple charms, and rare, in the sense that there are few accomplished magicians working openly. A master magician will not have lists of dozens of spells, but a compact and versatile selection that suits their inclinations.



Types of magic

There are two different types of magic, distinguished by power source and effects.

Spirit magic uses the caster's own personal power, usually in a simple and direct way. It includes such effects as controlling the mind and actions of another, augmenting physical and mental abilities, and dealing with the spirit world.

World magic is perhaps more sophisticated, using the caster's personal power as a sort of lever to affect the (sometimes massive) forces of the physical world by pulling on the strands of the Web. Examples include controlling elements and forces (e.g. light, fire, water, weather), dealing with the living realm of plants and animals, and working with chance and fate themselves.

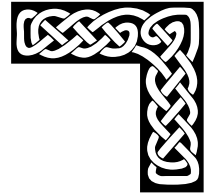
Practitioners usually follow Spirit or World Magic, but there are those who study both. In human society these latter are Magicians, rare individuals who specialise in the study of magic.

For each magic type the spells are divided into three **Realms** to reflect their different emphases. For Spirit they are Body, Mind and Essence; for World they are Elemental, Living and Web. Some occupations can only choose spells from particular Realms.

Some spells exist as both Spirit and World versions. When you learn one of these you must note which it is, because it can only be used with the appropriate skill; you can't cast the World version with your Spirit Magic skill or vice versa. If you want to do that you must learn the other version of the spell. However, familiarity with the effects does help you detect and counter the “wrong” version of the spell.

Types of spell

Charms are simple magic, usually with just one function. Most magic is of this type, and if someone happens to have picked up some magic along the way - perhaps taught by a friend or relative as a youngster, or by a teacher while training in a basically non-magical occupation - it'll be a Charm. They're easy to cast, and don't require any understanding of the general



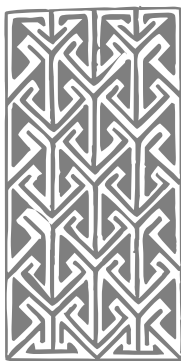
Ogham characters

These are spelled out in more detail than the animal spirits following because they'll be less intuitive for most readers. For each of the letters you'll find:

- The Irish name;
- The English name;
- A short descriptive title (invented for the game);
- The tree's traditional associations;
- Key kinds of action the Arcanum can aid.

The bulleted actions are phrased in very general ways, and should be interpreted accordingly. Many of them will apply to inner and outer situations - for instance, Ash's "Balancing contrary forces" could be used to calm one's own conflicting emotions or to seek a settlement between hostile factions. They're not exclusive uses of Arcana, but more a sort of "core syllabus" - the GM should allow other dramatic uses which fit the associations.

Regarding the order in which they're presented: the characters are traditionally seen in groups according to the shape of their ogham, for instance the first group is 1-5 downstrokes.



Birch

┐ *Beith* The White Lady

This delicate, white-barked tree is hardy, fast-growing and quick to colonise new areas. The paper-like bark does not rot. The sweet sap can be made into beer and wine. Birch is associated with beginnings as it is one of the first trees to leaf, bringing links with love affairs, births, initiations and Spring. It also has purifying properties, driving out the old to make way for the new and cleansing illness and evil spirits. The heads of brooms were made of birch twigs. With its ever-moving leaves and branches it has an affinity with air.

- Beauty and grace
- Beginnings
- Cleansing and purification

Rowan

┌ *Luis* The Fire Serpent

This graceful tree has powerful associations with magic and protection. It grows in higher places than almost any other native tree. The vivid red berries bear a tiny five-pointed star, and were said to have the power of rejuvenation; like the dramatic autumn foliage they symbolise fire and the sun. It offers the greatest protection against enchantment of any tree. It is linked with the power of the land, and with the dragons and serpents which symbolise earth energies; it's often found in places of power to provide protection and balance. It generally embodies moving, balancing and protective energy. It is sometimes called the quicken tree.

- Protection from magic and the supernatural
- Working with the power of the land
- Increasing energy

Alder

└ *Fearn* The Foundation of Craft

This tree shows connections with water, earth, fire and air. It grows on marshland and the banks of streams and rivers, its seeds carried on the water. Its roots hold the banks together and fix nitrogen to enrich the soil. It is prized by smiths and potters for hot-burning charcoal, and is the best wood for whistles and pipes. In water the wood becomes hard as stone and resists decay, so is used for bridges, jetties, foundations, boats and

