Overview

In the Ravenwood setting, there are several forms of magic available, more than most fantasy settings and more elaborate than settings that do have multiple magic systems. To account for this, this supplement will do its best to both explain the magic systems and what they can accomplish. This will hopefully provide clarity to the magic systems themselves and help those that use the jump get an idea on how the setting functions overall.

I will admit, I'm not the best at explaining things, so, some of what I describe here will not come through very well. If that's the case, I'd like you to comment on this document, either with a question or a suggestion on how to better handle it, as a comment rather than an edit. At least that way I can get an idea for what people think and use what works best from the suggestions without confusing people about how things work.

See Here for the google docs version where you can make the comments.

Mana

Mana is, in essence, the energy of potential given form within the hands of those that tap into it, allowing it to be shaped by the will of the individual. For those without the will, mana will simply form natural structures that offer some minor benefits, this even includes objects or places, not simply living entities. Even the undead will naturally form such structures. Particularly strong or refined versions of these structures can result in rudimentary spell matrices that, given the will, can be utilized by others, though these are often limited to minor capabilities.

The study of mana and its manipulation is known as thaumaturgy, which is split into six main disciplines that divide farther into various sub-disciplines, or schools, of magic. However, prior to the discovery of the various disciplines and schools was the simplest manifestation of mana's power, its natural dormant state and ability to expand. Before modern thaumaturgy, mana was simply thought to be a method of strengthening the body, what is commonly referred to as ki or life essence, and was used to bolster stamina, speed healing, and reduce the need for sustenance or air. This use is an innate trait of mana being within the body and only its growth within the body was an active manifestation. By cycling mana through the body, it is possible for one to expand their reserves, and in the past, this was the only method of mana use known. It wasn't until centuries after that the first true manifestation of thaumaturgy was discovered, the Protection or Aura Discipline. This led to further study that created the Enhancement discipline, the effects of which resulted in the development of Sorcery and, later, Wizardry. Finally, the study of other forms of mana manipulation, specifically alchemy, led to the creation of Witchcraft and Shamanism. It is entirely possible that a new discipline could emerge, but it has been nearly seven hundred years since the last discipline, Shamanism, was discovered, whatever would emerge as a new discipline would, inevitably, be quite unusual.

There are three classifications of mana use; Dormant, Active, and Hybrid. Dormant mana usage doesn't disrupt the passive effects of mana, not just because it doesn't, but because it can't on its own. Dormant forms of thaumaturgy are less versatile than the Active or Hybrid forms of thaumaturgy but are easier to master and put to use than the other forms. The Protection and Enhancement disciplines fall in this category. Active mana usage requires the mage to take full control of their mana, resulting in it not providing the proper resonance that provides its passive benefits and making dormant uses of mana far more difficult to accomplish. Active forms of thaumaturgy are incredibly versatile, but take a lot more practice than either Dormant or Hybrid applications. This also means that Active mana usage can't be used while the mage's mana is Dormant, effectively making it Active before it can even be used. The Sorcery and Wizardry disciplines fall in this category. Hybrid mana usage is a middleground of Dormant and Active uses, able to be used while mana is both Active and Dormant and easier to utilize than Active and more versatile than Dormant uses. While Hybrid forms of thaumaturgy are usable in both states of mana usage, they also have two states, one for while the mage's mana is dormant and another for when it's active instead. The Witchcraft and Shamanism disciplines fall in this category.

Protection, as a discipline, expands on the innate properties of mana, specifically the healing and reinforcing nature of dormant mana. Simply bringing the mana to the surface and allowing it to form a coating on the user's own skin, it acts as an innate form of simple armor and can weave wounds shut or set broken bones in extreme circumstances, though it would not be able to fully heal the bone on its own, simply accelerating the natural rate of healing rather than actively repairing the damage done. While seen as simplistic, the protection discipline actually has several schools focused around it, the foremost of which is the Armored Aura school, a school focused on the near reflexive hardening of the mana to improve its defensive properties. Others allow such things as dulling pain, infusing the hardening effect into an object to reinforce its structure, and even repairing equipment as if it were a living being, giving it a slow rate of repair, so long as it isn't completely broken. Many a knight has practiced this discipline for the added defense it offers. However, the greatest benefit comes from physical conditioning and removing

imperfections from an object. A Protection user's slow healing actually allows them to condition their bodies to a greater degree, combined with the reduced sustenance needs, they can potentially achieve greater physical capabilities than the peak of mundane human achievement through simple conditioning, nothing more. This can even be used on an object to remove imperfections that would, otherwise, weaken its structure. This often makes a blade wielded by a protection user much more resilient and in need of much less maintenance than a blade not treated in this way, though imperfections would start to build again without continued use of the discipline.

After the discovery of the Protection discipline, it wasn't long until someone attempted to focus the power internally instead of at skin level, forcing it through muscle, bone, and tendon. The first attempts at this often resulted in injury as muscle was reinforced without affecting bone or tendon, or a movement made caused internal damage from not using it to strengthen their organs. Still, the result was the Enhancement discipline, where mana is focused through and woven into the internals of the body to augment them, effectively allowing the mana to expand on the capabilities of their internal structures. The most common example is a direct augmentation of strength or speed from weaving mana directly into the musculature of the individual, along with the supporting structures. However, this is not the end of what it can accomplish. Focusing the mana through the nervous system, specifically the brain, can improve cognition, memory, and even protect against mental influences, though this is considered an advanced usage of Enhancement as a misstep can lead to headaches, migraines, temporary or permanent memory loss, and brain hemorrhaging. Thankfully, death from such an attempt is considered impossible as the concentration is often broken before damage can become too severe. Some have managed mental enhancement in stages to allow for greater heights, but this is considered a crutch as it uses more mana than a single application

Sorcery is the first Active form of mana usage discovered, as well as the one commonly seen as 'natural' due to the fact sorcerers are often born as sorcerers, even if the skills for it can be learned with practice, though this only started to occur after the discovery of alchemy and the dormant forms of thaumaturgy. Sorcery is focused on the construction of a Spell Matrix, a new concept for mana use. Spell Matrices are constructions of mana that has solidified enough to allow normal mana to flow through it and be shaped into a new form, creating a spell. The sorcerer must push the mana from their body while maintaining control of it, then shape it, all at once, into a Spell Matrix, set it enough to hold together, then trigger it to run the mana used in its construction through the Matrix as it collapses and forms the spell. This requires intense focus and the ability to visualize the Spell Matrix, but it allows for a great deal of flexibility in the casting itself. However, as each casting needs the Spell Matrix to be made anew, it is inefficient. Mnemonic triggers, such as specific gestures, spoken words, and even mental tricks can be used to ease the construction of a Spell Matrix, and most sorcerers naturally develop such aids even when they don't know the process themselves.

After the discovery of sorcery and how it behaves, Wizardry was created. A far more structured and regimented form of the same, slower, more methodical, but also more efficient and resilient. Where sorcery creates temporary spell matrices that consume themselves, wizardry creates stable spell matrices that are fueled from stored mana, able to be repeatedly used rather than needing to remake the matrix each casting. This is largely done by building the spell matrix slowly, piece by piece until it is a full spell matrix and making sure each component is as perfectly formed as possible, to the specifications of the actual caster as many develop little tweaks to personalize their spells. The mana used to build the matrix is hardened by this slower process, making it more difficult to dispel, and the more precise matrix makes fueling it more efficient, however, it is impossible to construct a wizardry matrix quickly, requiring significant prep time or dabbling in sorcery to gain that degree of versatility, not an uncommon occurrence. Another boon of this is that a wizard can build a base matrix, then have several sub-matrices attached to the base matrix, fitting several spells into a single matrix. A final benefit of wizardry is the ability to create mana stores, a spell matrix designed to simply store extra mana that can be used to fuel an existing matrix, something sorcerers are not able to benefit from without dabbling into wizardry. Most wizards are not, however, able to have more than a few such stores formed at any given time without interfering with other matrices.

Next is one of the two forms of hybrid thaumaturgy, Witchcraft, developed by studying the principles of alchemy. Every physical object possesses a natural mana channel in it, like a small part of a spell matrix, some more complete than others. These channels can be shaped and merged together with channels within other objects to form full spell matrices. This is alchemy, natural magic. Witchcraft takes that principle and expedites it. A hedge mage will pull the mana channels from objects, usually destroying the objects in the process, and combine them with each other to form a spell matrix that can then be used for casting, or added onto another matrix to refine or enhance it. Spell matrices created in this way are often more akin to sorcery in that the spell matrix is consumed in the casting, but are much easier to cast due to simply rearranging existing matrices. This can be done while the hedge mage's mana is dormant, not needing any mana investment. However, a hedge mage can use active mana to instead copy the channel, rather than than extracting it, and cast using the same object multiple times, or to harden the matrix and fuel it with normal mana, though the matrix will still only be good for a few castings in this case. Objects can also be alchemically treated to reinforce a mana channel or alter its properties slightly, making them able to be used repeatedly, either a set number of times or recharging slowly by absorbing ambient mana.

Finally, there is what is known as Shamanism, developed after the development of Witchcraft and expanding on the principles in a new direction. A shaman is able to tune their mana towards specific elements of the natural world that make the mana easier to turn towards a desired result. While best used when paired with another form of thaumaturgy, shamanism on its own has some simple, but effective, benefits. While dormant, the mana will grant an additional benefit on top of the normal ones based on the currently tuned element, such as wind making them faster and lighter on their feet while water could make them more flexible and have greater force behind their blows. While active, however, the shaman gain a degree of control over the force or element they are tuned towards, with the strength of this control being based on the size of their mana pool, something far more potent than it seems as they do not expend mana to use this control, making shamanism one of the few methods that does not rely on spending mana to be useful. The classical elements aren't the only ones that can be tuned, Light, Plant, Animal, Healing, and even something as odd as Emotion can be tuned in, though such effects can be more difficult to figure out. These can have some truly exotic or strange effects. Keeping mana tuned is a constant mental strain and grows more difficult as time goes on, which can force their mana to snap to neutral once more if they aren't careful. Training to maintain the tuning of an element will naturally ease the burden with that element, and mastery of it can make tuning into that element indefinitely a possibility. It is also possible to anchor tuned mana into an object, imprinting it with something akin to what's used in Witchcraft, which can then act as a focus for the use of the imprinted elemental mana.

Combining these methods of thaumaturgy is essential to be considered an archmage, though the dormant methods are often ignored by dedicated mages and left to their more martial cousins; the spellblades and mage knights.. Skilled mages are able to create a single persistent spell matrix as a base using wizardry, then utilize witchcraft and sorcery to build up a more complex spell matrix for a more potent spell, which is fueled by mana tuned with shamanism to achieve the effect with less mana than would otherwise be necessary and pulsed in much the way enhancement or protection thaumaturgy is used to reinforce and empower the spell matrix. Those able to master this melding of thaumaturgic methods are considered archmages.

Delfire

Delfire is a naturally occurring magical phenomena that creates a semi-solid orb of coalesced energy surrounded by a flame like corona of more ethereal power. An orb of delfire is actually a collection of multiple magical energies that form stable spell matrices intertwined into a single one with multiple uses, this creates a shell that contains the many energies that make up and maintain the orb of delfire. Simply existing, however, slowly burns through the energy stored within this shell of matrices, producing the flame-like aura that surrounds the orb and represents how close the orb is to dying. The flames from a fresh orb of delfire extend roughly six inches from the orb, but quickly die down to half that within the first few days as it stabilizes, an orb will burn at this size for roughly a week before the aura starts to shrink down, taking roughly a second week to burn out completely.

While anyone is capable of using delfire orbs if they can push energy into it, sustaining one is only possible for those with a specialized metaphysical nature that allows them to store the orbs within their body where the presence of abundant life force and naturally occurring magical flows help to sustain the orbs without expending the energy already inside of it. Such individuals are known as Kilns. Kilns have a slightly higher than normal body temperature and are resistant to disease, poison, curses, and other influences, the later of which is enhanced by having orbs of delfire stored within the kiln's body.

Storing an orb of delfire within their body ties up a small amount of the kiln's life force, effectively reducing their stamina levels by a small amount, though some kilns that also have access to mana can substitute their mana for life force, instead reducing their effective mana capacity. This tied up energy is often unnoticed at first, with only one or two orbs available, but with more orbs of delfire, a kiln will find themselves tiring more quickly than normal, taking as little as six before the drain is noticeable, though some are known to have a higher capacity before they start to show signs of reduced stamina. Troll-blooded individuals in particular are capable of storing dozens of orbs before seeing noticeable decreases.

The actual effects of delfire vary significantly based on the energies that compose it, what matrices have formed, what energy is used to fuel the effects, and the way the energy is channeled through it. Many orbs have three or four related effects that can have wildly different results based on the energies used. Normally, kilns will use physical stamina, not life force but actual metabolic energy, to fuel an orb of delfire, producing the common effects associated with an orb, other energies, such as false divinity, mana, life force, or even blood echoes, can result in a wider array of effects, though they are usually variations of the base effect rather than entirely new ones. Most orbs of delfire will, however, have some method of offensive or defensive use that is viable, if not optimally, for combat scenarios even if their uses are clearly not meant for that purpose.

It is possible to create orbs of delfire through the use of alchemy, a complex process that cascades several forms of magic together at the same moment the alchemical processes form spell matrices. While difficult to set up due to both how much precision is necessary and how some of the reagents need to be prepared, it can allow for custom designed delfire orbs that would be nearly impossible to find "in the wild" as it were.

The main advantage of delfire is how easy it is to use, merely feeding energy into an orb will result in an effect. Finding ways to maintain delfire without needing to be a kiln is an ongoing process with only a single success from the Crimson Fields, yielding the delfire forge, which has yet to be replicated by anyone since the original creator's death, leaving only a limited number that are highly sought after.

Alchemy

As was mentioned in the explanation of Witchcraft, *'Every physical object possesses a natural mana channel in it,'* and are considered to be small parts of a spell matrix. Where Witches pulls these channels out of the object to form a spell matrix they can use for casting, alchemists instead shape these objects and substances, fit them together, and bind the individual channels together to achieve a desired effect. Alchemy, sometimes called natural magic, is a slow and methodical power that always requires careful preparation of materials to achieve truly potent results, something that requires far more patience and study than even wizardry at times, though the basics are far easier to learn compared to the use of mana itself.

This process, the basic principle of alchemy, can be used in a few different ways. The first is the creation of potions, oils, tinctures, powders, and other such things using herbs, minerals, solvents, and other, softer materials. The second is based on the creation of artefacts, magical items that are made using the natural energy channels in the materials used in the artefact's creation. The third and final method allows an alchemist to process and shape the channels in an object, fuse them with others from similar materials.

Potions alchemy is the most common variety of alchemy and requires little training outside of knowing what individual components can do. This method uses liquids that have malleable energy channels that easily dissolve and absorb the energy channels of other substances to extract the desired results from the individual components. Such results are still built slowly and methodically, but need far less care and precision than other methods of alchemy, having some degree of in built leeway in how they are handled. Potions alchemy works to break down the bonds between the physical substance and the magical channels within that object, making them easier to extract and dissolve into the solvent, as well as being able to 'precombine' some of the channels as their physical carrier is broken down, such as the grinding of an herb with a salt acting as an abrasive to break the herb down and dissolve into the released juices, creating a primed set of channels that will combine as they are introduced into the solvent. Such mixtures will have the spell matrix that results from the dissolved components spread throughout it, seeming to break apart and recombine several times and getting smaller with each iteration, effectively making the potion carry innumerable, tiny versions of the spell matrix in each and every drop of the potion, though if this gets too diffuse it may weaken the potion while getting to concentrated will have it precipitate as a powder. This can then be distilled into a drinkable liquid or an oil that can be applied to an object to have the effects apply to that object. Some potions will only allow for one such effect, while others could go either direction. Potions alchemy is also used in the creation of alchemical alloys and other forms of arcane metallurgy, though this isn't an often pursued field.

Artifice alchemy, on the other hand, is a far more exacting methodology. The creation of alchemical artefacts, or magical items if you prefer, takes a significant amount of craftsmanship, practice, and meticulous planning even before you start the crafting process. This methodology is largely focused on individual, solid components being combined into a greater whole, however, certain alchemical oils can be used to alter or add onto the spell matrix created within the artefact. The alchemist takes time cutting down the magical channels within an object by shaping the physical object itself then fitting the individual components together in such a way that the resulting artefact has the desired spell matrix incorporated directly into its construction, a process that can take several weeks, or even months, even for a skilled alchemist. Once an artefact is complete, a simple catalyst is used to give a small surge of mana through the spell matrix, setting it and making the entire construction more robust as a result. A simple shift in a gem won't cause the matrix to shift after this catalyzing effect. Wands, rods, and staves are commonly made with this method, as are most forms of enchanted jewelry. Weapons can be difficult to make with this method as the shape of the artefact may well conflict with the desired weapon. Minor enchantments, such as from a guard or pommel being embedded with certain gems and connected with etchings in the metal, are more easily achieved.

The third method, called fortified alchemy, is often utilized as a supplement for the other methods rather than being used individually, however, it can have some truly impressive results to those alchemists that focus on it. This method focuses on the movement of the natural channels within an object, not shaping them, but altering their position, shrinking or growing them within the confines of the object, and moving them from one object to another. On its own, this can actually be used to focus several mana channels into a single object, potentially creating a small spell matrix within that object, as is the case with most magic gems. It can also be used to reinforce a mana channel that two objects share as long as they match up properly, allowing for more power to be flowed through them without a chance of critical failure. Truly skilled fortifiers are actually able to use the transfer of mana channels to fuse one material into another to create a composite material that has the traits of both, however, this is a difficult process and requires the two materials be similar enough to not conflict, such as two gems or two samples of metal, with masters able to branch just a bit farther so they could, for example, combine wood and metal together. Fortified alchemy is also used for the creation of mana batteries.

There are several subcategories that are not covered above, specialized variations such as blood alchemy or internal alchemy, which are rare and often dangerous or require certain traits most alchemists will not naturally possess. The only example of a common alchemy within this category is golemancy, the process of converting prepared materials into a golem with an infusion of life force, often in small enough quantities that it will only shave a few minutes from their final lifespan. This is actually a rather haphazard method of alchemy compared to the above as all it requires is a collection of materials, a bit of blood, and a bit of alchemist's oil to act as a catalyst for a reaction and can result in berserk creations that will rampage or in simple-minded servants that can't be of much use in battle. However, by shaping and combining the materials ahead of time, these negatives can be mitigated. This method works by using a life force infused catalyst to create a reaction within the channels in the materials used, forming a complex, intertwined spell matrix from the parts available and sympathetically tying them to the one that donated the life force used in the process, allowing the spell matrix to take on traits of a living create and animate the materials that make up its shell. This shell being broken beyond repair will cause the spell matrix to collapse and create a sympathetic feedback that will damage the life force donor.

Ritual Magic

The oldest form of magic and the basis on which all mana-based magic is said to originate from, ritual magic is able to accomplish nearly anything, so long as the proper process is devised and enough power is there to fuel the effect. This is shown well with the rituals of propagation, which can completely change the race of an individual, however, these rituals require the full power of several dozen experienced mages to accomplish.

The most common form of ritual magic consists of what's known as incantations, incredibly large and complex spell matrices built up through exactingly precise processes, carried through a physical medium of some sort. While the exact medium used to build the matrix can be just about anything, some are more potent or suited to a specific ritual than others and can make them more efficient as a result. The matrices made in this way are similar to those created via wizardry but are so large and complex that not even advanced archmages are able to form them well enough to actually function, and require enough power to function that it would take several mages to fuel a single casting. To help mitigate this is a very basic incantation, one that can store any sort of power and convert it into one usable by the ritual as a whole, allowing the ritual to be fueled over the course of days, weeks, or months rather than fighting against the energy leaking from the ritual, though that only occurs of the ritual markings are off, but considering the level of precision needed for them not to be off, they usually will be. This is further manipulated and shaped via exacting phrases, chants, movements, and meditations to trigger the final stages of the ritual and complete it, sometimes requiring several people working on concert to do so.

While incantations are the most common form of ritual, they are not the most usable, that goes to the rituals used by ritualists that have fewer scruples or a more pragmatic and brutal approach to rituals. These rituals are based on a sacrifice and are both faster and more readily usable than incantations, but are subsequently less powerful as they are often far less precise. These rituals are quick to set up compared to incantations, taking hours rather than days, and take the life essence of a being and convert it into a power source for a specific spell matrix that the ritual constructs and anchors to the ritualist at the completion of the ritual. The sacrifice can either be a lethal one, providing a considerable amount of power based on the creature sacrificed, or it can be a sacrifice of blood paid by the ritualist or another without taking life. While blood is a weaker source of power than life, barring heavily magical bloodlines, it is also more sustainable and palatable than a lethal sacrifice would be. Regardless, these rituals can be refueled in battle as blood is shed and lives are taken, allowing a skilled ritualist to keep on using their ritually made spells as long as they can keep topping up the power stored in the spell matrix. A cruder version of these rituals also exists, used by barbaric tribes in times of old and kept around due to their sheer expediency. These crude rituals use blood shed in battle to write simple runes onto weapons, skin, or armor to give them power, lasting as long as the blood remains fresh and able to be built upon and layered if need be. Some even use scarification to make it so the blood shed will naturally focus its power into the scars instead.

With incantations being common and sacrificial rituals being more usable, the magic of ritual enchanting is far more focused on sustainability. While similar in some ways to incantations and sacrificial rituals, ritual enchanting is based on anchoring and infusing power into an object in a way that sustains the spell matrix and the power used to keep the spell matrix functioning self-contained and self-sustaining. Such enchantments will last as long as the matrix isn't broken and will provide the object a magical ability that anyone holding the object can access, similarly to how alchemical enchanting creates a spell matrix in an object. However, ritual enchanting does not require special materials to function nor the object to be built with the spell matrix intact, just time and power with an already completed object. Because of this, the effect of ritual enchanting are the most stable and portable of all ritual magics. This can easily be combined with the other forms of ritual magic or with alchemical enchanting to create something overall more potent, though there is a warning of using sacrificial ritual enchanting as the soul of the one being sacrificed can taint the final result.

More specialized rituals do exist, such as the chimeric rituals created and utilized by Serra Dertak, better known as the fusionist, as well as the various rituals of propagation and ritual traps. These blur the lines between incantations and sacrificial rituals or ritual enchanting, respectively, while ritual traps are a variation of ritual enchanting that take notes from the quicker methods used by sacrificial rituals. Similar rituals can be made but they are by no means intuitive, taking considerable effort in trial and error to make functional. This is especially true of rituals of propagation as new races can be made if you can discover the correct methodology, as shown with Taylor Rose in the Ravenwood Setting Supplement as she changed her race to one never before seen with a ritual of propagation she devised herself.

There is a final sort of ritual, incredibly rare and hard to create. These are perfected rituals which charge themselves over time, absorbing tiny amounts of ambient power until they build to a critical point and cast themselves, even if the ritualist that built the ritual is long dead. The reason for this rarity is that such rituals require absolute perfection otherwise the energy would simply leak out before it could actually start to build. Such rituals can be hundreds of times more potent than any other form of ritual and it is believed that the effect that pulls locations from the material into the Demiplane are the result of one such ritual built on a hot spot of magical energies.

Rituals are able to benefit from being combined with other forms of magic, specifically alchemy, thaumaturgy, and delfire. These can all act as shortcuts to a ritual and can aid in speeding it up or allow a ritual to happen in a space more confined than it otherwise would be able to be set up in.

Curse Bending

This ability is utterly unique to the people of Ravenwood, none that have come to the Demiplane before or since Ravenwood's arrival have shown this ability, the closest thing being one or two instances of people with resistance to the effects curse bending works on. It's a mystery exactly what caused this ability to emerge, whether it was the favor of Khaine, an effect of the Ebonwood's natural magics, an ancestry linked intrinsically to the town, or a geomantic effect that took root when Ravenwood was dragged into the demiplane, it is what gave Ravenwood the chance to survive and thrive until they could make it back to the material plane.

Firstly, curse bending, or curse twisting (both terms are used and are interchangeable), makes those that possess it more adaptable and resilient, magically and spiritually speaking. The people of Ravenwood show a natural resistance to harmful magics, nowhere near the level of a jotunbrud but still quite impressive, and a magical presence that will shift to make those effects resonate and integrate with them instead of letting the normal effects take hold. This slows and reduces the effects of a curse, poison, disease, or virtually anything else that would afflict the person, so a curse that would cause the target's bones to erupt from their body and twist into a prison would instead cause bone spikes to slowly emerge, still painful and restrictive in the long run, but not immediately crippling or lethal.

It is, however, the second part that makes curse bending such a blessing for the people of Ravenwood, once an effect is at a proper resonance and integrated, it will start to be broken down and reconfigured into an inherent spell matrix, akin to those found in magical beasts, and fully incorporate themselves into the magical presence of the individual. For less magical afflictions, this will instead reflect on the spiritual and physical nature of the individual, leading to the development of natural mutations to take advantage of them. For poisons this will usually mean a simple immunity, though some have developed the ability to generate the poison instead, while diseases will often become symbiotic with the host. This is, however, a slow process, and something that occurs too quickly (even with the slowing effect of curse bending) could remain just as deadly.

Thirdly is that this will even work with implants, someone with curse bending will not reject implanted organs or blood from another person and will actually find them incorporated more easily into their body. Given time, the organ or blood could become a natural feature of the individual. This is especially true of magical organs and alterations as they carry spell matrices that can be easily incorporated into their body. This does, however, accelerate the demiplane's mutagenic traits and can lead to the development of new features, such as the heart of a lion being implanted also causing them to gain claws and the ability to roar, with just enough magic to imbue said roar with a bit of fear. However, it is blood that has the most interesting effects. Blood carries a bit of power in it, with it getting stronger with a more potent bloodline, and curse bending would allow one to incorporate multiple bloodlines into their own, enhancing the power within their blood and refining it. While not specifically useful on its own, a ritualist can make good use of blood empowered with this method.

Fourthly is the fact that possession become dangerous for the possessor if the target of their possession is a curse bender. The altered spiritual nature of a curse bender allows them to trap someone trying to possess them within their spiritual presence, even if the possession has allowed them to take hold and control their body, the curse bender will eventually be able to pull themselves back to the front and regain control of themselves while trapping the possessor within themselves. From there, they can access some of the abilities of the possessor, even gaining access to some of their memories if they try. This can be a great source of strength if used properly, as shown with Namira, but is one of the more dangerous forms of curse bending as powerful creatures can still have control. Accessing more of a trapped creature's power is possible, requiring their resistance to the curse bending being eroded by the will of the curse bender, which can take some time to accomplish.

Fifthly, cursed objects become a source of strength. Now, many cursed objects offer a great boon with an even greater downside, however, a curse bender can mitigate many of the downsides from using cursed objects and even twist the negatives as they do other curses, as is the case with Maxwell, a master of cursed artefacts. As many cursed artefacts already provide a benefit, it is rare that curse bending will turn the negative into a boon, instead mitigating the downsides to allow the existing boon to be more useful, however, more extreme downsides can be bent into an additional boon, given time, as shown with the sword Maxwell uses. This also functions for cursed locations. Cursed locations are difficult to bend as they stretch over a large area, but, bending an entire cursed location would allow one to tap into the power of that locale, creating a permanent bond to the curse, or allow them to absorb it into themselves and create a new power for themselves.

Sixthly, a curse bender can potentially gain insights into unnatural and harmful phenomena, such as the Spectre Storms that roll through the Ebonwood once every year. These insights are imprints of the phenomena within the mind and can be used to modify the manifestations of other curses the curse bender has already put under their control or to help in gaining access to more of the power of possessors. It can also help to unravel the effects of such phenomena if studied enough, which can lead to the development of new abilities.

Finally, the ultimate manifestation of curse bending is to subsume a curse so fully that the user gains the ability to recreate it and afflict it on others on a whim. These individuals, called Curse Masters, are rare, possessing the strongest manifestations of curse bending in Ravenwood, with only two residing in Ravenwood, one of whom dies before he can even learn of it and the other of whom rejects the ability; Torg Ironnail and Amelia Blackmoor. The power of such things, however, is amazing, as shown when Amelia finally embraces her abilities as a Curse Master to put Lord Blood on the backfoot long enough for the rest of the people she was traveling with to escape before she does so herself, badly wounded but alive. It was the only time the full power of a curse master was unleashed.

Delirium

Madness. It is the defining characteristic of Delirium and those not suited for the power will quickly find their mind awhirl as the chaotic patterns, bloodlust, and obsession start to take hold. However, for those actually suited to this power, it offers a great boon. Delirium itself is somewhat contradictory, a manufactured substance akin to a drug and an energy innate to the person, just waiting to be tapped into. A twisted parody of ki, of life force, but completely separate from it in a way that makes it uniquely its own thing. This nature is part of the danger of its use.

At a basic level, Delirium augments the user, improves them in a number of ways. Just possessing access to Delirium seems to make its user more capable than they already were, even if they don't utilize it actively, and even then it reacts easily, borderline instinctively, to their will to further improve upon this trait. This can, however, be a detriment to those that want to suppress their use of delirium for whatever reason, especially if they are incompatible with the source. Holding back delirium use can be much more difficult than actually using it, it is something learned early on for most users if they aren't in the arena of the Crimson Fields.

However, the simple physical augmentation wouldn't be enough to make it so powerful. No. It's Delirium's ability to *bend the rules* that makes it so potent. The physical augmentation is merely a side effect of that, allowing one to put their full strength behind their actions through much smaller, less costly movements. However, bending the rules goes a little farther. A slash of a sword will normally only be dangerous at the edge, but, a skilled delirium user could extend that edge beyond the borders of the sword or send the slash flying across a distance, turning their sword into a focus for ranged combat. Bracing a shield would normally just allow for an impact to be better dispersed, but with a touch of delirium, it could create a dispersing barrier that'd turn aside even lightning if the user was strong enough. Leaps of a delirium user can border on flight with how they can direct their movements through the air, small movements of their body causing sudden shifts in their trajectory and possibly even sending them farther into the air. Truly skilled users are able to even use air as a platform to balance on and jump off of if they do things right. Delirium archers are just as impressive, able to cause their shots to fire faster enough they create a sonic boom or pierce through stone without breaking and only barely slowing down, or causing the arrows to curve in their flight path, all by altering how they interact with the world in small, subtle ways.

Some more interesting examples of delirium based combat include a gladiator (not the race) in the Crimson Fields that uses steel wire as a weapon, using delirium to make the wires dance in a way that slices through his opponents while never tangling or getting in his way, even burrowing through the ground to latch onto foes and hold them back from attacking, a dervish (swordsman that uses scimitars) that uses delirium to make them move fast enough they appear to have six arms, and a skeletal knight that uses delirium to fire off his finger bones as a form of ranged attack, with the ability to return them to his hands at will. For other examples, see the Ravenwood Setting Supplement as it has several individuals that use delirium extensively.

While this applies exceptionally well to the battlefield, but other skills can be enhanced just as well. Delirium crafting and delirium boosted medicine are both commonly found in the demiplane. Virtually any craft can benefit from the addition of delirium, rope twists together more firmly and responds well to its purpose, clothes will feel softer as the threads weave together more tightly and can even provide a small degree of protection, even wood finds itself less prone to rotting from the addition when carved. However, smithing is where it truly shines. A delirium smith can hammer metal until it gets *denser*, compressing the metal to make it more durable and reacts as a better metal in general, alloys that would normally be impossible, like the mixing of mithril and adamantine which have opposing magical traits, become possible, edges are sharpened to beyond a razor's edge with a simple whetstone, and all the while the actual properties of the object remain largely unchanged, not even growing heavier.

Delirium based medicine is similarly potent, primarily in the surgical sense, though even just applying wraps of bandages can be brought to a higher level. Surgeries that could take hours and have a low chance of survival, such as cutting into the abdomen to fix a ruptured length of intestines, would would be done in minutes with a high rate of survival if the person doesn't agitate the wound more than their normal bodily functions would, and just binding a wound, a deep gash for example, would naturally pull that wound shut and promote it to heal faster while preventing infection. This is where most of the mad sciences of this world come from as well, grafts of beast muscle onto an ordinary man to bolster their strength with that of the beast, implanting the venom sac and fangs of a serpent, replacing an eye with an enchanted ruby that can cast fireballs and have it remain functional, all are potentially viable, even naturalized to the creature in a way that leaves the modifications a part of them that will heal back into place if injured or removed. This can even be used to incorporate other sources into a creature, as Silver Priest did when creating the Reforged race.

Other skills commonly benefiting from delirium use include gardening, cooking (especially for those already familiar with alchemy), animal husbandry, and painting. Gardening and animal husbandry allow the quick development of new breeds through selective breeding and even the possibility of hybridization in such a way that it results in a viable hybrid that can breed true. Cooking can replicate some of the effects of alchemy and witchcraft in food, just cooking a meal with the right ingredients can lead to foods with toned down, but long lasting, versions of potion effects or even result in dangerous ingestibles that don't register as poison because, technically, there isn't any poison to be found. Painting can be used to imbue a more vibrant appearance in a painting that can actually invoke specific emotions for those that view it, which can have a number of side benefits.

As noted prior, Delirium bends the rules, it will let you do things you couldn't normally do, but doesn't let you do it without some method of accomplishing it set in the original skillset. Someone using delirium to try and make an alloy with only one metal and nothing added in would get nothing out of their delirium use.

Delirium has one more primary use, it touches on the minds of those that have previously used it, and all that have been exposed to it, picking up bits and pieces of various skills and knowledge over the years. This can be tapped into to get a crash course in a skill, effectively implanting the knowledge in the user's head, many delirium users get something similar when they first gain access to the source as battle is such an integral part of delirium and its creation, making it quite common to occur near automatically on gaining it. This can't be done often as it puts strain on the mind and can cause temporary or permanent mania from all the madness of those tied into the skills gained if the user isn't careful or shows a lack of restraint. Generally, this works about once a month with only head pain as a side effect, two if you want to avoid the overpowered migraines.

However, it is possible to access said skills on a temporary basis instead, leading to much less mental strain, but without the ingrained instinct that would come with a direct implant. This means that it's more akin to beginner's luck than anything else and often has some flaws mixed into it. Overuse can still lead to the mania, though it will only rarely lead to anything permanent.

Those incompatible with Delirium that try to use it are struck by increased aggression, bouts of manic frenzy, the development of various psychosis, and a steady decline in their ability to empathize the more they use Delirium. Some, with exceptional restraint, self-control, and someone or something to monitor and repair their mind, are able to use Delirium while incompatible and remain mostly sane, though they will likely still be odd in the end.

There are four races that make use of delirium in the Demiplane, the three varieties of arena fighter, the berserker, the champion, and the gladiator, as well as the volkan race, another race of the Crimson Fields. Each has a different method of tapping into delirium that uses aspects different from what others utilize themselves.

The first of these races is the Berserker. Berserkers have an extra reserve of delirium within them, isolated from the normal reserve they possess, where it becomes steeped in rage, hatred, frustration, fear, and other emotions which roil within it, bottled up until it either bursts forward of its own accord, usually when it's too much to hold back, or when the power is directly tapped into. This rage filled delirium causes a surge of adrenaline that mixes with it and becomes more akin to an alchemical stimulant, increasing the size, strength, and durability of the berserker in the process, but also pushing them into a wild rage. Taming this form allows the berserker to maintain their actual skill and can even force themselves to compress back to a more manageable size. This mix of emotional energy, delirium, and adrenaline is the basis of a berserker's power and they can focus it in some ways, however, it is difficult to control even by those that have managed to tame the rage. Even with this difficulty, it unlocks a great deal of physical strength in those able to use it.

The second of these races, the Gladiators, instead rely on a key aspect of delirium that is a bit less well known, the ability for it to store information. Gladiators use this trait with a reserve of delirium that hangs close to their body at all times to imprint the traits of weapons, armor, shields, and other objects into the delirium aura, which can then be used to enhance similar objects to carry some, or all, of those traits on top of their normal traits. By combining the traits of various weapons, armor, or shields, a gladiator can turn even a mediocre weapon, or even a weapon-like tool like a hatchet, made by a common blacksmith into a potent artefact designed for battle. This only works with inherent traits, however, ritual based enchantments and legacies cannot be so easily imprinted, though there are stories of gladiators breaking through their limits to be able to do so, but alchemical enchantments are able to be imprinted for this ability.

The last of the arena fighter races is the Champion, who possess an incredible affinity for delirium use beyond even the other delirium using races, including an amazing ability to access the combat skills held within delirium in general, which manifests as an innate ability to use any weapon, no matter how unorthodox, so long as it has been used to fight before, and even then, similarities with other weapons will allow them to create an effective style quickly. Champions were created well after the gladiators and berserkers, and Lord Blood took inspiration from both when forming the champions as a race, taking the internal reserve and aura from the two other races to combine them, to an extent. When a champion defeats a foe, they can take a moment to focus their power and, in doing so, create a channel through which they can harmlessly infuse that foe with delirium. Killing a foe infused in this way allows them to pull their physical abilities and skills and incorporate them into their internal reserves, accessible in much the same way as a gladiator does for their weapons. This also makes champions surprisingly good infiltrators as they can take on the physical characteristics of those they have slain.

Finally, there is the Volkan, a race of slave artisans created from fallen warriors in the arena that showed promise in other, less combat oriented ways. The volkan were made to make the weapons and armor used in the arena as well as to maintain the arena itself and this is reflected in their abilities with delirium. The brand on a volkan limits their power, but makes up for it with precision, making it more suited to various crafts, especially delirium forging, but it is their ability to treat virtually any material as if it were a forgeable metal that sets them apart. A volkan can, with some time to infuse a material with delirium, cause it to act as if it were iron during the forging process, allowing them to work with materials they normally wouldn't be able to and creating alloys with non-mineral substances, including parts of monsters and various plants. This is actually useful for alchemical enchanting and volkans show that they can achieve results similar to alchemical enchanting using only this ability. Those actually trained in alchemy are even better at the process.

Originally, the Shards of Rust and Ruin were two delirium forged swords, named Rust and Ruin, created by a genius of the craft and ‘gifted’ to Lord Blood where they were steeped in delirium stronger and purer than any found elsewhere in the demiplane. These swords were used in a fight against an abomination by the delirium avatar, where they shattered and were soaked in the blood of the abomination following their shattering. These shards absorb delirium and bring it closer to the delirium used by Lord Blood, much more potent than what is normally used by practitioners. The scars that form after the artifact is bound possess a similar, though somewhat lesser, effect than the shards themselves. This delirium can take on a physical presence, commonly to recreate the swords the shards came from, though it benefits from having a physical medium to bind to. This more pure delirium is also easily infused into materials, especially metals, for easy crafting. However, it is the ease with which the delirium can be used once the shards fully mature that gives this artifact its power. So matured, the power of the user’s delirium is enhanced to the point they could, in theory, nearly match Lord Blood in terms of raw manipulation ability, though not in actual skill. Some think this was actually Lord Blood’s goal, a way to find a challenge outside the abominations. The shards are considered the simplest of the artifacts of power due to its effects on its source being simple refinement, control, and raw power. However, with how it functions, it’s possible to replicate the abilities of Lord Blood and the races he’s created using the power from these shards.

Out of all the avatars, the avatars of Delirium are the simplest, largely taking the natural aspects of delirium and pushing them to levels most would be unable to achieve with even thousands of years of practice and cultivation of power. The main difference both have is their ability to infuse delirium into a living individual, which is believed to be something achievable by anyone with enough practice, most just aren’t able to live long enough to reach that level.

Lord Blood has a heavy focus on warfare with his use of delirium, combat is an obvious part of it, but his focus goes far beyond that, he actually possesses a mind for logistics and how to support the Crimson Fields, how to keep his people from rioting, though he doesn’t care so much if they fight, and with an application of delirium, can make sure his intentions and desires are well known, even across great distances, by simply cutting out all the intervening actions normally required for them. In battle, he is able to cut out the actual need to attack, simply using delirium to do the damage for him, however, he rarely uses this ability as he actually prefers to *do* the fighting. The crafting of arms and armor, siege weapons, and similar works are also within his purview, creating potent weapons and armor when he deigns to do so himself, and virtually instantly as he simply converts materials into the finished product. The last is his ability to train others, something he does briefly for anyone entering the arena, and like with all of his works, he cuts out the actual process and just gets the results. However, this process is something that led to the first berserker, and he has since explored how training people through delirium can create new races.

Master of the Hostel, on the other hand, has used delirium as a means to grip onto other powers, holding them as if they were physical objects and using them in his works quite often. He is the only avatar capable of using other sources in any fashion thanks to this ability. Bits of soul used as sutures, dream turned into a solvent for a medicine, drift used as scalpels, and much more. He can even do this to delirium and uses a form of shaped delirium to maintain some degree of control over his creations, though those that free themselves have some means of getting around this shard of his delirium. Some do believe that this ability may even allow the Master the ability to hold, shape, and ultimately utilize true divinity despite not being a god, and that this may be the final thing he’s seeking.

Dream

Dream is an unusual source of power, mental in nature but extending outside the mind of the one using it, a connection to the collective unconscious of thinking beings across several planes of existence. Every thought, regardless if it is rational, emotional, instinctive, or otherwise, produces a small amount of dream that adds itself to the collective unconscious, where it reinforces itself and grows, a near limitless supply of psionic power that can be drawn from by those that know how. .

The first method learned by most dream users is condensation, the process of taking Dream from their own mind and/or the collective unconscious and compressing it down into a bead within the user's mind. Such beads are called foci (singular focus) and are the basis of most forms of Dream use, many dream users only able to manifest their power as long as they have one focus available to them, and often needing many to do so. On its own, a focus adds psionic power to the mind as it allows the user to store more dream within their mind, reinforcing their will, making their thoughts clearer, and allowing them to push aside emotional responses to think clearly, while still feeling the emotions and not losing themselves to a purely rational mind (at least if they are compatible with Dream). A key note for this is that it takes more effort to make each new focus, this increase in difficulty is fairly linear and small enough that even beginners can have a dozen foci formed before they'll need great amounts of effort to create more.

Once a focus is formed, it can be tuned towards a certain effect, usually manifesting in the form of a physical or mental enhancement, that remains as long as the focus is left intact. This is often referred to as Resonance and is one of the most commonly used forms of Dream due to its passive nature. While the boosts themselves are small when taken individually, a single individual can maintain several foci, stacking or spreading the effects as they so choose, and able to retune the foci towards new effects with a few minute's of mental calm if they need to. It should, however, be noted that while a Dream user can have and tune multiple foci, it gets harder to tune them to the same effect as more are tuned into it, just like it's more difficult to make more foci. More skilled dream users can obviously tune more foci to the same effect. Effects that can be created in this way include bolstering physical attributes such as strength or agility, enhancing senses, making thoughts flow faster, and resisting magic.

There is also the ability to create clusters of Foci that are tuned to the same thing and resonate with each other as much as what they are tuned to, resulting in a greater increase from each focus in the cluster, however, actually forming a cluster of Foci is difficult and novice, or even adept, users of dream are unlikely to manage it. Clusters that aren't already tuned (or have their tuning cleared) can also be tuned to things normally not possible, such as the creation of another train of thought, allowing a user to have multiple thought streams at once. Other such abilities include being able to create a field where the user becomes aware of everything around them in the form of pericognition, or awareness of the present, clairvoyance and clairsentience to effectively scry distant locales, and thoughtsense, which allows the user to sense every mind within a given range.

A focus can also be cracked open to release a burst of psionic power strong enough to escape the barrier between the mind and the physical world, allowing for telekinetic surges that can be quite potent. This can also be used to, instead, greatly enhance the effect of the Resonance of that particular foci for a few moments, a focus geared towards mental speed would, when cracked, give at least ten times the result of the focus's Resonance would on its own, and this is increased as the user grows more skilled. The psionic energy can also be focused into crystalline constructs in this way, most of which are short lived and used largely as a means of attacking with a projectile, however, in some cases, these can be fed with power to maintain them after the fact to create solid weaponry formed entirely of psionic power. Similar constructs, even non-solid ones, can be made in this way for a number of purposes, as shown with Nightmare.

Such a burst of Dream can also be used to kickstart a Surge (see below) or to fill another receptacle with a short lived burst of Dream, which can have a variety of effects depending on the receptacle in question. This can even convert the energy to other forms to gain quick bursts of other forms of power, with mana being particularly effective. This can also allow for the creation of a skintight, ablative barriers that act as a buffer to the user's body.

Finally, a focus can be stretched to allow a link between minds that can be used for telepathic communications of all sorts. These can even be forced on foes if the user wishes, though there is some resistance in that case. Infusing one of these links with dream, either drawn steadily from the collective unconscious or in a burst from a cracked foci, can open up a number of abilities beyond communication. Hallucinations and illusions, charm effects, and emotional manipulation are possible with a steady stream of Dream, while bursts would allow for telepathic spikes to hit the minds of their foes, causing psychic damage to their minds and potentially causing unconsciousness. Such charged links can also be severed to create a lash of psychic power that can be latched onto by other forms of mental manipulation and mind magics, leaving them susceptible for a time.

These links can also be used to form a network between multiple individuals, even if they don't normally possess access to dream on their own. Such a network is fairly limited in size, but allows anyone in it to speak with each other freely through telepathy. However, this is not the real benefit of such a network. Anyone in the network is able to share power with each other. At first, healing magics and effects would be able to be spread among those in the network, focused where needed, then the sharing of skills, then, finally, the sharing of strengths and powers akin to a familiar bond, except everyone in the network benefits. Other forms of transference and the sharing of power can emerge within a network, but these are largely unintuitive, though the most well known is the hive mind variant that allows one to connect to mindless, or near mindless, creatures to control them as extensions of the self.

There are, however, methods of using Dream outside of Foci, most of which are possessed by native races, as is the case with the Yasha and Zshar, or an avatar, as is the case with Nightmare. However, one of the most well known, dangerous, and potent forms of dream use is based in this category. Called Surging, this method allows a Dream user to cause their internal dream to begin to roil, becoming chaotic and creating a stream of psionic power as Dream floods the mind when the Surge creates a "low pressure zone" in the users mind. This psionic power can be directed for external use, a more consistent form than the bursts created from cracking open a focus, useful for creating barriers, consistent telekinetic force, and even telepathic static that can make focusing difficult. However, maintaining this roil is taxing on the mind, and the brain itself, which makes it difficult to use for extended periods of time or without at least some time between using it.

A darker and more dangerous version of Dream exists, where one pulls in power from something that lies *underneath* the collective unconscious Dream is normally drawn from. This power is well and truly dangerous, but monstrously potent. Tapping into the will of the Demiplane itself. Few do so because of an almost instinctive understanding of the dangers involved, but when all else has failed and you know you're going to die anyway, taking your opponent down with you is an option. Though death doesn't always occur, it is likely. Doing so draws out a single focus dense with power that resonates strongly enough with dream that it naturally induces the roiling effects of a Surge, is tuned in such a way that it enhances dream use intensely, but also amplifies the downsides, and, if burst, releases enough power to generate an explosion powerful enough to actually harm an avatar. And all the while, the mind is clouded with pain and an alien mind trying to impose itself on the user.

Surviving this requires the focus be burst and its effect initiated, but with enough control maintained to render the user safe, something that rarely occurs with the pain and pressure of the Demiplane's thoroughly alien mind pressing down on their own. However, those that do survive it, find their ability to wield dream greatly enhanced, but are forever cut off from the will of the Demiplane, never able to repeat the process that granted them this strength, not that many ever actually want to.

Incompatibility with Dream has many side effects, but one that's particularly dangerous. The roil of a Surge can start up on its own and escalate, with all the issues that brings, and the user must forcibly calm it with an act of will or find themselves suffering the side effects of continued surge usage. However, this can lead to pressure on their mind as they must keep this up even when asleep. Many aren't able to do so.

There are three races that natively use Dream on the demiplane, the yasha and zshar of Bluth'aven and the dreaming apothecary of the Hostel of Screams, taking a more physical approach to their use of Dream.

The yasha of Bluth'aven are descended from the first race to tap into the use of dream on the Demiplane, which manifests in two ways. Firstly, the dream a yasha uses naturally extends into the physical ever so slightly, forming a nearly skin-tight barrier around their bodies, requiring no foci to augment it and giving them access to minor telekinetic tricks, such as holding something against their body, blunting impacts (especially from falls), adding telekinetic force to their actions, and replacing the need for shoes by forming a protective layer over their skin. This doesn't, however, grant them much range for these abilities. This can be enhanced with the use of foci and even allow for more distant uses of their telekinetic power if they have multiple foci at once. The second use is to actually convert free floating dream, dream not condensed into a focus, into stamina. This is slow enough that it won't completely mitigate the drain of heavy physical activity, but fast enough to allow them to extend their stamina considerably.

The zshar have one of the most unusual uses for dream of the races that innately utilize it, the most obvious being the ability to "metabolize" free floating dream into one of several types of resin that they can then shape, either through standard crafting ability or dream based manipulation. The resin produced is psionically active and receptive to dream, allowing dream users to form a link with anything made from this resin, though this is easier for the zshar to accomplish in general. Such objects can be enhanced with resonance much like how the body can be. A zshar can push this trait to allow them to form links with non-psionically active materials and objects and even use the link to learn new forms of resin that will carry some properties of the materials so linked. Finally, the zshar can quickly and partially metabolize dream to form a poison instead of resin, though only their tail is really able to make full use of this quality. The poison is a mild hallucinogenic normally, and functions when ingested or injected (or inhaled if somehow dispersed in a mist), but, it's effects can be enhanced by skilled dream users.

Dreaming apothecaries, those that have broken free of the Master of the Hostel's control, have one key element of their use of Dream, they've shunted the entirety of their mind into a section of the collective unconscious and linked it to their body and soul, no longer needing their brain to survive. This gives the apothecaries extreme levels of self control, both emotionally and physically, as well as awareness of their body that is straight up supernatural, complete awareness of every cell in their body. This allows them to effectively synthesize various chemical and alchemical substances within their body with incredible speed and precision, more so than the non-dreaming variants. These can be enhanced with uses of dream, resonance and cracking a focus doing quite a bit for them. Knowledge of alchemy can make a dreaming apothecary far more dangerous.

The Catalyst is an artifact built from the remains of the Crystal Golem, an Avatar of Dream that was destroyed before The Templar became an avatar. When bonded, this artifact allows the user's body itself to interact with dream more readily, drawing it right into the physical realm, something that normally requires a surge to accomplish, and grants all the abilities normally accessible with a surge without the need to do so, though a surge will empower such effects. Additionally, the user will find the dream in their mind far more tame, able to be shaped into foci with only a tenth the normal effort. Finally, the user can create a number of Dream Crystals, which act as external receptacles for dream that can be the origin for dream based effect the user creates rather than their own body, they can also sense through these orbs due to them being linked to them intrinsically.

The main power of the Templar comes from his ability to maintain the Focus created from accessing the Will of the Demiplane and managing to convert it to his own will, even learning to bud off pieces of it to create smaller, less potent but more stable versions. These smaller foci contain fragments of his will and skills he has imprinted into the main foci that is the source of his power. He can then implant these foci into the minds of others, slowly eroding their minds and bringing their connecting to the collective unconscious under his control, if it doesn't burn out their physical body in the process. There has been a single case of someone actually converting the foci he implanted into *their own* instead of an extension of his mind. Finally, the Templar can condense more power into their main Foci, stabilizing it and their body to be able to return to a mostly human form.

Nightmare is known to access another layer of the collective unconscious or, more accurately, separate parts of the collective unconscious to *create* another layer he can access and mix with his undead nature to create his own manifestation. The dark feathers of dream that identify him are this power, a mixing of necrotic power and dream that naturally occurs within his form, fueled by the emotions generated from death, whether of the person dying, those around them, or those influenced by them. Some have tried to emulate the ability to separate out parts of the collective unconscious, the emotional aspects of them, and all have failed thus far save for a single unliving entity that has a core of dream powering their unlife, but theirs takes the form of a pale green crown and is completely instinctive, unable to be taught.

The former dream avatar known as the Crystal Golem was old, not quite as old as Nightmare, but close, and its power seemed to reflect that, having a weight to it. It was capable of emitting a potent psionic aura that reinforced reality, a direct counter to the abilities of Abominations, and likely the reason it was originally constructed. As it was an automaton with no mind of its own, it was completely passive until it detected an abomination, at which point it would unerringly move towards it to fight. Unfortunately, the being that would become the Templar dismantled the golem while it was dormant in order to grasp the core of dream it possessed so it could be used to aid him in controlling the power he sought to grasp.

Anima

The soul houses a lot more power than most would expect, even those that actually experience it don't truly understand just how much power a soul really has. Anima harnesses a mere fraction of that power which is left behind when the soul passes on and lingers in the air itself. The soul itself is made of three main components, the inner layer or core where who you are is imprinted, the middle layers where what you are is imprinted, and the outer layer that contains the two and determines your potential. It's this final, outer layer that anima users most commonly access for their power and abilities, both their own and those of others. It should be noted, this outer layer can be damaged, but it will also heal and potentially grow stronger as a result. Those that utilize anima are called animists.

A key aspect of anima use is the ability to sense the part of the soul they interact with, to help with this, animists gain the ability to shift their sight to view the spiritual level of reality, which is also the part of reality that ghosts use to interact with the world. An animist viewing this level of reality can interact with beings on it, specifically those that are ethereal and astral in nature, as if they were physical beings, allowing them to strike at ghosts, spectres, shadows, and similar creatures. The main use, however, is to allow the user to access the leftover bits of the soul, that outer layer mentioned above, that are commonly called gleanings, wisps, revenants, or a variety of other things, the nomenclature used is quite varied, which they collect and infuse with a tiny touch of their own soul, claiming the gleaning (as they will be referred to for this document) for themselves. These gleanings enter the animist's soul where they can then be worked for the many other forms of anima usage. Most gleanings float on the air and can be captured by an animist with the right opportunity, however, there is also the ability to extract them from a recently dead creature, or even from the living. Those extracted from a recently dead creature are far more stable than those collected after they've been set to the air, where they degrade over time, however, those on the air may have traits collected from where they've been, such as one found in a swamp having traits aligned with the nature of a swamp.

The gleanings collected are not themselves blank, they hold echoes of the one that originally possessed them, bits of memories and emotion and even experiences, echoes of what and who they were in life. This is the basis of which the most commonly used form of anima use is built upon. By combining these gleanings, or parts of them, an animist creates a new layer to their soul, which they can then condense down into a semi-solid artefact with effects based on the traits held in the combined gleanings. The form this artefact takes when condensed is set during the creation of the layer of the soul, only allowing it to take on a single form, however, the user can break down the layer of the soul they created to remake it with new traits if they so wish. Most such artefacts also act as receptacles for the animist's own soul, the outer layer of their own soul able to be fed into the artefact to power up its effects or to open up new options that expand on its base effects. While unmanifested, these artefacts can still be accessed to give a lesser form of their effects, good for keeping a low profile, but they can't be filled with the user's soul to empower them unless they have an expanded capacity from being deeper in the soul.

These artefacts normally rest over top the soul itself where they can act as a buffer and form of armor for the soul itself, however, a skilled animist can push the gleaned artefact deeper into their soul, though not into the part that controls what or who they are, where it becomes more saturated with the soul of the user. This allows the user to manifest a stronger, more solid variation of the artefact that can be quite potent. Artefacts affected in this way will often have new abilities or improve upon the base effects (and thus increase the expanded effects from using their own soul) and/or have an expanded capacity for how much of the outer soul they can hold. An animist can, with a little practice on how to sever their connection to an artefact, give an artefact or gleaning to another animist, who then can claim them incorporate them into their own soul. Truly skilled animists can even gift such artefacts to those unable to use anima without causing issues for that individual, but the process is somewhat invasive.

Some animists learn to create internal receptacles for themselves, separate from their artefacts, by shaping the layers of their soul closest to the part of themselves that makes them what they are. Such receptacles reach down into that part of their soul and can be used to change aspects of their physical self for a time. Usually this comes in the form of augmenting what is already there rather than manifesting new abilities, however, this can unlock new ones based on what they are augmenting, such as an animist that's exceptionally precise and steady with their hands being able to apply a similar trait across their body. This is almost entirely physical in nature, but, some physical augmentations can be used to affect the mind and how well it functions without altering who they are.

An animist can, in a pinch, ignite the outer layers of their soul, causing it to expand and fill up more space. This is called an Anima Flare or an Anima Halo, and the effects are very much obvious, quite potent, and potentially damaging. By doing this, the animist expands the outermost layer of their normal soul (not the gleaning layers that rest on the outside of their soul) to several times its normal strength, but causes it to quickly dissipate, removing the layer, this can allow them to invest more into their receptacles, artefact or otherwise, until the power fully dissipates. However, it takes time for that layer to return, reducing the amount of spiritual power they can invest into their receptacles until they get it back or they perform another Flare. There are, however, instances of animists taking gleanings and creating a soul layer specifically designed to be burned in a Flare, these are often called Banners and create an aura effect when Flared, bolstering allies or hindering foes, but unable to be invested into an artefact or other receptacle. Banners themselves are not receptacles and have a fairly fixed effect, but they come back just like any natural soul layer, even though they are by no means natural themselves. They also are able to last longer than other layers of the soul before they run out of power, lasting several dozen minutes instead of only a scant two or three. Forming a banner is an advanced use of anima, not particularly difficult, but time consuming and involved until the animist is more well practiced at the process, with progress undone if they are unable to complete it in a single attempt.

Finally, there is the ability to infuse objects with anima in the form of a gleaning, turning them into a receptacle akin to an anima artefact, though more permanent and less flexible. These objects are able to take in energy, usually soul-based energy like anima though others can work, and enhance what they can do, much like the internal receptacles an animist can create within their own soul. This can even be used on another gleaning to empower that particular gleaning, potentially allowing it to develop a structure similar to an internal soul, though one that has what and who blended together. This is how soulsparks, spirits, aspects, genius loci, and vestiges come into existence. Such advanced gleanings remain dormant until awakened, but can be infused into an object (which automatically awakens the gleaning) to create a soulspark, cut loose from the user as they awaken to create a spirit, kept bound to create an aspect, bound to a location to create a genius loci, or awakened then cut free to create a vestige. These living gleanings are what are usually referred to as revenants in terms of anima use, though spirits, vestiges, and genius loci are mainly beneficial to other sources (pact for spirits and vestiges, drift for genius loci). Some mistake spirits created in this way for soulsparks from a general misunderstanding of the term.

Soulsparks are the most common form of this sort of anima use, imbuing the pseudo soul of the gleaning into an object being quite simple in practice compared to the others. This won't always result in a soul that is completely aware or sentient, instead giving the item responsiveness, however, a strong enough soulspark will have sentience and sapience, even being able to speak. However, while a strong gleaning contributes, a well made vessel is almost as important, with a poor vessel, most soulsparks never develop a true intelligence. It is possible for a soulspark to manifest a body if it is strong or old enough, though this is an exceptionally rare occurrence as it requires the soulspark to have the power to directly manifest a truly physical body out of only anima from the outer reaches of their own pseudo-soul. Such creatures are often called Kreshen, a draconic word meaning, quite literally, Puppet of the Tool, and they will often disguise themselves as another race, which they find some ease in doing as they often resemble a mix of their creator and the gleaning "donors" used to create them compressed into a humanoid form.

Spirits are a little more complicated. The animist makes the spirit layer by layer, focusing extensively on the who and the experiences that shaped that who into a proper being. Very little needs to go into what the spirit is at this point beyond just how it informs the who. Once this is done, the animist simply pushes the pseudo-soul free of themselves, and uses a burst of raw anima to kickstart its awakening, which can take a few days to finish. Once a spirit is awakened, the animist has no control over it, but it is almost always friendly towards them and may offer aid of their own accord. Without Pact, however, the aid these spirits can give is limited, they can scout, collect stray gleanings, and fight off spiritual entities. An animist can further empower these spirits by feeding them gleanings, which also serves as a way to keep their favor.

Aspects are living anima artefacts fully realized. They are much like a spirit and made in much the same way, but remain within the soul of their creator. Just the presence of this secondary soul will fortify both and offer a degree of mutualistic gain. However, aspects also act as receptacles and can be given some soul power, which they can then direct into other receptacles for the one they are bound to or to manifest in their own form. Most aspects are loyal, however, there have been cases of animists creating aspects that become hostile or start out that way. Pushing these out of the body is what creates vestiges, which have traits of both spirits and aspects, forced out of the physical, and even spiritual levels of reality until pulled back by a ritual or pact user.

Genius Loci are incredibly similar to soulsparks, but taken to a grand scale. A genius loci needs to be much stronger than a soulspark in order to manifest an intelligence as they are dispersed over a much larger area, making it quite the accomplishment to reach that point without triggering an awakening prematurely. Once a genius loci is placed, they bind themselves to the geomantic flows of the local ley lines and rapidly infuse into their domain, getting a remarkable degree of control over the region they rule over, almost becoming minor gods of the region. Most genius loci even gain the ability to use drift once formed. Most genius loci start out positively inclined to their creator and will aid them if asked, but such a relationship can turn distant or sour at times. However, a positive relationship with a genius loci cannot be underestimated, their aid can be immense.

A little known fact; there are many models of the soul, some contradictory to others, and yet, those that explore the soul and how it is built will find that all of them are true at the same time, even if it contradicts another model of soul construction. The one used commonly with anima is merely the most well known, and others can be used for a more complex form of anima use, however, these require entirely different methods of thinking than would normally be used for anima, making it difficult to access at times.

Those that try to use anima while incompatible with it will find the gleanings sometimes reaching into the deeper levels of their soul, which may change them physically or mentally alongside the spiritual change such a thing would cause, as well as stressing the soul itself. This happening too often or too quickly can actually fracture the soul, which can result in serious shifts in the person, both physically and mentally. The Lost are but one result of a person falling to this incompatibility (as well as being the result of the Soul Eater's feeding frenzies). Vigilant animists and those that create artefacts as quickly as they gather gleanings can potentially mitigate this effect.

The three races of naturally occurring animists consist of the reforged created by Silver Priest, the N'mak of Aberinth's Gullet, and the Graphers created by the Master of the Hostel, each with a unique manifestation of anima use, though only the reforged's method cannot be emulated.

The main power of the reforged is their anima reactor, a potent receptacle for anima that, when invested into, starts to generate a spiritual power compatible with anima receptacles other than the reactor itself. While this can be used to fill anima artefacts or other receptacles, it can also be focused through the body to effectively overclock. This comes with the downside that it builds up heat and strain that can be painful and damaging, and can even lock up the reactor if overused. They can also incorporate anima artefacts directly into their prosthetics.

There is an odd misconception with the n'mak's use of anima, many believing it is their strength alone that is born of anima. This is false. The n'mak, as a race, are heavily aligned with emotion and emotionally charged anima specifically, and the n'mak naturally possess anima charged with sorrow, which gives rise to their unsettling and spiritually damaging gaze, however, a n'mak's strength is born from a similar structure, one geared towards another, lesser known emotion, compassion, allowing them to lighten the burdens of others, though taken far more literally than one would expect. These two are innate to the n'mak as a whole and can be improved upon by distilling the emotion from anima, strengthening the layer of their soul that contains that emotion. However, a little known fact is that the n'mak can do this for emotions not innate to themselves, pulling out the emotional component of anima and incorporating it into themselves to gain new abilities as a result. However, this often has the effect of intensifying the emotion incorporated, which can lead to emotional instability until the n'mak gets used to the new, more intense feeling, which they always do thanks to their innate emotional control, though going through many quickly can leave them quite emotional for extended periods of time. Abilities gained in this way can vary slightly, such as fear allowing either the ability to deaden their presence and blur the edges of their form or allow them short range teleportation, though this is thought to be based on the nuance of the emotion in question, such as the first being the fight reaction to fear and the second being the flight reaction. These traits can be reinforced with normal anima investment.

The grapher are an odd race as they focus heavily on the soul sight possessed by all animists. This allows the grapher to view the soul of a living being right from the start, rather than needing to train for it, however, this is not what gives the graphers their power. Graphers are able to extend parts of their soul into another entity's soul and place a tiny piece of their own into the target's soul, specifically, in the part of the soul that determines what they are. Once so placed, the grapher can use this bit of soulstuff to cause sudden, unnatural twists in that part of the soul. While normally this does things like causing a leg to bend the wrong direction in seemingly painful ways, it is not in and of itself damaging, though it won't feel natural in the least and leave the individual unable to effectively use the body part so afflicted. However, when used on an ally, this can actually have some useful effects, such as causing wounds to squeeze shut to stunt bleeding or to extend a limb suddenly to strike a foe or even to cause their skin to harden into a chitin-like structure for a few moments needed for defense. Graphers can use this on themselves with some practice but are better suited for affecting others. The bits of soulstuff left behind are usually ejected after a few minutes at best, reverting the changes made by the grapher and returning the bit to them in the process.

The first of two artifacts born during Creation, the Remnants are a collection of exceptionally potent spiritual threads that intertwine and self propagate when exposed to the soul. Bonding with the remnants allows for the generation of blank gleanings, which can then be imprinted with virtually anything while remaining exceptionally stable, as well as bolstering the soul of the user to allow them to more readily use and fill any anima receptacle they may possess. This also allows the user to fuse anima artefacts into the remnants when they manifest, adding the effects together as a result, creating what is sometimes referred to as Regalia, which allows all of them to be invested at once and gain the benefits rather than each needing to be invested separately. Even without the Regalia, the remnants can act as a receptacle that grants magical flight, an environmental shield, and basic kinetic blasts that grow stronger with the anima invested into them, though they'd need other anima artefacts in the Regalia to become truly potent.

The Soul Eater's main power is the ability to consume and process gleanings, separating them into parts that can be burned to fuel her power immensely and those that can be incorporated into her own soul to further empower her abilities, making her internal receptacles ever stronger. This is borderline instinctive as it is fueled more by the hunger that takes hold of her than by her actual, conscious mind. The parts to be burned are allowed to collect on the outside of the Soul Eater's soul and packed densely, turning them into a highly efficient fuel for her flares. These flares trigger her hunger and send her into a feeding frenzy.

The Soulsmith has two main manifestations of their power, one of which frames the soul in a different light than the layered model commonly used. The first is the soul graft, which is technically possible to achieve through sheer skill, this accesses part of the soul that determines what a creature is, extracts it, and distills it into a potent internal artefact that is buried deep in the soul, grafted into the outermost layer of the part of the soul that determines what they are, modifying the existence of the creature so grafted to gain powers and abilities reminiscent of the creature the graft was made from. This needs to be extracted from a relatively fresh kill and requires incredible skill to actually accomplish. The second, however, is far more interesting. It models the soul as pools of liquid that represent *experiences*, which can then be squeezed out of the soul to form a physical substance with traits modeled after them. The most common of these is vitriol, liquid agony, which naturally drips free from a soul ripped from a still living body, the second most common being liquid pleasure, called ambrosia, which seems to flow freely between the other pools in the soul. Extracting the other forms of liquid experiences, at least in pure form, is far more difficult, but each has their own unique effect.

Drift

Drift, on the material, is a phenomena by which druids, geomancers, and hunters isolated in untamed parts of the world for extended periods of time experience, where the magic of the land infuses into them over the course of years or decades and, sometimes, grants an ability similar to an animal in the region they lived in for so long, often accompanied by a physical change. On the demiplane, however, this phenomena is accelerated and the magic that causes it is twisted by the demiplane itself to run crooked. This has had a benefit for those on the demiplane, because of the changed nature of the magic and the more intense effects, it is easier to feel it out than it would be on the material, allowing people to access and manipulate the power for their own usage. Drift has come to be the name of the power itself rather than just the effects of the slow build up that the material knows it for. Those who practice drift use are called druids, geomancers, or galvanists, depending on their focus.

Accessing drift is based on tapping into ley lines, the flows of energy that run within the world itself, and drawing out just a bit of the power held within them to form a stable connection. This allows a druid (as will be used for the rest of this document) to draw in some of this energy and fill up a small reservoir at the end of the connection, called a Mote. It is possible to have multiple reservoirs attached to a single connection, granting more Motes, but this requires a degree of skill to form them the right way for it to work. Each Mote is a reserve of power that can be drawn on to achieve certain effects. The most basic draw very little power from a Mote are more about convenience and quality of life, such as warming the body in cold weather, cooling it in warm weather, retaining water or making a little quench thirst better, improving the flavor of things, and making foods more filling. These give comfort and don't even use up the energy from a single Mote, just small amounts of it. This also is useful for the health of plants and animals as small amounts of drift can bolster their health, prevent diseases from taking hold, promote healing in general, give restful sleep, and, with a bit of a twist of power, make them more nutritious when eaten. Just having motes will have most of these effects applied to the druid, though it won't make a druid more nutritious.

More extreme uses require entire Motes worth of power, often needing multiple Motes to achieve the desired result, which can be a wide variety of tasks. The first and most obvious use of drift is controlled mutation, incorporating the power drawn into the body and allowing it to alter the body in permanent ways. This is usually a slow process that requires steady expenditure of Motes over a long period of time, however, using a lot of motes all at once can lead to a more intense, and very painful, mutation that, over the course of a few hours, will tone down to a more natural level, such as making claws almost as long as the arm they're attached to and sharp enough to cut through stone with a few dozen motes then it toning down to more normal, though still long, set of retractable claws. There are very few that do this the fast way as it is both wasteful and painful, but, in a pinch, such a surge of mutagenic strength can allow for survival. These mutations can even be imposed on other beings, plant, fungus, or animal, as long as it is alive and mostly physical in nature, such mutations can easily be accomplished. There are even some that can cause the growth of 'natural' spell matrices using drift if they know what they're doing, which can allow them to create new magical flora and fauna or adjust how the matrix they normally possess manifests to make them more useful for alchemy or witchcraft.

Temporary mutations are also possible, not quite as expensive as creating a permanent mutation, but also only lasting so long. Temporary mutations don't look entirely natural to the body and are often mirrors of other creatures rather than true mutations, more akin to shapeshifting, it's possible for a druid to even alter their general appearance within the confines of their race, gender, and body mass without spending a full Mote. With a good deal of practice, it's entirely possible to take on a form near identical to an animal or lesser beast with only a few motes using this method of empowerment. Oddly, using the same temporary mutation repeatedly over a long period of time will eventually start to manifest a more permanent, but lesser, version of that same trait.

Mutation, however, is not all that Drift offers to its users. The building of environmental energy flows, commonly referred to as geomancy, is another application of drift, and one that can offer much to those that utilize it effectively. By setting up an area in specific ways it is possible for a druid to create flows that simply need to be fed power to function, in which case they provide a benefit or hindrance to all within that region ranging from bolstering the strength of all within its bounds to increasing the pull of gravity to making the animating force of undead more or less effective to making the space an ideal spot for growing plants or various crafts. These can be set with a permanent bond to a ley line to keep them constantly powered or set to accept energy from the druid themselves so they can be activated as needed then turned off when no longer required.

Such flows can even be imbued into items, though they aren't very well integrated with more processed items, such as forged metal, especially alloys such as steel. These objects can either be focused inwards or outwards during their creation, with outward flowing objects projecting an aura-like effect identical to the environmental flows explained above, just portable. Inwardly focused objects, however, are a bit more interesting. Most examples of inwardly focused objects are clothing or armor, usually formed from hides or leather, though hard woods like ironwood, bronzewood, or ebonwood are sometimes used to emulate metal armor, creating their effects inside the objects and applying them to the person wearing the object. Containers are sometimes used in this way, however.

The most potent form of inwardly focused power is the Mantle of the Beast, a beast skin, usually a bear or wolf hide, worked with drift until it maintains the spirit of the beast (anima helps, but is not necessary). Wearing such a hide causes the wearer to start to take on traits of the beast the hide came from. The size, strength, and durability of a bear, the coordination and speed of the wolf, and more. This only works for natural (or at least mostly natural) beasts, however, and ones that are more magical in nature are often difficult, or nearly impossible, to bind in this way. There are examples of the hides being used to subjugate weaker willed individuals and convert them into man-beast hybrids that are borderline mindless, and even cases of some twisted druids combining beast skins to make chimeric beasts using such hides.

The final form of drift use is what is practiced by Galvanists and is one of the most difficult forms of drift use to manage. Galvanists use drift to simultaneously create flows and mutations in outside forces, not even physical ones, to create powerful effects, at the cost of many Motes worth of energy. This is used to direct and empower natural forces, causing plants to grow grasping vines and roots, turning a little static electricity into a bolt of controlled lightning, turning a spark into a fireball, making a breeze into a whirl of air currents to deflect arrows, or causing stones to suddenly shift in a localized, pseudo-earthquake. While energy intensive, such powers are far more versatile and can be used to end a fight before a foe can close into melee, preventing the need for mutation. Actually controlling these effects requires a good understanding of the natural world and how it flows so they can recreate the desired effects.

Of note, Motes that are allowed to sit for a time, laying unused, will become denser with energy and more potent as they are allowed to age. Having old motes gives a density to the power that causes small amounts of drift to suffuse and rejuvenate the body, preventing degradation, atrophy, and even aging to a degree. Having even a dozen old motes would be enough to extend an average human's lifespan a good three hundred years.

Drift, for those incompatible with it, will often cause unwanted mutations or enhance the more animal side of the mind. Fortunately, it's actually fairly easy to sever a connection to a ley line to prevent further mutation and degradation of the mind. This does not remove old mutations, however, and they will remain long after the connection is severed.

There are three naturally occurring druidic races, the khelan, gaian, and undertaker, though not quite as unusual in terms of abilities as the other source empowered races.

The khelan are a race that does not so much possess unique manifestations of drift as they are ones that are highly receptive to transformative effects, specifically beneficial effects. The khelan often develop innate magical abilities far more quickly than other druids using mutagenic effects. This is augmented by the fact that khelan pull out quite a bit from what they eat, which incorporate quickly into their body through the passive effects of drift. A khelan can also set a mutation, making it difficult to alter or remove and allowing for the khelan to more easily direct their final form when they create a “Clan” form.

Gaians take the concepts of the Mantle of the Beast and apply it to plants instead, and with the way their form is set up, they are able to directly incorporate such things into their body rather than creating an actual mantle, though they can still do so if they desire. This is generally a far more subtle variation compared to the mantle of the beast as it is often more defensive in nature, though poison and similar abilities can be developed. Beyond the Mantle of Nature, as most gaians refer to it, they form natural fonts of drift that seemingly generate drift on their own and create permanent motes that they can access virtually at will. Additionally, gaians have an interesting ability to use drift to “reset” themselves, removing any mutations done to themselves and go back to what they were before imparting any such mutations to themselves.

While undertakers possess an affinity for drift, their use of it seems fairly normal compared to other drift users, if anything, their abilities with the power almost seem to be stunted, thought to be due to their undead nature, though they do have an exceptional precision with their use of drift. In actuality, undertakers possess a single manifestation of drift use beyond the norm that has two main applications. A core where they funnel small amounts of drift from their motes into, putting a near constant, but mild, drain on all of their motes. This causes the motes an undertaker possesses to age at a much faster rate than other druids but also builds up the central core to have a potent reserve of power that has anti-magic qualities that allow them to dull the effects of any supernatural power they encounter, or even negate it entirely if they can use enough of this Core Drift.

The only truly living artifact out there, the phaezroot is a plant-like symbiote with similar energy flows to ley lines running through them, which can fuel multiple motes. The phaezroot directs mutagenic effects on its host and will work to incorporate useful features while mitigating ones that would be harmful, even if such effects are born of something other than drift use. More interestingly, the phaezroot can metabolize the energy in one or more Motes to create a seed carrying an effect desired for those motes. These can vary from the size of a poppy seed to the size of a walnut, with a predetermined trigger for their effects. Because the phaezroot is actually somewhat intelligent, a user doesn’t fully need to decide the specifics of the effect, just the end result they want, and the phaezroot will work it out itself, though more detail will make it quicker. Finally, the phaezroot can shift within the body to create geomantic flows, turning itself into a focal point for geomantic auras, even being able to maintain several at a time, roughly a dozen, with the ability to evolve more.

The power wielded by Echidna is fairly straightforward at a surface level, however, her madness has led to the actual power languishing to a degree. Echidna is able to absorb a living thing, whether that’s animal, plant, or fungi, and mix them together into new creatures, even able to add her own essence in to give them a humanoid form. If Echidna were to ever recover her mind, she could create truly powerful creatures on par with the Proxies used by the Master of the Hostel, with just as much control over them as the Master exerts over his proxies. A great many magical beasts found in the demiplane are the result of Echidna’s ability, though far fewer than one would expect. However, there is another layer to this, Echidna is connected to each of her creations, almost as if they were ley lines, and can draw power from them to augment herself if she feels the need.

Tribal is a natural geomancer, able to manifest geomantic auras virtually at will and with a reach that can touch the highest of clouds. On top of this, he has a truly massive number of motes he can access due to the number of ley lines he has tapped over the years. Tribal will often use his geomantic talents to set certain regions to resonate in specific ways, promoting certain kinds of growth, empowering the region, or simply warding them against various effects. This power and the range it can manifest makes Tribal's influence quite subtle when he wants it to be, however, his raw power output can be enough to change large regions of the demiplane permanently, causing him to use his full power sparingly. He commonly uses this power to shape the weather.

Pact

Pact isn't simply one source of power, it is several rolled together into a singular category because of similarities they all seem to possess. Pact is the art of the deal, of contracts and oaths, of promises and bonds. And yet, the various types of pact magic show this in differing and sometimes contradictory manners. There are seven main types of pact use, referred to as styles; Priest, Cultist, Merchant, Dealer, Contractor, Familiar, and Spirit. These styles are what is focused on below, but other sorts do exist and will be explained in short below the six main ones.

The first and most common form of pact magic is the Priest Style of it. Priests are those that devote themselves to a god, greater spirit, or other being of power that hands a basic code of conduct that, as long as it is followed, offers power to them. Some are as simple as "follow these rites and something will happen" while others actually have a code of actual behaviors and attitudes that must be followed, such as a no killing rule or not being able to consume meat, while others are more closely related to philosophies like bushido or religious tenants (the norm for godly priests). There are some, however, that take a little more, sending trials that must be passed in order to maintain the connection or sacrifices that must be made in their name, these gods generally offer more power to their priests, but also more danger in turn. Priest based pact magic is considered the most restrictive form of pact magic due to the restrictions often put in place by the one granting the power, however, a particularly well favored priest may find some of their restrictions loosened, or even lifted entirely, if they prove themselves well enough. True faith in the deity or great spirit is what's necessary to gain such a thing, as that faith empowers the being in some small way.

The second style of pact use is the cultist style, which has many negative connotations despite it not being inherently evil or deceptive in nature. Cultist style pact use is based around belief and faith, much like that which is collected by gods to give them power, but is directed differently, allowing it to be collected and processed into false divinity, which is the power used by cultists to achieve their desired outcomes. False divinity is a less refined version of the real thing, processed enough to be usable but not enough to grant any form of godhood or godly power, though offering it up to spirits and gods can be quite the boon for them. With false divinity, a cultist can perform ceremonies that will shape it and create an effect they want, akin to wide reaching, but weak, rituals. In fact, using false divinity in this way is very similar to ritual magic and knowing proper ritual magic will make these ceremonies more effective. It is not the only use, however. False divinity can be given a set of conditions on which it can be used and have rites aligned with it to create premade effects, akin to the powers granted by priest style pact use, with the ability to link people into it even if they themselves are not pact users, which can fortify the belief gained to grant more power for the cultist to draw on. Some cultists are even able to rely on belief in themselves, using their own confidence in themselves to gain a small reserve of false divinity they can use for their own purposes, often including powers outside the scope of a cultic reserve built up from the belief of many.

Merchants and Dealers are fairly similar in nature, they make deals that are enforced with the use of pact and have a magical component that makes their deals collectable even for intangible things such as a person's strength or lifespan. The difference lies in what they deal in.

Dealers are those that bargain for and gain power over the soul itself through their dealings while merchants favor other 'goods' that sell more readily in comparison. As mentioned in Anima above, the model of the soul comes in three layers, the outer layer, the part that governs potential, is the part that most dealers actually bargain for and use. This is a great source of power and can be used much like Life Force can be, improving the power of other magics with a small amount infused into it. This can also be used to fortify magic items (whether made through alchemy, legacy, ritual enchanting, or otherwise), increase a person's potential by giving them a little of the power themselves, or be used to protect the dealer's soul from destruction. It can also be broken down into a vast reserve of false divinity that can then be used for other purposes.

Some dealers, however, go deeper. These are the dealers that give the style of pact magic a bad name and why so many distrust both merchants and dealers, the ones that bargain for the inner layers of the soul and use them as a power source and material. There are a few ways to use complete souls like this, however, most are considered evil by their very nature, requiring the effective destruction of the soul. Most of these dealers jealously guard their collected souls and use them only sparingly, but when they do, they are a force to be reckoned with. One of the more dangerous, and common, uses, however, is to dissolve the soul and absorb the power from it into their own, artificially swelling the power of the dealer's own soul with it. This distorts and twists their soul in the process, both in who they are and what they are, twisting them into monstrosities on par with many demons and fiends, but grants them a constantly regenerating power from the outer layers of their soul, which most who undergo this process feel isn't enough and use it again and again until they are twisted to the point of inhumanity. Others do similar tasks, but feed the power into other things; materials, other creatures, constructs that they animate with them, or even back into the original person to gain control over them.

Merchants are considered the fairer of the pair, with dealers often viewed much more negatively despite many merchants showing an equal or even greater lust for power. Merchants, as the name implies, offer trades of goods for appropriate payment. It's just that their payments and goods are often things other than material good or wealth. A merchant has the ability to reach into a person, themselves included, and add or remove bits of their existing abilities or traits, which is the service they often provide. Some will even facilitate trades between others, acting as an arbiter or mediator for the two sides. A merchant can either store such things in a physical form, usually marbles or knick-knacks of various types, or incorporate them, at a reduced strength, into themselves. They can also incorporate such traits permanently into objects to effectively enchant them with those traits, which they then can manifest in their own unique way or impart them on the one using the object.

It's not exactly known why merchants have these effects at a reduced power, but this has always been the case. Lisa Higgs, the most potent user of pact magic in the demiplane, has thought that it has to do with the way their powers naturally manifest, the trick that allows them to pull out these traits also causes them to not fully manifest and, maybe, by finding a way to temporarily shut off that trait, they could access the full power they purchase.

Nearly every pact user is a contractor, the ability to create deals and contracts that are enforceable by the power of their pact use is a major point by which most cultists, merchants, and dealers operate. The contractor is able to add a penalty to breaking a deal or contract, usually a mutilation of the soul that is both painful and hard to recover from, that manifests as the anchoring of a hook into the soul, which can be felt. This will tug to warn someone they are breaking the deal before they do so, and if they push, it will pull free with the penalty taken from them. Those that survive often say it's the most painful and damaging experience of their life, leading many to pay attention to that hook in their soul and not break the deal if they can at all help it simply due to the stories. This can also be used to call in owed favors, the hook setting in when the favor is called in with a message given on what the favor actually is, which can allow the contractor to always find and contact those that owe them.

Familiarists, a term rarely used for those that practice familiar binding as a specialization of pact magic, use pact to form a bond with another creature that allows their souls to somewhat intermingle, carrying with it benefits for both the master and the familiar. Most creatures will provide a benefit based on their species and magical abilities, though some can have unique benefits based on their individual characteristics, many even having traits that seem to have little to no relation to what they can naturally do, leading to varied benefits for the master, while the familiars generally receive a boost in intelligence or a degree of humanity with a nice defensive ability as they share in the magic of their master, able to speak empathically and transfer magics between each other, which can be a great boon to a familiar as a defensive spell or power would echo onto the familiar.

The process of spirit binding is similar to priest style pact use but with traits of a contractor making a negotiation. Spirits naturally want to grow and develop, for that, they need access to a soul, not to feed or anything that would be damaging to it, but to shelter themselves and give their power a chance to mature. However, spirits grow better in certain conditions, so will favor souls that match more closely to those conditions, making deals with them often more about what a person is willing to do and put up with. Spirits will even encourage certain behaviors by rewarding acting in certain ways with bursts of extra strength. This can be mitigated with false divinity as such a power will often allow a spirit to mature even after leaving the soul, something they will give a good deal of strength for. The main issue is actually finding a spirit as you need to perform a small rite to call them, or a fragment of them, to you to allow the binding to occur. This will grant a few abilities based on the spirit which will usually explain what it can do for you before the binding is complete, at least in a vague sense. It is possible to have multiple spirits bound, and even have quite a few of them, but they will clash if you allow too many into your soul at once

Vestiges can also be bound in this way and are considerably less concerned with the behaviors of their binder, but impose more of their will onto them due to their desperation to experience the real world once more, often causing shifts in behavior and manifesting physical signs, but are also generally more powerful than a spirit of a similar level of development. Vestiges don't reside in the soul the way a spirit does and instead extend a connection similar to those formed with familiars, this is potentially damaging to spirits you have bound and they may flee rather than be bound at the same time as a vestige.

There are other methods, though most are combinations of these various existing ones. The first is the Coven, which allows a group of people to pool their belief, direct it towards a concept, and draw on it as if it were a God, combining the traits of Priest and Cultist style pact magic. The second is the preferred method of Lisa Higgs, the creation of a pool of false divinity infused with many of the traits purchased as a merchant to form an alternative form with many of the traits infused. This also comes with an odd form of priestly magic based on using the concept of wealth as a patron, established with a self targeting and enforced contract. Finally, there is divine familiarists, a rarity where a familiarist's faith or devotion towards their familiars produces false divinity within them that they can then draw on to create the spell like effects priests are known for, only on a much smaller and weaker scale

Incompatibility with pact is difficult to measure as someone may have an incompatibility with one type of pact magic but not another, though it is next to impossible for someone to be incompatible with familiar binding. Common traits, however, include fanaticism, zealotry to the point of excess, arrogance, a lust for power that cannot be slaked, reduced inhibitions and empathy, and general megalomania.

There are a total of three races that utilize pact on the demiplane, though one only comes into existence later in the storyline, the wispers, spirit binders all, daemons, living nexuses of false divinity, and the kenku, the race created by Father Anderson to aid the people of Ravenwood.

Wispers are a relatively new race in the grand scheme of things and have two simple interactions with their use of pact magic. The first is a spirit that bonds with them on a much deeper level, able to form a bond quickly and sharing space within the soul of the wisper, often called Favor Spirits. These spirits are heavily attuned with the wisper and can be bound with simple concentration, even when binding a spirit should be impossible, and effects that exorcise spirits from the body do not work on a wisper's Favor Spirit unless they are overwhelmingly potent. The second is the ability to "fix" any disability the wisper possesses by simply binding a spirit to themselves. Exactly how this works is a relative unknown, but, every wisper possesses at least one disability, mental or physical, that seems to simply vanish when bound with a spirit. The only thing this doesn't help with in terms of disabilities is missing body parts. This does go a little farther, however, a wisper can tune the way their spirit presents itself within their own soul and, slowly, optimize their mind and body while the spirit is bound, though the loss of these optimizations when the spirit unbinds is often disorienting in a big way.

There are three key elements to the daemon race that make them natural Merchant style pact users. The first of these elements is a blueprint imprinted within the mind of the daemon, a way of shaping false divinity into a physical object that can be used to achieve an effect, usually being consumed in the process. While these items are typically fairly weak, they are an amazing resource for trades with a daemon. They can also claim or create more blueprints by either stealing them from other daemons or simply having enough experience to make a new one, though the first method also causes combination blueprints to emerge which can cause them to gain several new blueprints at once. The second is their ability to generate small amounts of false divinity to use with their craft, this comes from a small structure in their heads that naturally uses their thoughts as a means of generating false divinity, with the premise that thought is belief in reality and self. The final ability is implied deals, if someone takes something from a daemon and doesn't return it, the daemon can use that as the basis for an implied deal, and if they go unpaid or without the object being returned, then they can use the implied deal to inflict a "penalty" on those that have broken these implied deals. Usually in the form of a curse that steals some luck from the individual and converts it to false divinity for the daemon to use. Daemon lords are nearly identical to a daemon, but possess a wide array of objects and a stronger production of false divinity, the ability to turn thought into false divinity generation being enhanced.

Where the wispers align with spirit binding and the daemons go for merchant style pact use, the kenku are primarily users of priest and cultist style pact use. Kenku naturally possess a connection to a divine source, not necessarily a god, that feeds false divinity into an internal reserve while they are in their base form. While useful for other forms of pact use, a kenku has unique uses for it, namely, the ability to transform into a more avian, corvid-like form that resembles the potential transformation of a corvithrope (were-crow or were-raven), which can use more false divinity to sharpen and harden their claws, beaks, or feathers. Such a transformation is draining, but gives a great deal of strength. A lesser known aspect of a kenku's pact use allows them to make their body lighter, an unusually efficient ability accessible in both their base and transformed states. However, it is the final ability that made the kenku infamous in the demiplane, their ability to create spectral ravens from false divinity. These spectral ravens are extensions of the kenku and they can see and hear (and sometimes smell) the world through the senses of the ravens, they are also nearly indistinguishable from normal ravens unless directly, physically interacted with. This can put strain on the kenku and most are only able to maintain between five and twelve before it becomes too much for them to handle, though training can push the number from the lower end to the higher end, and other sources can potentially allow them to handle more.

The aethermental is a ball of nearly pure divinity so dense that it has taken a nearly physical presence, acting like an unintelligent animal that can be bonded like a familiar, with the bond strengthening to the point it cannot be easily severed. There is some debate on the aethermental being created by a god while others believe it is an infant god that was stillborn, resulting in the unusual purity of its divinity. Regardless of its origin, the aethermental is a powerful artifact, able to shape blessings it can bestow on those bonded to it, like a god would to their priest, store and shape false divinity for cultists, and even store souls which can then be consumed, broken down, or shaped in various ways. However, likely the most potent ability for it is its ability to be shaped by its master. By imbuing it with traits, either collected through merchant pacts or exposure to familiar or spirit bonds (though these attributes are weakened or inaccessible if this is done), the aethermental can slowly have its form crafted into a new state, even gaining intelligence and self awareness. Once it's achieved self awareness and intelligence, it can mix and match traits its master grants it to alter its form to be a better combatant or to create a boon for their familiar bond, granting their master access to various abilities through the bond they share. Even should this not come to pass, it will remain an exceptionally potent focus for priestly and cultist based abilities, in fact being better in that regard when in its base form.

There are a number of potential patrons present in the demiplane, gods, fiends, greater spirits, and even some creatures. Here's a list of a few of some patron deities you may encounter.

- *The Peaceful Night:* A patron deity with two known aspects. The God of Repose and the God of the Afterlife. The Peaceful Night is an elder god of rest, recuperation, sleep, dreams, nightmares, and death, specifically the peaceful death of sleep. He is also known as the patron of assassins, which is often seen as a strange thing due to his generally benevolent teachings and the fact he is the god that controls the local variation of Heaven, granting peace to those under his care.
    - The blessing of the Peaceful Night gives a calming presence, control over illusions, the ability to fade from view, the ability to grant or enter a healing sleep, and the ability to ward away nightmares. It also allows those so blessed to muffle noise, deepen the sleep of those already asleep, the ability to speak to the dead, and the ability to destroy undead.
    - Paladins of the Peaceful Night are almost never seen as such due to their nature as assassins. These individuals will go to regions where despair has set in and weed out those that cause the pain that rendered the place as such. These individuals have unnatural celerity, a poisonous touch that renders those so struck comatose, and a presence so well subdued they may as well be a shadow.
- *Regale, the Redeemer: The* elder god, in many religions, Regalus is the god of light, redemption, magic, compassion, and life. Regalus, while not the source of magic, has an incredible comprehension over it and has taught many how to utilize it, however, he is best known for being the ruler of the City of Redemption, where the wicked are sent to be rehabilitated in his light. Regalus is the one that initially empowered the Peaceful Night to allow him to achieve godhood.
    - The blessing of Regale gives control over holy light, insights into magic, specifically thaumaturgy, healing abilities, and the ability to see the good in others. Those blessed by Regale also find their capacity for thaumaturgy increasing more quickly, with the ability to imbue their spells with the holy light Regale gives control over, making such spells more effective against undead and fiends.
    - Paladins of Regale are often spell knights, able to unweave the magics of others with surprising ease, and possessed of the ability to turn their holy light against any that are so blackhearted they have no good within them. Most also possess a potent mental defense that allows them to counter and negate most mental magics.
- *Kaine:* A nature god native to the Ebonwood and the main patron of Ravenwood, Kaine is a greater god of nature (specifically forests), protection, community, and birds. He has taken an interest in Ravenwood and has tasked his messengers, the ravens, to aid them in the Demiplane.
    - The blessing of Kaine comes in a few forms, the most common of which is the bond with his ravens, forming a natural familiar link to them. However, others include the ability to promote the healthy growth of plants, the laying of wards that keep out harmful energies, and the ability to communicate with a large number of people at once over a distance.
    - Paladins of Kaine show an amazing sense of awareness of both their surroundings and the people under their care, they are able to promote healing and growth in people, both mentally and physically, and are naturally able to communicate with birds of all sorts, though corvids are the easiest for them.
- *Darius Quinn:* A recently ascended god that managed to achieve the rank of greater deity with surprising speed, Darius is the God of Autonomy and Self-Sufficiency, teaching others to work under their own merits and relying on their own will. His domains are autonomy, victory, endurance, and perseverance.
    - The blessing of Darius is simple, but potent, rapid improvement. Anything those blessed by Darius put their mind to and work for will come to them in less time than it would if they lacked his blessing. By a considerable margin. Those that achieve a great deed may also find his blessing in the form of artefacts that they can conjure.

    - Paladins of Darius are strange as they are not his envoys, but those that have proven themselves able to overcome great obstacles and been imbued with amazing strength, endurance, durability, and agility as a result, as well as a natural skill for survival.
- *Xomi, The Librarian:* Xomi is a lesser goddess of knowledge, order, and language with a small cult following, with most of her priests also being minor cultists. While her following is small, she is respected due to her freely giving her blessings to lore seekers. (the X in her name makes an Sh sound)
    - The blessing of Xomi is quite simple, she improves the memory, learning speed, and mental resilience of those she puts under her care, giving resistance to mind affecting secrets and making it impossible to tamper with their memories. Divinations are also favored by her followers, though her blessing rarely gives more than a few minor ones.
    - Xomi does not have the true capacity to create paladins, however, her blessing is more in line with those paladins would receive regardless. Those called her paladins have the ability to silence a person, rendering them mute for a time and have improved organizational skills.
- *Lizarrah, The Wise:* Another lesser god, Lizarrah is Xomi's confidant and considered the god of intuition for his domains of empathy, mental health, truth, and clarity. Most of his followers are diplomats, though a few are skilled tacticians, and are often seen as mediators for conflicts.
    - The blessing of Lizarrah gives incredible insights into the human mind (or any sophont mind, really) with the ability to see and understand emotions, pick out lies from truths, and a very basic ability to think like another person for a time.
    - Lizarrah does not create paladins, not even to the extent of the false ones Xomi does.
- *Gorge:* Somewhere between a demigod and a lesser god, Gorge is a God of gluttony, predation, cannibalism, retribution, and patience and seeks to feed on other gods so he may regain his power once more. As a fallen god, he has a permanent physical form, making him more vulnerable than other gods, so he is far more careful with who he blesses than one would expect.
    - The blessing of Gorge makes it safe to eat anything, gives the ability to ignore hunger for long periods of time, allows the user to strike back at those that harm or imprison them with a curse, and the ability to free themselves from any prison given enough time. Additionally, those that feed on the flesh of a sophont being find their power growing as some of the strength of the consumed being are taken by the blessed individual. This does come with a steadily increasing desire and need to feed on such beings.
    - Paladins of Gorge are exceptionally rare, possessing the consumptive power Gorge himself possesses, whatever they consume going to Gorge while their patron sustains their form, as much a curse as it is a blessing as they feel Gorge's constant hunger gnawing at them. Most are gaunt to an unhealthy degree, looking pathetically weak, though their actual strength is often enhanced. Should the paladin fall, they will rise again as a hungry dead, similar to a ghoul.
- *Aberinth:* Much like Gorge, Aberinth is between the stages of demigod and lesser god, but acts as a god of growth, evolution, change, progress, and symbiosis. He, like Gorge, is possessed of a permanent physical form, though one that is much better protected. As an undead god, Aberinth is able to subsist on far less divinity than most and can turn it towards his followers, making his blessing quite potent.
    - The blessing of Aberinth grants a more mutable form that benefits greatly from various shape changing effects and magical enhancements, a number of abilities to alter their form, an affinity for symbiotes that makes them grant a greater benefit and eases the burden of hosting them, and the potential to learn lifeshaping.
    - Paladins of Aberinth are able to produce symbiotes from their own flesh, heavily bound to themselves, and form a symbiote collective that is, effectively, an extension of the paladin as they form a hive mind with each other.

Beyond the gods there are the various demons, fiends, and devils to consider. While not as potent as the gods themselves they are able to grant considerable boons to those that seek them out, though usually at a cost as well. Those able to grant power to their followers are called Demon Princes, Archfiends, or Devil Lords.

- *Chis'Kabel, Grand Traveler:* The oldest entity in existence, Chis'kabel survived the death of the previous universe and saw the birth of the current one. While not a demon, fiend, or devil, she is often viewed in much the same way as demonic patrons due to her alien nature. While acting as a Patron, Chis'Kabel teaches, her blessing taking the form of various rites that come in her priest's dreams, rites that, individually, can bring unique effects, but can also be combined. To any single priest she will teach between four and a dozen rites that, when used together, will create something grand. And worship of her is not necessary, she simply offers these rights to those that wish to learn. Beyond this, she will impart knowledge of how to make tools that make the rites stronger when incorporated into them. Those that can be considered her paladins learn all sixteen of her rites and how to create all the necessary tools, then use them all in tandem to achieve a new state. Those that die after achieving this new state will harden into stone and dream, partially aware of their surroundings and able to spiritually recreate the rites she offers to those that beseech them, if they so wish. This state preserves the body and spirit of the being, and they are often considered saints within her following.
- *Vor'golluk, Demon Prince of Swarms:* The Demon Prince of Swarms is a worrisome being, while vermin such as flies, locusts, and rats are the most commonly associated swarms Vor'golluk controls, even mobs of humans can fall under his sway, causing many a riot in human cities. Those that earn Vor'golluk's favor, usually by raising insects or inciting a riot, are able to play host to insects, rats, and other vermin with their bodies able to act as a living hive that can store swarms far larger than their body should be able to. They can link up the minds of people in a way that incites their emotions, rage building on rage, hate building on hate, etc. until they can sway entire crowds to collective action. This similarly works on animals, especially insects and is how they control the swarms they host. The smarter a creature is, the harder it is to influence, but if emotions overwhelm rational thought, they can get an opening to influence them.
- *Trunnidan, Demon Prince of Decay:* Trunnidan is a dangerous entity to contract with. While he freely gives out his power, those that gain it find themselves slowly rotting while still alive, the price they pay to gain his power. For this reason, most of his followers are undead as the decay does not affect them, instead bolstering them further. Priests of the Prince of Decay gain the ability to rot flesh, break down organic matter, erode stone, and otherwise cause things to fall apart around them, it also gives control over the rot they create, able to turn those they've rotted into undead, usually zombies or thralls. He can also give control over mushrooms and their spores, instead of the rotting touch, if he's inclined to keep a living agent around for a time, though he rarely does so
- *Brolvadal, Demon Prince of Apathy:* Brolvadal is an odd one, a demon prince that takes no price from his followers, but gives a power that isn't very strong as a result. The power of the demon prince of Apathy is to induce apathy in others, dulling emotions, quenching passions, and rendering them passive. Those with a strong will can power through it, but, it weighs down on the mind and can wear away a strong will with enough time. Even an abomination was pacified with a group of Brolvadal priests working in tandem, once.
- *Irzonuch, Archfiend of Brass:* One of the few fiends known more for creation than destruction, Irzonuch is an archfiend of flame and metal, with a special connection to Brass in particular. He is the forgemaster of the fiends and arms all his fellow Archfiends. Those that follow him must construct a build of basalt and forge a hammer of brass to act as a focus for his power, only then will he give his aid. He grants control over flames, can soften metals and earth to make them easier to work or harder to move through, and can call forth arms and armor from the earth itself. However, the true potential lies in the hammer, which is able to forge magical pathways through objects as they are crafted, creating a spell matrix similar to those created via ritual or alchemical enchanting using only forging technique and will, though such objects also often carry a curse from the fiendish origin of this power, which will not affect the maker.

- *Urzageth, Archfiend of Secrets:* Urzageth is the spymaster of the Archfiends, both working to keep their own secrets safe and to uncover the secrets of their enemies. She is renowned for her ability to obscure things in tales and falsehoods while keeping just enough truth to keep the real secrets hidden. Those that carry her blessing are given great subtlety, to the point even an inept loudmouth could act as a spy and informant without revealing themselves. They are also able to conjure mist and skew the senses, effectively allowing them to move unseen at will. However, the greatest gift she offers is the hidden mind. Her priests do not register as magically capable, shave no presence with any source, even pact, and have their minds closed off in such a way that others cannot read anything of their thoughts but what the priest wants them to hear. All she asks is for those under her to seek out secret lore and keep it hidden until she asks for it.
- *Sarzudan, Archfiend of Vengeance:* Sarzudan is actually an odd case as he is the son of a fiend and a nephilim, which has given him some measure of holy power and a resistance to the same. He is considered an enforcer of the fiends, with an unusual investment in making sure those that wrong him or another Archfiend are taken down swiftly and brutally. His priests are more akin to bounty hunters, with him giving a 'stipend' of power to keep them on retainer but otherwise only giving them more power once they've claimed a bounty he has placed. His priests are able to mark a target for death, making them more susceptible to harm by the priest's attacks, a natural skill at setting traps and tracking down those they hunt, an enhanced sense of smell, and a divination ability to find those they have marked with unerring accuracy.
- *Jolmen, Lord of Disease:* A pale shadow of his former self, the Lord of Disease was betrayed by his fellow devil lord Dokannar after aiding in the creation of the vampire virus. Even with his power weakened so, Jolmen offers those that pay his price great power in order to entice more followers and aid in his recovery. As the lord of Disease, Jolmen's blessing gives the ability to act as a carrier for all manner of diseases and to take components from those diseases to forge new ones, from a simple, persistent cough to great plagues able to sweep through entire cities. However, since his fall, he has also given some measure of necromantic strength to his followers, allowing them to imbue their diseases with a touch of necromancy, making them more deadly or allowing them to create thralls empowered and controlled by the diseases. His price, however, is that his followers display many of the physical signs of the diseases they carry, he will negate this display for a day for each sophont creature killed by one of the diseases the priest unleashes.
- *Dokannar, Lord of Blood:* Dokannar is the Lord of Blood and the creator of vampires, though what goes unsaid is that he needed aid from Jolmen to achieve that feat. Those that take Dokannar as a patron are expected to draw blood, to shed it in his name, and to help accomplish this, he gives them the tools to do so. Great strength and speed, a potent ability to drain the life of others in order to heal, and a weapon. This weapon takes the form of a khopesh with an attachable secondary blade, able to shapeshift into a powerful axe by holding the blade of the khopesh and attaching the axe-like head to the handle, where it drinks in the blood of the wielder to form a brutal, double sided axe with the ability to channel the life draining ability Dokannar provides. Alternatively, the attachment can be fixed to the khopesh blade and elongated into a combination scepter and halberd, able drink in blood and form them into projectiles to shed more blood.
- *Zagthalluuz, Lady of Tyranny:* One of the few devil ladies to be found, most often stripped of their strength long before they can achieve the level of a Lord, Zagthalluuz usurped the thrown of the devils from her husband, who she has since imprisoned and drawn power from to cement her position, gaining access to his followers and abilities on top of her own. Zagthalluuz is quite picky with her followers, only taking those that have conquered and laid claim to land before, whether they kept it or not, and will require an oath that, if broken, will drain the former priest of their strength and vital essence, leaving them near permanently crippled. However, for those that do follow her despite all of these restrictions, she offers instinctive combat abilities, the ability to empower those under their command with zealous fury, and access to some of her own tactical acumen. More so, they gain some power from her "husband" who can forcefully enslave others with a brand, forcing them to obey their orders and clouding their mind.

Even beyond the demons, fiends, and devils, there are the greater spirits, spiritual beings that have gained enough power to act as if they were divine even if they lack the full soul construction needed to become a true deity. Most are often called by an animal that represents them with a qualifier (such as adamant or a color), and while their blessings are weaker than most, you are not beholden to a single one the way gods and fiends often demand.

- *The Black Toad:* One of the more common spirits for priests to learn the rites of, the Black Toad's power manifests through rhymes that invoke minor curses, such as causing sneezing fits, a sudden stubbing of the toe, or the dimming of flames. The ritual sacrifice of an animal, which is then eaten, can provide a small increase in power for a time, though this can only be done on specific nights of the month, when the moon is in the right phase, at exactly half moon, whether waxing or waning.
- *The Stone Mother:* Represented as a great turtle or tortoise, the Stone Mother's rites give some measure of control over earth and stone, enough to open and close passageways in underground tunnels, pull rocks out of fertile earth, and increase the fertility of the land itself. She also grants the ability to imbue stones with power that makes them hit harder when thrown or used in a sling. Stone weapons are similarly empowered in the hands of the Stone Mother's priests, though this generally brings them on par with steel weapons rather than making them *better* than steel.
- *The Silver Kraken:* The rites of the Silver Kraken are strange, but offer a measure of eldritch power. All the rites are based on a large, sealed container of sorts, filled with salt water. Using these rites, tentacles of silvery-blue light can be conjured and used to produce a sort of slimy coating that will provide several forms of healing. Only a single rite is offensive and uses the tentacles to wrap up, pull, push, or constrict a foe, though this is surprisingly difficult to use to actually injure or kill said foe.
- *The Wretch:* One of the darker spirits, taking the form of an emaciated and deformed pig. The Wretch's rites focus on the production of foul smells, giving the priest a grotesque visage that can disturb those that see it, either temporarily or permanently, and making others more susceptible to disease and poison by compromising their immune system. Most are also able to eat rotten food without issue.
- *The Misty Fox:* A tricky spirit that likes to scare people, the Misty Fox's rites are able to conjure fog, induce auditory hallucinations, "throw" voices and sounds to come from somewhere else, layer an echoing quality to sounds or muffle them, create silhouettes, and cause a nervous tension that makes a person more primed for fear, more susceptible to spells or effects that induce fear. Their rites, however, are a little tricky and require a good deal of manual dexterity.
- *The Laughing Goat:* Also known as the Fanged Goat, this is one of the more malicious spirits out there, with rites focused on the causing of pain. Those that shed blood or cause pain, particularly in battle, are able to focus it into their weapons to empower them, create auras of unease and fear, and unleash the gathered power to influence the minds of a target to be more easily influenced and controlled. Most of the Laughing Goat's followers are great warriors.

While there is no Pact avatar, there is the potential for them to form, with many trying to figure out how it could happen, either in a bid to prevent such a thing from occurring or in an attempt to achieve those exact results, empowering themselves into the pact avatar. Some examples of those that may emerge should someone become a pact avatar are listed below.

- *The Covenant:* A melding of spirits and familiars that are connected to an entity that was once a community, all interconnected and fused together into a blob of flesh, blood, and bone. Formed from an entire community of cultists that tried to join their familiars and spirits into the resulting mass of false divinity, caused the people to instead fuse and weave together into a hive mind within a single body, trapped in a nearly euphoric state. The Covenant would be able to take the powers of their familiars and spirits and use them to create powerful guardians and vanguards, as well as hunters to find more creatures to add to their collective, either as familiars (if animal) or added to their mass (if human-like). This is the avatar that would result from the Magic, Static, Call Me A Fanatic Drawback.

- *Asphodel:* One of the more personable Avatars, Asphodel is still a dangerous being. Originally a merchant style pact user, and later a dealer instead, the being that became Asphodel had an ability similar to Lisa Higgs, able to fashion the traits and abilities purchased from others into an alternative form. The problem was, she went to far with it. She fashioned a powerful alternative form that she could not truly handle and had managed to take on a life of its own, transforming permanently into Asphodel. Her original mind is still present and has resigned itself to being an advisor to its more powerful creation, along with a collection of souls gained from her dealings that have been deemed intelligent, wise, and charismatic enough that their input is considered useful. They're the main reason that Asphodel is as personable as she is, because without them she'd be just another dangerous and unstable avatar.

The Ink

The Ink isn't really a power in and of itself, it is a layer of reality normally inaccessible to the world as a whole, even through magic or other means of planar travel, only those looking to practice inkwalking ever seeming to gain access to this level of reality. There is much debate on what the Ink actually is, but, there are some that think it's the border between the mental, spiritual, and physical levels of reality while others think it's similar to the astral plane, a place between places and another group believes that it's the place at the border of reality itself. Regardless of what the Ink is, accessing that level of reality opens up a variety of options to the user, who are almost universally referred to as Inkwalkers.

Simply accessing the Ink gives the signature ability of the power source, Inkwalking. In the brief moment between steps, an inkwalker can transfer themselves into the Ink, manifested as vanishing in a cloud of dark mist, only to step out of a similar mist at their exit point. This only lasts the length of a single step, but it allows the inkwalker to travel over quite the distance, even traveling twenty times as far with a single step. This does come with a bit of vertigo, but this is something that an inkwalker grows used to and those with good proprioception are able to ignore it fairly easily right off the bat. However, Inkwalking is more of a means to an end in the long run, it's nearly impossible to stay for long in the Ink, the one example of someone that did ending up as an Avatar, but repeated exposure grants an expanding effect on the mind, allowing an inkwalker to better understand the nature of the Ink and how to access the power it gives them. Inkwalking merely acts as a means of getting to that point, the fact it is a useful tool for other purposes is a bonus.

The mental expansion that allows one to better understand the Ink is not limited to just that understanding, it also has the effect of expanding the mind in other ways, bolstering the intellect of the inkwalker as they learn more of the Ink. An uneducated and moronic farmer could, over the course of years, begin to understand complex problems using only the intellect gained from their use of Ink, and those that are already intelligent would potentially become geniuses in their own right. This is normally a slow process, however, and few inkwalkers actually notice it at first, not until they're confronted by it in a more blatant way. Primarily because of the way the intelligence manifests, an enhanced memory, greater retention of concepts and ideas, and better organized thoughts that make it easier to pull up information from memory.

As an inkwalker's understanding of the Ink grows, they'll start to develop new abilities other than inkwalking, this is an individual understanding, it cannot be taught (even through memory sharing), only experienced, leading to the paths that inkwalkers take in their learning to be fairly different from individual to individual. The only thing that remains the same is learning to inkwalk itself and how to "look" when in the Ink to help garner understanding faster. It is these abilities that define an inkwalker and their methods more than anything else, and they tend to reflect the personality of the inkwalker as well. An inkwalker that prefers to be alone is unlikely to unlock the ability to bring others with them when they inkwalk, for example.

There are some trends in the abilities gained by inkwalkers. Some gain the ability to use their Inkwalking on others, willingly or otherwise, while others use it to obscure and hide themselves, seeming to let them blend into shadows or create smokescreens of Ink that hinder their foes, but not themselves, others can use it to form poison-like effects from the mildly irritating to the downright deadly, and still others can use it to form solid constructs of pure Ink, there is even a small group that is able to use the Ink to drain energies from their foes and pull it into themselves, mana, stamina, other sources, the vital energies that keep living beings alive and allow them to recover, and even, in one instance, life force itself. While not exclusive, many inkwalkers will display a propensity for one or two of their specialization with only a few abilities from the others emerging.

Because of how varied and personalized the powers of an inkwalker can be, new abilities are found quite often and are sometimes isolated to only a handful of individuals, such as a small group capable of partially entering the Ink while remaining mostly in the material, allowing them to pass through solid matter as if they were ghosts or the solid clones of Ink discovered by the first master of Ink use, Khaross (though he's believed to have since become the Archivist). This makes it quite difficult to properly define the abilities available to inkwalkers without explaining each and every ability, many of which won't be relevant to most inkwalkers. However, some abilities are common to all inkwalkers and will be described below.

The first of such abilities is script, the ability to render the Ink into a liquid form that can be used to write onto an object, this infuses just a bit of the Ink's power into the object. For weapons and armor, it makes them act as if they were magic and it marginally enhances the magical effects of any object the Ink is written on. On its own, this ability is fairly weak, however, objects enhanced in this way act as a channel for other Ink related abilities, a sort of primer for Ink use. Some have even learned to combine this ability with alchemy, specifically rune based alchemy, to spontaneously generate minor magical abilities.

The second is much more useful, the ability to inkwalk without moving, which can manifest in a few different ways, such as a flicker effect where the inkwalker just vanishes in a puff of black smoke and reappears in the exact same spot a few moments later or to actually move as if they were inwalking, though without the movement as a catalyst it is much less effective, only going about a fifth the normal distance the inkwalker could manage. There's also the "glitching" method, which has the inkwalker blinking in and out of the Ink rapidly, allowing them to suddenly jump around a battlefield with barely any sign of their movements. This is fairly straining to maintain, however.

The third such ability is perfect darkvision, the ability to see in darkness and low light conditions as if in normal daylight conditions, even in supernaturally dark conditions. This also allows the inkwalker to see through illusions, not quite erasing the illusion from their sight, but making it obvious to their eyes. This does next to nothing for other senses, however, illusions of scent, sound, taste, and even touch still work normally, merely visual illusions are overcome. This is still a great boon, however.

The fourth and final one of these abilities is an odd one, the ability to change the color of the Ink they manifest from back to another color. This actually seems to have some effects on how their use of the Ink manifests, such as shifting it to red causing their inkwalking to release a cloud of cinders that can burn while shifting it to white causes the mist that normally manifests with inkwalking to turn entirely transparent, in fact, all manifestations of white ink does. Not all colors are equal, and each individual color comes in its own time, however, their effects can be combined with time and practice.

Alongside the more personalized abilities mentioned above, these four abilities appear in all inkwalkers, often appearing in a seemingly random order, as they get a better grasp on the Ink and how it works. Inkwalkers are often considered tricky or tactical fighters due to their abilities and the general inability to prepare for them in full, and most won't give a straightforward fight, making them more dangerous than their listed abilities makes them sound.

For those incompatible with the Ink, just that brief glimpse into the reality it rests in is enough to damage the mind. In small bursts with time between uses, this damage will repair itself easily and can actually lead to the user building up a compatibility, but those that use it as compatible ink users do will find their mind effectively destroyed, bits of themselves erased with each jump through the ink until they're nothing more than a blank slate, just waiting for something to kill or take possession of their body.

Of the three races of inkwalker, all of them pull a bit of Ink into the material in various ways, though only the kruxan is able to do so at range.

The jadar are the most instinctive users of the Ink's power, primarily because they don't actually have to do anything to access the power themselves. The jadar's fur naturally draws in a material from the ink that acts like an undercoat for them, giving them their distinct, blue-black coloration. This is always active and can actually grant much insight into the Ink itself, though not enough to truly master its use on its own. This material can then be used in a variety of ways, the first and easiest being to blur their form to better hide themselves, however, this 'ink haze' can be condensed down into solid constructs; spikes, claws, shields, etc. all of which carry a deathly chill when touched by anyone other than a jadar, draining the vital essence (a byproduct of life force and often confused for life force itself) of a creature to replenish their own. A final use, in more senses than one, is the ability to metabolize the substance, pulling it in through their skin and using it to improve their physical capabilities, reducing their capacity for pain, and giving them a berserker-like fury. However, the metabolization actually has a poisonous side product that can, and often does, kill the jadar that uses this ability, leaving it as a last resort for most, though some do learn to use it sparingly. Even then, this poison can take weeks to work through the system and leaves the jadar weakened until it does, barring healing abilities purging the poison, which are only partially effective anyway.

The kruxan are a weird case of an Inkwalker that cannot naturally inkwalk. Kruxan, as a race, are firmly anchored to their plane and find it difficult to simply shunt themselves to another through conventional means, though portals are unaffected, this seems like it would clash with their use of the Ink, but instead, it allows them to drag some of the Ink closer to themselves, instead, creating the same cloud-like effect that inkwalkers generate when they inkwalk, but much thicker and having a sticky, slimy feel that clings to those that touch it. Abilities that pull the Ink closer to the material are also generally easier for a kruxan, but their ability to inkwalk and other abilities that rely on traveling through the ink, either themselves or others, are severely hindered, requiring special training and persistence. The ink clouds themselves don't grant insight to those that see it as it is a byproduct of the Ink being pulled into the material, but kruxan, able to see through the cloud, can spot the actual Ink to gain insights from it and grow their abilities like any other inkwalker.

For the incubators, the Ink isn't so much a source of power as it is a binder for their actual power. The diseases an incubator has absorbed are bound together into a sludge with some material from the Ink. This sludge resides entirely internally until it is called out, at which point it will form a skin-tight suit that acts like armor and enhances many of the abilities of the incubator. However, the sludge has another aspect that's less well known, it provides a steady connection to the Ink, which makes inkwalking easier and gives it greater range than other races normally possess. It is possible that certain diseases can provide unique manifestations of the Ink, though this is reserved for particularly rare and magical diseases.

Created by the Archivist, the shadow ichor was intended as a means of gaining an even greater understanding of the ink itself, and it shows in its uses. The first such ability is the formation of Inkgates, holes that open into the ink and shed a black smoke similar to the mist that shows up just before and just after inkwalking. Inkgates are more akin to a hoop or halo-like structure that opens a portal through the ink to another location, but those bonded with it are able to peer through to speed up their understanding of the Ink. These halos are composed of seemingly solid ink and can be manipulated and summoned at will, including causing them to grow or shrink. These halos will link to each other normally, but an opening can be forced elsewhere with effort, which can even allow for travel over incredible distances. The other, however, is a potent mental boost, a sort of second mind that looks for and stockpiles information and can be accessed at will, with most of the information freely flowing through the mind. By synchronizing with this second mind, however, the user can greatly bolster their intelligence, processing power, and pattern recognition. While somewhat straining on the mind to do this, it can get to the point where it's constant, though the Archivist insists this has been shown to have negative repercussions on the user as they start to go mad.

The Archivist's power is all focused in his intellect, with almost nothing truly unique other than the degree of mental augmentation he's had from his use of the Ink. The Ink that makes up his hands is the same used to forge weapons by other ink users, he can use Ink internally much like a Jadar, and he is able to access a kaleidoscope of Ink colors when he needs them, but in terms of unique abilities, it is merely the level of mental expansion relative to his skill in ink usage that marks him as different from other inkwalkers. However, he does have the ability to use any Ink-based ability used by other races or developed by other inkwalkers as he can easily understand the abilities from seeing them once or twice, usually. Those he can't, he will actually ask to study the ability and gives a great deal of respect to those that can use such abilities.

The Shade resides almost entirely within the Ink, only coming to reality to attack and feed. This is really the only thing truly unique about the Shade, it is able to remain near indefinitely within the Ink, which protects it from harm as few are able to attack it in the split second they're in the Ink for. This has secondary benefits such as the ability to "splash" the Ink into reality or pull reality into the Ink for a few short moments, enough for the Shade to whip around and eat whatever they dragged in, but this all stems from their ability to remain in the Ink indefinitely.

Rhythm

Also known as the Song of Creation or the Song of the Demiplane, Rhythm is actually one of the simplest powers to access in the demiplane, but the hardest to develop beyond its normal applications. Rhythm is the echo of what occurred during Creation, distorted from bouncing around the bounds of reality and feeding back on itself as it did until it harmonized into the song that underlies all of reality itself. Over time, people, animals, objects, places, events, and life itself absorbed bits and pieces of the song, shaping it as it shaped reality to give rise to the shifting ebb and flow of the song known today. Now harmonized and stable with much of its power sealed into reality, the song can be heard by those able to listen, but for those that know how, it can also be a source of great power. However, due to the largely passive nature of rhythm, it is often considered the weakest source.

Accessing rhythm is actually fairly simple, one merely needs to listen. Simple, however, does not mean easy. Those with a strong affinity for rhythm will hear it with only a little strain, but for those with a lesser affinity will need aid, meditation to clear their thoughts and slow their heart, a quiet place with little outside noise to better hear what they try, and similar precautions. But once the first few notes are heard, the song is forever linked to them. This allows one to hear the song and they can use its tone, pitch, and specific sounds to determine a variety of things from where they are to the intents a person may hold to if there is potential danger and how close that danger is to the user. There is a semi-instinctive grasp of some of this, everything carries a portion of the song from the moment they come into existence after all, but interpreting it is up to the user for the most part. There are even rhythm users that actually use rhythm only as a tool for navigation for years before they start noticing patterns well enough for other tasks.

Refining this sense is the basis of much of rhythm's power, interpreting and understanding the song better and faster, until it's nearly subconscious. Over time, this will develop to allow its user to sense danger and bloodlust, where it's directed, and even where individual stones or are in a field of gravel, able to pick out exactly which one they are looking for each and every time, without even needing to pause. They're even able to hear the intent behind words giving them the ability to understand anyone they speak to, with some even able to extend the effect back to those they speak to to make themselves understood in return.

Besides the obvious passive effects, there are other abilities available to rhythm users that are more active in nature, the first of which is within the scope of the bards, those that use their voice or instruments to add a layer to the song, bringing bits of it to the fore where it can be heard along with the music they make themselves. Such songs are often referred to as Verses, though it isn't the only name used, and can provide a number of effects, ranging from inspiring specific emotions in people to causing hypnotic trances to promoting creativity in those that hear the songs. The effects are almost universally mental in nature and can reach anyone that hears them, but, masterful bards are able to craft songs that are inspiring to their allies but intimidating to their enemies, achieving two, or more, effects at once. This is the easiest method of interacting with rhythm outside its passive effects and some can even accomplish this without ever hearing rhythm's song themselves, though without the insight from hearing the song, such is unreliable at the best of times.

The second of these methods is that of the composer, rhythm users that tie together the songs of many people, which functions similarly to a more instinctive variation of the network dream users can form. This doesn't allow for telepathic communication, but the intents of the people so tuned together are in line with each other and allows them to work and synergize their talents so that they coordinate with almost unnatural levels of precision, even people that have never worked together can seem like they've been doing so for years with a composer tying their songs together. A composer able to interact with the song can also apply certain effects to this connected song, called a Symphony, to grant boons to those within the symphony's effects.

Tuners make up the third form of rhythm user, those that tweak their own song. This is considered one of the more dangerous forms of rhythm use, mostly because an incorrect tuning can have negative side effects, but these side effects are more annoying and painful than truly deadly, though some happening in combat could lead to serious injury or death if the user isn't careful. The most common use of this is to soften or intensify their personal song, subduing or enhancing their presence, respectively, though self hypnosis is also a possibility, using many of the bardic abilities on themselves without needing to sing or actually make music.

The greatest use of this, however, is to take an external song and incorporate it into their own as what are called Echoes. These echoes are normally quiet, unnoticeable even to those listening for them, but, a tuner can intensify the echo to bring it forward and incorporate it more fully into their song. This can imbue some qualities of the song the echo came from onto the tuner. A skilled fighter with a precise and graceful fighting style could provide an echo that provides a similar level of precision and grace, even shifting the build of the user to something more suited to that level of grace. However, people and creatures aren't the only source of songs, objects and places can as well, though their songs are often a it more… eccentric and esoteric, unusual. A sandstone canyon of massive proportions may just give a power related to water and breaking defenses rather than anything related to stone, for example. Tuning more than one of these echoes at once is difficult without some form of aid and most don't get passed two such echoes at once.

The final use of rhythm is often considered a travesty by those that practice the more common arts, that of the discordants. These rhythm users take bits of the song, and twist them into discordant notes that clash with each other, which they then contain to allow them to repeatedly clash with each other until they energize or reharmonize into a new song. This creates a burning energy that can then be shaped and used as a weapon or shield. Few other uses exist for this energy with how damaging it is, but there are some that make use of it as a tool of sorts, usually when needing to cut through things. This is the most difficult form of rhythm use to actually learn and utilize as it runs counter to all other methodologies, and those that learn this method first often have difficulty learning the more harmonious methods described above.

Oddly, incompatibility with rhythm doesn't really have negative side effects, and one can still hear the song if they access it, but without that affinity, interpreting and interacting with the song is nearly impossible, most never learn to do more than the basics with rhythm because of this and are largely barred from the more refined uses of the power. Some, however, have been known to adversely react to the song, unable to tune it out, making it difficult to focus on other tasks or sleep, often resulting in increasing levels of exhaustion and frustration that can be quite dangerous for their health and safety.

The races of rhythm are unusual, they don't really have truly unique abilities in terms of what rhythm can do, instead seeming to possess physical adaptations that make them exceptional in an existing area of rhythm, though a few minor abilities do come up with unique traits.

The eahrwhrm are some of the most well suited to the use of rhythm in a more active sense, their ability to make music through their body's internal processes allowing them to act as natural bards, even able to create several bardic songs together with their many internal structures. Their strongest ability, however, is that of the Anthem. Eahrwhrms are able to synergize songs exceptionally well, even vastly different ones, combining bardic songs like a composer would the individual songs of people to create a symphony. These battle hymns can then combine with other bardic songs, especially if they are similar, creating the Anthem. Anthems themselves are incredibly potent bardic songs that combine several effects and makes them more potent for each layered song. This is largely a talent anyone with the capacity to play multiple instruments at once or able to sing in multiple tones could do, but the eahrwhrm are simply naturally suited for the task compared to others because of their natural abilities.

The Salat-ka possess a unique crest on their head that picks up the songs of rhythm far better than those that use their ears alone, giving them incredible sensitivity to rhythm, to the point where they can construct mental maps of their surroundings using only the songs they hear. This also makes them exceptional in picking up on the emotions and intents of those around them through their songs, even picking up on deeply buried emotions and intents. The sonic breath weapon and resonant skins a Salat-ka can use are only loosely based on rhythm, the first only barely energized sound that the Salat-ka can naturally produce. The skin, however, has its own song, one that easily resonates with the Salat-ka that shed it and imbues it with greater resilience when worn by that Salat-ka. Some exceptionally skilled Salat-ka tuners have been known to imbue the songs of those they defeat into their shed skins rather than storing them in their own song, making them easier to tune. It isn't known if this is unique to the Salat-ka or if someone with a similar ability to shed their skin could accomplish a similar feat.

By far the most unusual rhythm using race, chirurgeons have three songs of their own, almost as if they were three similar, but different, individuals. This is the only known interaction that a chirurgeon actually possesses, and the race is new enough that not many have discovered how best to use it, though there is thoughts that composing a symphony between the three songs would greatly improve the chirurgeon's abilities and precision to be more in line with those under the control of the Master of the Hostel. It may also allow them to tune multiple songs, one for each of their own, without the increased difficulty other races are capable of using.

Like the Remnants, the First Verse was born during Creation, an echo of the moment of Creation itself. The First Verse is able to manage many of the more dangerous aspects of Rhythm use, especially tuning, making these abilities far easier to utilize. The user can also project music directly without the need to play an instrument or sing. It also greatly enhances a user's ability to hear the songs and pick out individual notes and parts of the song itself. However, if this was all it did, it wouldn't be worth it. The songs stored by a Tuner can be permanently combined, making a new song that is easier to tune than tuning both songs individually. The user can also tune songs of two individuals, themselves included potentially, to cause them to fuse into a singular entity with traits of both and amplified to be stronger than they would be if you were to just add their abilities together.

Aria is a potent illusionist, able to use rhythm to impose a perception of something into reality with such clarity that it can actually physically interact with the world, to an extent, even able to affect those normally resistant to such abilities. She is also able to use rhythm to create life and is a lesser god or a demigod, it's unclear which is more accurate, on top of this. The reverence of the Salat-ka, whom she created, keeps her reserves of divinity ready. However, she seems to only be able to use her divinity to augment her use of Rhythm, which may be part of her nature as an avatar.

The Choir is notable among avatars for being empowered by an extreme case of an existing ability within their source rather than a unique ability all their own, though still possessing a unique manifestation. The Choir instead takes the abilities of a Tuner and takes them to the extreme, able to manifest dozens upon dozens of songs at once and even imposing them on others for short periods of time. Its unique ability, however, is the Song of Silence, an ability to tune a song so it completely vanishes, which erases the thing the song is connected to unless it is replaced by another song almost immediately after the first is silenced. This actually takes some level of skill and more powerful beings are harder to influence in this way.

Delve

The Delve, as a power, is unique in terms of Sources. It does not come from a special heritage, it does not come from an external power, it is not a special trait found only in certain individuals, it was not awakened by the demiplane, it is a completely internal force that anyone can access and benefit from. This makes it much like thaumaturgy with the exception that it is technically non-magical in nature, even able to function in areas where magics, and other sources, wouldn't. Actually accessing the power of Delve, however, is a difficult process that requires the user, known as a delver, to crystallize their mindscape in such a way that it actually takes on a form they can interact with, then use meditation to send a mental representation of themselves into their mindscape. This mindscape is referred to as the Inner World by most delvers.

Meditation is a key aspect of delving, and this has its own benefits beyond just allowing the delver access to their inner world. While meditating, their mind moves more quickly, allowing them to enter their inner world for what seems like hours for them and come out of it with only a few minutes to an hour having past in real time. Some delvers actually use this to sleep in the safe portions of their inner world while others learn to be able to enter a meditative trance even while in combat to get a moment to strategize or otherwise get a short mental reprieve, some can even partially enter this trance to speed their thoughts without going into the inner world. Beyond this, the use of meditation clears and focuses the mind in many ways and can allow the delver to organize their thoughts better, or even isolate portions of themselves in such a way that they can even fool magical methods of reading their mind or determining truthfulness.

For the actual use of the delve, the power shapes and crystallizes traits of the user, their experiences, their mental state, their fears, dreams, phobias, ambitions, and convictions, into physical things within the mindscape, which then are hidden behind tasks, foes, puzzles, or other challenges that grant them access to the thing crystallized from their mind. These can be just about anything, some may be creatures, while others will be weapons or armor, and still others will be magical tools, with even pieces of spell matrices, permanently formed, or pools of energy they can use with their various delve-related abilities. They merely require the delver meet the requirements, usually in the form of completing the challenge set before them, and Claim the prize. After doing so, the delver can manifest what they Claimed, either summoning a creature or object they obtained or forming a spell matrix out of the pieces they have. The biggest thing is that everything in the use of delve needs to be earned, there is no cheating or getting around the challenges, if you do not beat the challenge, the Claim will not take.

Failing a challenge is always a possibility, and while this won't kill the delver, it can lock them out of attempting the challenge again for some time, locking them out of the potential growth it would offer and needing to attempt something else. On top of this, the delver cannot enter their inner world for at least a day after being forced out, which only occurs of their mental avatar is "killed" by the challenge. Even the lockout effect only occurs if the delver's avatar dies in the attempt.

Additionally, inner worlds are not static in nature, they can shift and gain new features to them over time, the inner world ever growing, though this is a slow growth and can leave the delver with no way to progress for a time as the inner world shifts to grant them an appropriate challenge from their own mind.

Claiming is another aspect of delving that can be useful. A delver can, with practice, Claim things in the physical world that they can then store within their inner world. This actually takes up space within the inner world and can pile up enough that actually entering and exiting the inner world can become a bit more difficult, though some that do so regularly will start to find challenges with more safe space as a reward. This will also allow the Claiming of bonded creatures, such as familiars or golems.

Because of how personalized delve is, there is often a theme involved in how it manifests, such as all the prizes being represented by masks or being trees that give a power when its fruit is eaten. This theme, while not always present, can give direction, and a skilled delver can actually restructure their inner world to lean into a theme, either emphasizing the one they already have or lean it towards a new one, though the old one will often remain as a subtheme even when a new theme is brought in. This can actually allow a delver to "reset" their inner world in a fashion, giving them the chance to obtain new forms for their existing prizes.

One other use for the inner world is the ability to train in it. The creatures within, both as challenges and prizes, can be summoned as opponents for the delver to match themselves against and train themselves to fight. Some even Claim foes during a fight to gain a shadow of them they can fight in this manner. This is a form of image training and will actually improve the delver's ability to fight, their muscle memory, and even offer a small amount of physical conditioning as the inner world starts to reflect in the outer world. This means that most delvers have access to a method of training that is safe for them and can allow them to learn at a rapid pace through sheer perseverance.

Using the objects and creatures from the inner world costs nothing to the user, even if they are destroyed, they will return to the inner world and be repaired over time, and may sometimes even have an upgrade for them spawned behind a new challenge to cover for the weakness invoked by such an event. There is no cost to maintain the presence of these objects or creatures, just the time for them to heal or repair if they are injured/damaged or destroyed.

Enchantments placed on the delver have a unique interaction with this form of power, they can form in the inner world as a prize and become an innate part of the delver if they Claim it, though such prizes are often hidden behind difficult challenges for even minor enchantments.

Delve naturally interacts with other sources the delver has access to and can open up prizes based on those sources or increase the delver's level of compatibility with the sources in question. The challenges for such boosts to compatibility are often extreme, but it is one of the few ways to become compatible with a source you normally wouldn't be without ritual magic to change yourself into a race that is compatible innately. Other prizes are interactions the delver is often unaware of and specific uses that become near instinctive once Claimed, improving the delver's abilities with their sources.

As a final aside, there is a major defense offered by the use of delve. Memory and personality erasing or rewriting techniques, spells, or powers can take hold, but, they will not remain long. The safe space in the mind will remain and an avatar of the user will form there if such a technique is used, allowing them to rebuild their inner world, and thus, come back from even total mind erasure. This also allows the delver to fight off such effects actively, having an avatar form in their inner world to fight any mind affecting effects, morphed into a form that can be fought against, cast upon them. This will even occur passively as claimed prizes will fight for the delver if they can't afford to split their attention to do so themselves, which can be just as effective at times. Similarly, this will open up new options as the mind magics used crystallize within the inner world into their own prizes, and even rebuilding the inner world will find dozens of new challenges forming to help rebuild what once was.

Incompatibility with Delve is a rarity, it merely makes it harder to actually crystallize the mindscape and send in a mental avatar the less of an affinity someone possesses, but anyone can potentially access it with enough time and dedication. The real issue is the balance of the mind, someone with intense mental issues will find themselves facing challenges that are often too much for them while someone exceptionally well adjusted or little experience outside of a safe place may not actually receive much benefit as their challenges would be rather limited or minor.

Only two races exist that access delve naturally, each possessing the ability to access Inner Worlds other than the normal one any delver would possess.

The aberrants are a creation of Aberinth and possess a touch of divinity, not enough to achieve godhood themselves, or even to become a cleric or priest, but enough to change them on a fundamental level from what they used to be. This touch of divinity, taking the form of a red gem embedded in the body of the aberrant, has its own Inner World that they can delve as easily as their own natural one, even easier, even as non-delvers are able to delve this gem. This gem represents the blessing of Aberinth in the race. The Claims within this gem are physical alterations, new organs, entire limbs, and even the occasional symbiote for those that delve deep enough, along with an energy used to manifest such things. This energy is similar to false divinity, but even thinner than normal false divinity, it is only usable for the purposes of manifesting the claims of this Inner World.

Drudges, specifically the helmed variety, are natural users of delve, largely as a result of necessity. However, they possess a unique quality that is very different from other delvers, they have an open Inner World, one that they can connect to magical objects in their possession or enchantments placed on them and catalyze a temporary (or permanent, if they're skilled enough) inner world within them. From there, the drudge can Claim things, either reducing the object to empower themselves in some small way, or, push the Claim into the object, expanding on what it can do and making it stronger as a result. Enchantments are similarly affected, but can only be claimed, the effects of the enchantment being internalized and made a natural part of the drudge. Most only push the Claims once they realize a pushed Claim will open up new paths where a Claimed trait will lock those paths away forever.

The Idol of Aspects is a potent artifact for delve that allows a delver to access Inner Worlds of virtually anything, not just their own, but those of objects, locations, and even other people if they are willing. This can grant a wide array of powers, tools, and summons that would otherwise be inaccessible. However, this isn't what makes the Idol so potent, that lies in its ability to open Inner Worlds within their own Inner World. The key of the Idol allows a delver to open a path to an Inner World based on a facet of themselves, either something of themselves that's focused differently, a component of their physical or spiritual being, or even something they've claimed, allowing for a greater ability to explore their own Inner World and gain unique abilities as a result.

The Gate's abilities lie in projecting its Inner World into reality, making it external to itself and manipulating the environment through this imposition. With a large and complex inner world, it can actually project a wide variety of hazards and dangers to herd, redirect, and harm those that it disapproves of, often manifesting incredibly strange and unusual terrain features. It can even manifest some of its own challenges from its Inner World to stall others, though it rarely does so as this can actually lead to someone gaining access to one of its powers at the end of that challenge, without losing them itself.

The Keyholder is able to manifest within the Inner Worlds of others, sending their own mental representation into another person's inner world to force them to fight on two fronts. It can even empower aspects of the Inner World to make them more dangerous to the delver or take artefacts, summons, or spell matrices from the mind, temporarily, to empower itself, often fusing weapons and spell matrices into its spear while forging summons and non-weapon artefacts into its armor. This does catalyze the inner world in others to grant them access to Delve if they didn't already have it.

When working together, the two can permanently steal parts of the inner world of another creature, potentially rendering the victim permanently weakened.

Demonfire

Usually the result of demonic, devilish, or fiendish heritage, and always the result of influences of the same, demonfire (also called felfire) is a potent magic. Demonfire pools within the core of the user, be they demon, devil, fiend, or cambion, hereby referred to simply as cambions, with a finite amount that will naturally accumulate. This demonfire can then be used in two distinctly different ways, drawing it out from their core and externalized in a flame-like manifestation, with a number of options to alter how it manifests, or flooded through the body to empower the fiendish nature of the cambion's blood.

The second method mentioned is mostly used by those that only possess a fiendish heritage, however, even full blooded fiends are able to benefit from it. Dispersing the power of demonfire through the body awakens the latent power of the cambion's fiendish heritage and causes a potent, and often terrifying, transformation. For most cambions, this results in a more intimidating and dangerous form that is unmistakably demonic in nature and has the power to match as the demonfire bolsters the strength and durability of the cambion, as well as augmenting their magical prowess. Soul- and blood-based powers in particular find themselves enhanced by this transformation. However, only full blooded fiends are able to fully handle this power, those that simply have the blood of a demon find their body and soul eroded by the power if maintained for too long. Practice with this transformation can make it last longer and some are naturally more resistant than others, but at its most basic level, most can only safely maintain this transformation for a few minutes before needing to recover over the course of hours. Demons and other fiends tend to keep this power up constantly and only drop it to hide the full extent of their power. This transformation doesn't use up demonfire, but is powered by the pool you possess, if you use demonfire externally, it weakens the transformation.

The most common use, however, is the ability to manifest demonfire externally, this is where the power gets its name as it manifests in a flame-like manner similar to delfire. Depending on how the power is compressed and shaped, the color of the flames will change and their effects will manifest differently as a result. The simplest examples, and the ones all cambions are capable of using instinctually, are the red, black, green, and violet forms of demonfire, however, others can be discovered and practiced with given the time. Each type of flame has its advantages and disadvantages, such as red demonfire requiring almost no power to use, replenished nearly as quickly as it's used, but is the weakest form of demonfire. There are a dozen known forms of demonfire, all of which are listed below, however, only the first four, the red, black, green, and violet forms, are one's a cambion would begin with.

- *Red Demonfire:* The red manifestation of demonfire is by far the easiest to use, taking very little power to manifest and controlled with a surprising amount of ease. However, it is also one of the weakest forms of demonfire in terms of raw power. Even so, red demonfire burns hotter than normal flames, more similar to the fires of a stoked forge and anyone burned by them feels an intense pain for days after the burn has healed, sometimes weeks after if the burn was particularly bad.
- *Black Demonfire:* The strongest of the four basic demonfires and one of the most expensive and difficult to control of them, black demonfire is extremely dangerous to wield as it can burn the one using it if they aren't careful. Even those that specialize in the use of black demonfire are careful with it. Black demonfire can burn through nearly anything, able to even burn through stone and leave nothing but ash. The danger comes in that the flames spread even without fuel to burn and seem to seek out living things to burn.
- *Green Demonfire:* Also commonly called hellfire, green demonfire is highly energy intensive, though not as expensive as black demonfire, but is not as damaging as one would expect, barely warming the body. However, the flames persist around the body for several minutes and causes the mind to be clouded and makes them vulnerable to other forms of magic. This is not, however, its main use. If someone dies while coated in green demonfire, they will rise as a thrall under the control of the cambion.

- *Violet Demonfire:* The violet manifestation of demonfire is the most difficult to control of the basic forms of demonfire, though not in the same way as black demonfire. Violet demonfire is energy intensive, roughly on par with green demonfire and is roughly twice the strength of red demonfire. Violet demonfire's main feature is that it interacts with spell matrices, rather violently so, as it burns away at the structure of the matrices it comes into contact with, allowing it to disrupt most forms of thaumaturgy, alchemy, and ritual casting. However, this also causes a violent react with the mana within the matrix that can result in a surge of wild magic that often has unpredictable results.
- *Gold Demonfire:* The demonfire most commonly associated with Lucian Blackfrost the Hellbreaker, this demonfire was born from the blood of countless demons shed on his weapon and infused with the holy power he naturally wielded. Gold demonfire is on par with red demonfire in terms of strength, but it has the ability to burn out corrupting influences, poisons, diseases, and other ailments rather than causing persistent pain. Gold demonfire is more energy intensive than red demonfire, requiring twice the power to manifest, though this still isn't much compared to other form of demonfire. This demonfire is only able to manifest in those with both divine power and demonic heritage.
- *Blue Demonfire:* The most energy intensive form of demonfire to maintain is the blue manifestation, even more so than black demonfire, most are only able to use it for a few moments at a time. Blue demonfire allows one to effectively skip over events by burning the time necessary for them away. This allows the cambion to accelerate themselves or even seemingly teleport as they reduce the time necessary for their actions. This demonfire is second only to pallid demonfire in terms of rarity.
- *Silver Demonfire:* One of the stranger forms of demonfire is the silver variant. Exceptionally difficult to unlock and about as intense as white demonfire, if not a bit weaker, silver demonfire is considered a cursed flame due to what it burns; fortune. Those burned by silver demonfire find their luck failing, their fortunes turning sour, and ill omens following them, accompanied by an uncomfortable, semi-feverish heat that pervades their body all the while. This is in proportion to how bad the burns are, slight scalding may result in minor misfortune over the course of a week, but, deep burns can be a constant onslaught of borderline lethal misfortune that can last months, or even a year. Skilled users have been known to burn up ill fortune with silver demonfire, but this darkens the flames and makes them more energy intensive.
- *White Demonfire:* The white manifestation of demonfire is the easiest demonfire to control, even more so than red demonfire, but burns with half the intensity as red demonfire. The main use of white demonfire, however, lies in its ability to mix with other forms of demonfire, where it can enhance the level of control the cambion has over that form of demonfire without any loss in heat and a minimal increase in cost. It can also be mixed with mundane flames to gain control over them.
- *Pink Demonfire:* More of a magenta flame, pink demonfire is one of the most insidiously dangerous forms of demonfire in existence. About on par with violet demonfire in terms of costs and intensity, but slightly more controlled, pink demonfire burns away at the lucidity and inhibitions of the one burned, causing them to grow more and more disconnected with reality, causing hallucinations and waking dreams, and making their mind disjointed and prone to manic fits. This demonfire burns away at the very sanity of a creature, and while they can, and often do, recover from this, continued or heavy exposure can result in permanent mental damage that can lead to insanity in its own right.
- *Glass Demonfire:* Shorthand for colorless demonfire, glass demonfire is an odd flame for its subtlety, as most manifestations of demonfire are rather noticeable. Glass demonfire doesn't burn very intensely, in fact, it doesn't burn at all. Much like green demonfire, it gives a gentle warmth and focuses more on its effects rather than harming others. The use of glass demonfire allows a cambion to burn away or enflame emotions, making some stronger while reducing the effects of others, giving a level of control over a person through their emotional state. Intense uses are easily noticeable and are often fought against, though sudden surges of fear or anger can be quite effective in the right situation. This demonfire comes into its own with a gentler touch, and is one of the few forms of demonfire suited for something other than destruction.

- *Pallid Demonfire:* The rarest form of known demonfire is the pallid manifestation, taking a sickly and pale yellow-green coloration, pallid demonfire is considered the most dangerous form of demonfire to exist for one simple fact, it is able to burn away at the boundaries between places. This demonfire allows its user to create portals between planes of reality, however, the amount of energy needed to simply manifest this form of demonfire means that few without an augmented soul are able to achieve it. Those that do often use it to leave the demiplane, making it even rarer as those that do gain it simply leave.

Demonfire does not grow in the way mana does, more will not accumulate through practice, only by strengthening the soul itself will more demonfire collect. However, this is not the primary method through which demonfire grows, that is the result of efficiently using the power. Skilled users of demonfire can use a mere fraction of their reserves to achieve the same results as a less practiced cambion could, resulting in them being able to pack more power into the flames. This is often linked to practice with an individual manifestation of demonfire, rather than demonfire as a whole, though general skill with multiple forms of demonfire can increase efficiency in others as they get a better feel for how to use the power in general, though some flames may still prove to run counter to this. Many cambions choose to specialize in one or two flames rather than trying to master them all.

Demonfire can manifest in non-cambions when exposed to excessive amounts of demonic essence, whether that takes the form of fiendish magic, blood, or souls. This can even occur in objects, as is the case with Lucian Blackfrost's scythe, though such objects often have much less power to draw on than a living creature would.

Implings are natural users of demonfire, and every single one has access to a unique form of demonfire that is grey in color. This demonfire has almost no energy cost to manifest or maintain, provides only a comfortable warmth with its presence, and is relatively easy to control, though not as easy as red demonfire. However, it's unique properties make it quite potent. Grey demonfire is able to absorb both mundane and magical flames, and can even siphon the flame-like manifestations around orbs of delfire (though not the delfire itself), that will slowly coalesce and pull away from the rest of the demonfire. A seed of fire that can be harmlessly held by any creature and used as a focus for flame-based magics and abilities, especially useful for the control of flames.

A step further allows one to tie these seeds of flame to their life force to allow it to grow with its wielder and develop unique properties as it does so. Using demonfire through this flame seed allows the cambion to slightly alter the properties of a flame, intensifying or dulling the heat given off, dulling the visual manifestation, adding extra control, reducing the cost to initially manifest or maintain it, and even slightly alter how the extra effects of the flame could manifest, though this last one requires the bound form of the flame.

Holy Aura

Celestials derive their power from a form of divinity that has been mutated into a form usable by non-godly beings, resulting in what is commonly referred to as holy (or unholy) magic. This magic naturally manifests as an aura that extends a goodly distance from the celestial, usually around 30 meters, and offers a minor effect based on the will and heritage of the celestial, which can range from making the world seem a bit brighter, easing the burdens of the mind or soul, making injuries or illnesses heal ever so slightly faster and less likely to worsen, or even just a boost in conviction that can keep someone going just a few steps more in a fight. These minor effects are passive and affect anyone in range unless the celestial specifically excludes them from it.

Using the aura more actively condenses the aura, reducing its range to empower and focus it towards a desired effect, often requiring specific iconography to fully manifest. The halo of an angel, the wings of an archon, the glowing markings of a daeva, or the holy symbol of a deity, all help to manifest the full power of the aura and can be conjured from that power to help aid that effect, though they are not themselves physical, and possessing a physical version keeps from needing to manifest these icons directly. Each icon is aligned with a different set of effects, breaking down the magic to different manifestations based on the iconography used to create them.

The manifestations are described below, and while any celestial can access any of these manifestations, they are best with the ones they naturally align with, either through heritage or a simple affinity. Much like demonfire, the holy aura of a celestial does not grow with practice, instead, it grows more efficient as they get better at using it for different abilities or they gain access to an icon that eases their use of the magic.

Angelic manifestations are geared largely towards comfort and protection; wards, protective barriers, soothing and healing wounds or illnesses, creating shelters and sanctuaries, and calming tempers to prevent hostilities from breaking out. They can also make themselves calmer and more serene, augment their persuasiveness, make themselves understood by anyone and understand anyone in turn, or enhance their perceptions to see into the hearts of men, giving them uncanny insights. The icon for an angelic manifestation is a halo or an unbroken circle of gold, such as a ring, armlet, earring, or circlet.

Archonic manifestations are more focused on the concepts of guidance, where angels heal and comfort, archons push people to overcome and persevere despite whatever setbacks have presented themselves. Giving clarity and perspective, a calming hand that provides focus and confidence, bringing out the skills and abilities of those under their guidance so they may show their true potential, and making lessons stick in the mind, allowing those taught by an archon to retain the lessons given to them. The icon for an archonic manifestation consists of wings made of light, usually in a white or golden color. A glass pendant shaped like wings can do to aid in these manifestations as can a cape or mantle.

Daevic manifestations are designed for battle, bolstering the celestial and their allies while hindering their foes in a variety of ways. The most common daevic manifestation of holy magic is to enhance coordination and teamwork in a group, making them function in battle far more efficiently, though it can also be used for other tasks such as building fortifications or negotiating, however, granting divine strength, enhanced fortitude, stamina beyond the norm, and empowering weapons with holy power are all possible. Against their enemies, however, a daeva will level a potent feeling of menace, not quite fear or awe, but a pressure that makes their foes feel as if they were fighting an uphill battle even when they are clearly superior. The icon for daevic manifestations are the markings on a daeva's skin, making tattoos and scarification a common theme for daevic nephilim.

Deific manifestations are varied based on the god represented in the iconography, a god of death and sleep, such as the Peaceful Night, would allow a celestial to give someone a restful, healing sleep or cause someone mortally wounded to pass gently and painlessly, while releasing a bit of divine power that would temporarily empower the celestial's aura while a nature god with a focus on plantlife may allow them to accelerate the growth of plants, remove blights from them, and commune with them. These manifestations are often the most common form and are similar to, but not the same as, the powers offered by a deity to their priests. The icon for deific manifestations are the holy symbol of the deity, the deity's preferred weapon, the likeness of the god in question (so those that look like their deity can benefit from such), or even the deity's favor.

There is another manifestation, that of the auric manifestation, where, instead of focusing the aura to a task, it is strengthened in its own right, either by being condensed, having a bit of life force infused into it, or simply pushed into a stronger state at the cost of fatigue. Beings antithetical to the aura, such as most forms of undead, fiends, and corrupted beings, find their power eroded within the aura, though focusing it further in this manner can lead to it being damaging to other sorts of creatures, albeit at a very costly rate. This can also be used to infuse a substance with holy magic, such is the case for the creation of holy water.

Nephilims, those with only the blood of a celestial, will often find themselves naturally possessing the ability to manifest the icon of their ancestry without needing to focus their aura towards that task, or at least requiring significantly less investment to make them manifest. However, their power is often more flexible than other celestials as they can access other manifestations more easily in general than a normal celestial could.

Most nephilims, like cambions, are able to undergo a transformation to a more potent form by internalizing their aura, which empowers their physical and mental capabilities proportional to the amount of aura they internalize. This also enhances life focused magics, such as most forms of healing and many magics focused on empowering the physical body. This comes with a perfection of form that makes the nephilim more beautiful than they already are and adds traits reminiscent of their celestial ancestor to their form. However, overuse of the higher levels of the transformation can lead to changes in personality, and even death of personality, as the archetype of the celestial take over, taking time to recover and return to normal from the experience.

Harks are a special case in terms of nephilim, mortal celestials that have their own, unique manifestation of their holy aura that allows them to temporarily bolster the life force of another being, or themselves. This comes with all the benefits of having a greater than normal life force, as described below, but the boost is always temporary, never permanent, though this temporary life force has been used for empowering other magics without impacting the actual life force of the user on occasion, this takes practice to target the right "portion" of their life force, however. They are also naturally resistant to the transformation's effect on their personalities as they are, in themselves, lesser celestials rather than descended from one of the above varieties, meaning their natural personalities are often close enough to the effects of the transformation that it doesn't change them much.

Two things mark the Hark even more, the first is the runes that circle their head, which act as a focus for their holy aura, and the second is the Hark's ability to make their aura take on a partially physical form. The runes and glyphs that encircle a Hark's head have meaning, and as they practice with power related to the meaning of one of these runes, that rune comes closer to the front, hanging over their forehead if it is the strongest affinity they possess and replacing the normal icon that would normally empower that manifestation. However, it's the second ability that brings the harks fame, their ability to distill, bottle, and age portions of their aura to create potions with the effects of a manifestation, even auric or transformative ones. The aura eventually recovers, but the bottled power remains, allowing them to overcharge their abilities with these bottled bits of holy aura.

Blood Echoes

This form of magic only comes from a hybrid of vampire and another race, a result of the magic within the vampire forming naturally within a child that isn't infected with an active form of vampirism. Dhampir, regardless of what race they are descended from, possess an inert form of vampirism that grants access to the power of blood echoes. Just having access to this magic improves the physical capabilities of the dhampir, though by no means to the extent of a full blooded vampire. A dhampir would be as graceful as an elf, as quick as a halfling, as tough as a dwarf, and as strong as an orc, with senses to match, but are otherwise fairly normal.

Like vampires, a dhampir can draw sustenance from blood, getting far more nourishment from it than they really should, extracting the magic from that blood. Unlike vampires, however, dhampir don't immediately funnel the magic they extract from blood into refining the spell matrices vampirism creates as they do not possess them, not in the same way at least. This allows the dhampir to store up the magic they extract within their own blood where they can access it for a number of purposes. The power stored carries fragments of the creatures the blood was drawn from, bits of memory that linger within the magic itself, giving rise to the name blood echoes, or simply echoes.

All dhampir possess some minor powers to help them obtain these blood echoes without costing them anything in terms of stored power. The first is the ability to sense blood and see it within a creature, even through walls if they aren't too thick. This allows them to see just how much power the creature has in their blood, spot unique traits, and even tell if they are inherently magical beings or mages. The second ability allows the dhampir to strengthen their jaw, open their mouths far wider than normal, and sharpen and harden their teeth to the point they can cut through even thick hides without damaging them, though they can choose to instead change their teeth to the more commonly viewed hollow fangs that drain blood directly. The final ability is immunity to other forms of vampirism and the ability to extract vampirism from the blood of vampires, something only the Master of the Hostel has accomplished without being a dhampir himself. This can actually act as a method of curing vampirism in those that have yet to be fully converted and can grant the dhampir some additional abilities. Dhampirs cannot normally spread vampirism with their bite.

Obtaining blood echoes merely requires the dhampir to drink blood drawn from a living creature, it doesn't even need to be done directly, a bit of blood bled into a cup and preserved with magic would be enough. Intelligent and magical creatures naturally provide more blood echoes, as do older creatures, but even simple animals can provide a small amount of blood echoes to the dhampir. However, there is a downside to obtaining blood echoes from intelligent creatures, the blood echoes from them are addictive. The memories housed within such blood echoes can grant a nearly euphoric feeling that, if indulged in too often, can cause withdrawals when the dhampir starts to deplete them. These withdrawals cause reduced inhibitions, heightened levels of stress and anxiety, a feeling of thirst that won't go away no matter how much they drink, and enhanced sensory feedback, especially in regards to scent and taste. This often leads to a dhampir drinking blood to get rid of the effects and having the effects of the blood echoes enhanced further, which can lead to the symptoms worsening. While these withdrawals never directly lead to death, some dhampir find them bad enough that death is preferable. Moderation and willpower will mostly mitigate these drawbacks, as well as being frugal in the use of blood echoes in general.

The memories within the blood echoes, while causing the addictive qualities mentioned above, are also the primary source of strength they possess. A dhampir can access the memories held in the blood to effectively gain some of the skills of those they have drunk the blood of or to learn secrets of the people whose blood they have consumed. This does not use up the power the dhampir holds and can be used indefinitely as long as they do not spend the blood echoes that contain those memories. Many use this as a learning aid.

More active uses of blood echoes, ones that actually spend the power, are focused on actually activating parts of the vampiric virus within them to form short lived spell matrices fueled by the blood echoes they put into it.. All the common powers of vampires can be accessed in this way and specialized powers from specific strains can be obtained by the dhampir through drinking the blood of a vampire with that strain of virus. It should be noted that this does not provide blood echoes, a dhampir cannot acquire blood echoes from anyone infected with vampirism as the magic in the blood that would result in them is used up by the vampire. Only a vampire that has recently fed may provide blood echoes, but even this would be a paltry amount by comparison, though they would not carry memories and thus be non-addictive. A dhampir can also substitute their need for food, drink, sleep, or even air with blood echoes, at least for a time. Food is the least expensive of these effects, followed by sleep, then water, then air, with air being exceptionally expensive, comparatively. A dhampir with full reserves could go a full hour without air if need be using this ability.

Use of these powers refines the spell matrix created when so activated, much like how a vampire's spell matrices are refined through feeding and living for long periods of time, making them more efficient. Most dhampirs find their power of regeneration and self healing to be the most potent thing they possess as they near instinctively use their blood echoes to keep themselves healthy, some even able to heal as quickly as a troll-blooded just from their instinctive use of the healing matrix.

Even a dhampir's ability to extract magical power and store it within their blood can be refined over time, with some of the most well practiced being able to extract the magic from the blood of a creature over a distance, never having to touch them. Without blood as a physical medium, however, such blood echoes lack imprinted memories. This does have a negative effect on those drained in this way, causing fatigue and weakening the magical abilities of any so affected for a time, but it is not a painful process, leading to many dhampir using this ability on people who sleep.

There is one final ability dhampir possess, that of awakening. Awakening is similar to the transformations induced by demonfire and holy aura, a transformative boost in power caused by tapping more fully into their heritage. For dhampir, however, this is far less dangerous. Using blood echoes to fully awaken their vampiric virus, the dhampir accesses the full power of their vampiric heritage, gaining all the abilities of a full vampire and maintaining their natural resistance to the weaknesses normally found within vampires. This temporarily heightens the power and refinement of the spell matrices the dhampir manifests, which is especially noticeable for those abilities they commonly use outside these transformations. The transformation will last as long as the dhampir has blood echoes to feed into the transformation and can be ended at any time by just not feeding more blood echoes into the effect. Most dhampir can only maintain this transformation for a few minutes before they run out of blood echoes.

The sovin, a unique race of naturally occuring dhampirs, have developed two additional abilities that utilize blood echoes, one of which is completely innate to the race itself. Sovin are capable of forming a bloodstone, a red, crystalline structure composed of blood and the inert vampirism virus. These stones are able to be infused with the memories held within a sovin's blood echoes, making them a permanent part of the stone that can always be accessed as long as the sovin possess blood echoes to bridge the memories within with their own. This gives them a high level of resistance to the addictive qualities of blood echoes. These stones can break off pieces with specific sets of memories which can then be given to others to grant them access to the memories within, as well as a small reserve of modified blood echoes designed to simply allow one access to the stone. Some vampire hunters have found that these stones can be extracted from a sovin directly and used in the same way as the ones willingly given.

The other ability is one that allows a sovin to shape and harden their blood using the echoes stored within it, with many being able to form weapons entirely of semi-crystallized blood. This is partially possible because of the bloodstones possessed by the sovin race, but other dhampir have been able to replicate the ability, with difficulty.

Moonlight

Like with blood echoes, the power of moonlight is one unique to those with an inert form of therianthropy and not full therianthropes. The inert form of the therianthropy virus does not catalyze with exposure to moonlight, instead mixing it with the naturally occurring magic within the virus to form a sort of magical mixture that is stored within the body of the shifter. Like with dhampir, a shifter cannot spread this form of the therianthropy virus through a bite, though it is believed possible to pass the infection in other ways, unlike the dhampir's form of vampirism.

Unlike most of the other heritage magics where the transformation is a secondary feature, with moonlight, the transformation is its main purpose and the most commonly used methodology. Moonlight, as is, can be streamed through the body to cause a beastly transformation similar to a therianthrope entering their hybrid state, though the form of a shifter is often much closer to their human form than any animal form, and they sometimes seem to have the traits of many animals while transformed, leading some to link it to the chimeric variety of therianthropy, some even going so far as to believe that shifters are key to the magical variant of chimeric therianthropy. The more moonlight dedicated to the transformation, the more powerful that transformation is.

Even when not transformed, a shifter will show a heightened reaction speed, incredible instincts in a wide variety of situations, and heightened senses that surpass even the senses of the dhampir as just having moonlight gives them a connection to their more animalistic side. These are maintained, and often heightened, in their transformed state. Most shifters also possess a naturally athletic and acrobatic form even with minimal training, not as physically potent as the average dhampir, but close enough to be a challenge when paired with their other advantages.

However, moonlight can also be processed into two other forms which have their own uses. These alternative forms are not as instinctive as the transformation and must be achieved through a degree of trial and error or by being taught to do so by another shifter. The first form is a darkened form of moonlight known as Moonphase, which can be mixed into a transformation to emphasize certain traits while dampening others, altering how the transformation manifests. The second processed form takes Moonlight and focuses it into a point, making it denser and separating it from the rest of the Moonlight the shifter has access to. These are often called Star Motes, which act similarly to a combination of the Motes described by Drift users and the foci commonly utilized by Dream users.

Moonphase is the most commonly used form of processed Moonlight as it is easier to create and use. A shifter can use it to make their transformation more subtle, maintaining a mostly human appearance while having much of the power of their transformation, or if their transformation has reptilian and mammalian traits, they could emphasize the reptilian ones to armor themselves in scales that would otherwise not be present or only cover part of their body while tamping down the further heightened sense of smell they might have from such a transformation to avoid a particularly foul odor from incapacitating them. Moonphase has one main downside, it ties itself into the Moonlight used in a transformation, it cannot be removed or added once the transformation is complete, meaning that they need to revert to their normal form (or at least a lower level of their transformation) before they can remove or add Moonphase to the transformation again, though adding more Moonlight can allow them to tie in more Moonphase as it is a new transformation, of sorts.

Star Motes are much rarer and mainly used by more introspective and spiritual shifters unless they are taught by another shifter that already knows how to use this form of Moonlight. Star Motes are effectively little bundles of Moonlight that, with some practice, can be linked to certain archetypes. Archetypes can be environments, types of animal, elements, stars, constellations, or other celestial bodies. The moon, in various phases, and the animal the shifter's transformation most resembles are the default archetypes for most Star Motes.

Archetypes provide a unique focus, such as a Star Mote aligned with the Full Moon Archetype granting enhanced physical power in their transformation while one aligned with Mars would grant a much more combat focused form with better armor and more deadly natural weapons and one aligned with a Mountainous Environment would make them more suited to climbing and exceptional balance. Just having an archetype aligned will grant a minor version of this ability, however, aligning multiple Star Motes with each other allows them to reinforce and mix their traits, as well as turning them into a method of using Moonlight actively. Such collections of Star Motes will collect Moonlight of their own, primed for use in that collection. This combines the effects within each Star Mote to create an almost spell-like effect by spending the Moonlight they've collected.

Each variety of Archetype, environmental, elemental, animal, and celestial, provides a different type of bonus. Environmental Archetypes almost universally grant a talent for things useful in that environment, a plains would give one a talent at running and the ability to turn on a dime while a cave may make them better attuned to their senses to picture the world around them or enhance their ability to see in the darkness. Animal Archetypes often allow the shifter to add some of that animal's qualities to their transformation or act as a method of shaping the other archetypes when in a constellation. Elemental Archetypes, while rare, are actually often aligned with weather conditions and offer the most potent abilities to Star Mote Constellations, giving little actual power beyond a basic resistance to natural manifestations of that element, unless they possess many Motes aligned with that Archetype, in which case their transformations may take on elemental properties. Celestial Archetypes, often aligned with planets, stars, and the moon, grant skills or physical abilities outside the norm, though when in a Constellation they usually add more in the way of raw power.

Common abilities formed from these Constellations include the summoning of spectral animals made of pale light and mist, surges of lightning, or causing a star to fall and strike someone. These are relatively easy to form abilities and are quite potent despite how common they are. However, some more advanced uses could allow a shifter to share their transformation, control the weather, or induce a sort of madness in others.

Many shifters, all of them in fact, have described these three powers as looking up at the night sky, with each one representing something in the sky as a result, and the three powers are named after this mental construction. Moonlight is represented by the moon itself, Moonphase changes how the moon is represented, Full, Gibbous, Crescent, New, Waxing, or Waning, and the Star Motes are actually the stars in this mental sky, with flickering colors based on their archetype. The collections of Star Motes become constellations, and each shifter has a different sky they work under as a result.

The kith, a race composed entirely of shifters and moon-touched, take this a step further as they have a unique interaction with moonlight, allowing them to splinter off a portion of their therianthropy and infuse it into the moonlight directly to transform it into a Totem, an spiritual animal guide that is similar in many ways to the conjured animals shifters can create, but intelligent and far more persistent, bordering on being a unique creature, with some kith believing they are already.

A Totem is a potent ally for a kith as it has an innate understanding of its nature and what it was birthed from, they know how to temper instincts, how to guide moonlight, and how to shape therianthropy itself. On top of this, they are naturally skilled in teaching others, but are especially good at teaching the one that created them, something that has allowed the kith much potency in their use of Moonlight. However, the Totems have another benefit, they live beyond their creator's death, a legacy for their creators and a carrier of their memories, as well as a tie to the soul of their creator. Even if the body is long lost and decayed, a Totem can act as a focus to revive their creator, should they be willing to return.

Draconic Magic

While true dragons are a rarity in the Demiplane, with only a single living dragon to date, those that could be called the children of dragons are fairly prevalent. Half-dragons and those further removed that still carry the bloodline do exist within the Demiplane and prove their worth, and this comes with the power of dragons itself. Dragons, and even half-dragons, possess an organ known as the draconis fundamentum, roughly the same size as their heart and located near their stomachs. This organ is the source of a dragon's breath weapon and many of the other magical abilities they possess and develop, as a matter of fact, converting almost anything the dragon eats into magical power that works both nourishes them and fuels their innate magic, it also allows them to gain nourishment from nearly anything, even stone and dirt can be processed effectively.

Dragonkith, the distant descendants of dragons, do not have the draconis fundamentum, but they do possess a similar organ that rests just below the heart and is only about the size of a peanut. This organ, called the Faldracom Cordis, functions similarly to the draconis fundamentum in that it extracts magical energies from what the dragonkith eats and further breaks down the physical substance of it. This draws out more nourishment from foods and makes normally poisonous foods edible, though it doesn't give the ability to eat dirt for food without something to help it along and concentrated ingested poisons will still cause problems unless it's particularly slow acting. The magic extracted in this way is infused into the body of the dragonkith, making every part of them more magical, and the infusion gets more intense with age. Besides being useful for alchemy, this reinforces the body in several ways. Bones become harder to break, muscles can apply more power, organs become more efficient, the blood carries more oxygen, and even the brain starts to work faster, which can extend the lifespan of the dragonkith by quite a bit, this also gives a boost similar to having dormant mana. Consuming substances high in magical power regularly can accelerate this infusion. Dragonkith similarly find that their mana reserves will grow more quickly the more infused their body is and they can train their physical abilities to a higher level than most others.

For most dragonkith, this is the extent of what they gain, some use the innate magic in their body to augment their use of thaumaturgy, others bolster their rituals, and still others add a bit of themselves to their alchemy, but few ever learn to wield the power infused into their body directly. It is not an intuitive method, nor is it instinctive. The methodology seems counter to what the instincts of the dragonkith say they should be capable of, and only through the desperate attempt to use this power, when all else has failed, does the dragonkith gain the ability to use the magic infused in their body for more than just augmentation. Simply put, trauma, stress, desperation, and terror combined with a powerful survival instinct lead to this part of the magic unlocking, and only once this is done, can the magic be used as such. (Taking the Heritage: Dragonkith perk also unlocks this ability without the need for the above)

Once unlocked, the power held in the body of the dragonkith can be shaped to form into physical alterations of their body, gaining dragon-like qualities as they do so. This isn't the same as forming a spell matrix, the magic simply expresses draconic qualities through the manipulation and the method of infusion, though they often naturally form into crude, spell matrix-like structures. Claws, scales, tails, wings, and even the breath weapon of a dragon are all possible to emulate with the proper shaping of these infusions. These changes take time to set in, and time to undo, often needing several days to fully manifest or fade, in fact. Many dragonkith that unlock this ability are mistaken for half-dragons once they unlock this ability as a result of the changes they often make to their form.

The actual forming of spell matrices, instead of the pseudo-matrices used to form the draconic features, is possible but is an extended process that can take weeks to complete, along with several steps that the dragonkith can get a feel for if they focus enough on their own magical nature. The process is the same regardless of what the spell matrix the dragonkith wants to form, and some won't be possible through this method simply due to how the process forms the spell matrix.

The first step is for the dragonkith to limit their diet, eating and drinking only a small subset of things that have desirable spell matrix components. This makes the magical energy and structures more readily available and easier to form within their body, effectively using a naturally occurring form of witchcraft and shamanism to set the spell matrix in their body. This can take roughly a week, longer for particularly potent and extensive spell matrices, to fully develop. The second is obtaining a large influx of magical power, often in the form of a potent magical reagent or the use of another form of magic to kickstart the process, especially those that utilize mana. This triggers and catalyzes the third part, where the dragonkith enters a fugue state where their mind seems to drift, the magical power forming into a shell around their body, quite literally, in fact. This is often referred to as the Draconic Rebirth due to how it resembles a dragon egg. The final step is to simply a matter of endurance. The longer the dragonkith maintains the shell around themselves, the more refined and potent the resulting spell matrix will be, however, while their needs for water, food, and sleep are reduced based on the amount of mana used to form the shell as long as it remains active, they still degrade, and the shell will naturally crack open when the dragonkith can no longer maintain the mindset necessary due to this lack, often coming out of the shell exhausted, hungry, and dehydrated. Few enjoy this process and will avoid doing it more than a few times in their lifetime.

Once this is done, however, the dragonkith gains access to a magical ability that feels completely natural to them and can be used with only their stamina being drained, without a need for magical energy or mana to fuel them, though they can use their mana reserves if they choose to do so. These spell matrices do tend to get stronger as the dragonkith ages, but this is a side effect of often having higher levels of stamina or mana to use in fueling the effects and the fact that the capacity of these spell matrices increases as the magical density in their body increases.

The wyver race is not dragonkith, not really, they are, in fact, a variety of small dragon, a lesser form than the true dragons, but close enough to possess something between a Faldracom Cordis and a Draconis Fundamentum. Most simply call it a lesser fundamentum or a greater cordis as it seems to be right in the middle of the two organs. Because of this, wyver are able to eat a far broader range of things than the average dragonkith, approaching close to a true dragon, and they naturally possess a breath weapon. This breath weapon allows the dragonkith to produce, shape, and launch dragon glass, a naturally magical material similar in appearance to obsidian, but more resistant to damage and heat. Additionally, as the wyver often possess many draconic traits already (scales, claws, a tail, a beak-like muzzle full of sharp teeth, etc), they do not need to invest as much magical power into forming such things, instead enhancing what they already possess.

Dragon glass actually has a use once it leaves a wyver’s mouth. When melted down into a metal, especially those that are innately magical or magically conductive such as mithral or gold, respectively, the metal becomes a receptacle for magical power. The magic naturally produced by a dragonkith or dragon is the most readily absorbed, but mana is also easily stored within, which anyone touching the metal can store up and tap into. However, a wyver can attune themselves to a dragon glass alloy to allow them to store and draw on magic within it when not touching it, and even do so over a great distance. However, this requires a special form of dragon glass, not simply that produced by using their breath weapon. This dragon glass has exactly the right concentration of magical energies for the wyver to attune to it and can only be produced in relatively small amounts. Even so, wyver tend to hoard these alloys as a way to bolster their strength. Such alloys also produce a minor curse-like effect when filled with dragon magic that afflicts any non-dragonkith with a minor form of mental impairment, often manifesting as greed, paranoia, and increased aggression. This is similar to the effects a true dragon has on their hoard as their natural magic radiates into the things around them, which is called dragon sickness.

Glamour

Fey magic is based on a unique magical substance known as glamour. Only the fey and those descended from them seem able to make this substance and it is often described oddly, such as the distilling of emotions and mixing it with starlight and parts of ley lines that change with the season, none of which seem to be available to other races in any way, even archdruids, masters of drift use, cannot seem to find the seasonal shifts that most fey and changelings mention so commonly in this. However, all fey and changelings give a similar description leading many to believe there is something to it, possibly related to the very nature of the fey themselves.

Regardless, the production and collection of glamour opens up the magic that the fey use. Glamour is easily able to disperse into the air as a light mist, with some able to hide its presence completely, and those that inhale it find their senses bent to the will of the fey, allowing them to create potent illusions and enchantments within the minds of those exposed to this form of glamour, it can also be lit to form faerie fire, which is simply light that radiates like a star or miniature sun, which can then have the light shaped to form more general illusions, though these are easier to bypass compared to those produced by mist glamour. Most fey are heavily protected by these two forms of glamour being passively generated, changelings don't do so passively but may use it actively.

Glamour can also be used to accelerate the crafting process, as is the specialty of brownies and other house spirits, weaving an illusion that makes time move slower as long as the fey is not perceived by another intelligent being, resulting in them getting through weeks worth of work in a single night, potentially more. This takes some practice for changelings and many fey not normally known for the ability, however, as it is imposing an illusion on themselves, which they know is there as a result and is thus tenuously bound, able to be dispelled with an errant thought if they aren't careful.

A fey can infuse their glamour into an object and change its form to something similar, a semi-solid illusion of sorts that they can use quite effectively. A simple stick, not even a very sturdy one, could be altered and converted into a sword of indistinguishable metal and act as such, even to the hand of the fey that wields it. This makes the object a useful weapon or other object, but, it is merely an illusion, albeit one that is functional as the real thing, possibly even more so as it naturally seems to enhance the qualities of the infused object and makes them look more aesthetically pleasing, which seems to be the mechanism through which the object is enhanced, the perception of quality improving the actual quality of the object. Because this is an illusion, it can be dispelled in much the same way an illusion could, though actual fey glamour is resistant to being dispelled and many changelings use quality objects as a base to begin with.

Permanent infusions are possible, weaving the glamour into the object during its creation to make it better than it otherwise would be, to the point it's nearly impossible to damage. And as the glamour is infused in the creation process, it is much less illusion and far more real, making it much more effective. Such permanent infusions will only enhance what is already there, it will not provide new qualities, a sword that's impossibly sharp would be easily achieved, but one that ignites with holy fire would not unless it already possessed that ability, and even then, only if it had it naturally from its construction and not a spell matrix infused with a ritual.

Such an infusion can also be dispelled by the touch of iron, and iron and steel objects cannot be infused with glamour. Steel is not enough to dispel the glamour itself, but it can damage the illusion more easily than other materials, and enough damage to the illusion will cause it to break, dispelling its effects and the enhancement it naturally grants. Permanent infusions aren't fully dispelled and are instead suppressed until they can be kickstarted once more, brought back to full effectiveness either over time or with a minor infusion of glamour.

Many races of fey also have unique manifestations that come from their glamour being infused into their body, such as the literally supernatural beauty of most forms of nymph, beauty that makes others subconsciously not want to mar it with injuries, leading to their beauty naturally turning aside enemy attacks, or the spriggan's ability to increase their physical size, strength, and durability to several times their normal size, going from the size of a halfling to the size of an ogre easily. These can sometimes be replicated by changelings, but they are difficult, in much the same way as the acceleration of the brownies mentioned above.

However, there are cases of individual fey and changelings developing unique (or nearly unique) manifestations of their glamour use, with the most well known being the Lord of the Silver Cloth, Velik Hex, the most well known fey lord in the demiplane, though by no means the strongest. This is often done by forming a solid, purely physical form of glamour that has properties based on the one that produced it. In Velik's case, he produced threads that, when woven together, would form scarves able to assault the mind to cause fatigue and unconsciousness and could be used as wings. Another example is the Lady of Iron Grace, who possesses the ability to affect iron with glamour and immunity to its normally dispelling effects, making her glamour infusions so powerful that it is nearly impossible to dispel or suppress them. Regardless of the ability itself, the common factor is that the individual gains an understanding or insight into their nature as a fey that fundamentally shifts how their glamour manifests.

Changelings, like many descended from magical beings, are able to go through a transformation to emphasize their fey heritage, infusing glamour into their body to take on some of the supernatural qualities of the fey. This rarely comes with a change in appearance, however, merely a change in *presence*. An abstract, ethereal quality that makes them simultaneously more and less real, even to themselves. This enhances the glamour used by the changeling and gives them an unnatural grace that is difficult to pin down for non-fey creatures, but, the disassociation with their own presence can often lead to a changeling forgetting who they really are as they distance themselves from who they are and move more towards what they become. Many changelings fall to this danger until they learn to temper their sense of self, with only those that already have a strong personality and sense of self resisting the danger.

The Iif'n race, consisting of lesser fey that have interbred with mortal and fey so often that they've bred true, possess their own racial form of glamour, which allows them to infuse glamour into living things in much the same way other fey infuse objects, including the permanent version from continued exposure to glamour over the course of years, especially if raised from seedling or from a particularly young age. Doing so from a young age can alter the nature of the creature enough to make them a changeling themselves, and even older beings can gain some ability to use glamour from this, though often only as it was laid down by the iif'n, meaning the iif'n decides how their abilities manifest in most cases.

Most iif'n use this ability with plants as such plants will produce more glamour as they grow than what was initially put into them, which can be useful. It also makes the plants taste better and have better medicinal qualities compared to plants not raised in this way.

Finally, iif'n are able to manifest solid glamour stones that, if planted into the ground, will infuse the soil itself with glamour, which can then be taken in by plants, which will often develop unique properties from the infusion as no two patches of soil will be infused in the same way, leading to the plants developing differently.

Ephemera

The rarest form of magic that comes from the melding of a supernatural race and a human or demihuman, ephemera is the power of the umbrals, beings born from the melding of a living bloodline with undeath. Most cases of umbra emerge from a ritual that infuses a ghost or spirit's essence into an unborn child rather than normal procreation, though there are some forms of undead that are living enough to make this viable, though such cases are still exceptionally rare. Like with Glamour, Ephemera is a substance. Unlike Glamour, it is produced passively by internal processes.

Ephemera results from the umbra's soul being closer to the physical realm than most, still protected and separate from their physical form, but close enough to draw in the ectoplasm that creates the semi-physical manifestations of ghosts, spectres, and similarly ethereal undead, as well as a natural wellspring of necromantic energy that is normally inaccessible to the umbral. The ectoplasm drawn into the umbral's body is infused with this necromantic energy and tuned to the umbral's life force, turning it into ephemera passively and allowing the umbral to build up a reserve of the substance.

In this state, ephemera is highly reactive to the wants of the umbral, to the point where it can often react before the umbral even wills it, an instinctive reaction. The one most umbral become familiar with is the Patch effect, where a bit of ephemera will emerge to coat a wound after its been formed and seal it off, preventing infection, cleaning out poisons, and keeping blood loss to a minimum. This happens without any thought on the part of the umbral, and once a wound is healed enough to no longer need it, the patch will dissolve. It also tends to react to the umbral's emotional state, an umbral that is enraged will often have the ephemera darken their presence to make them more intimidating while one that's fearful will find their steps lightened, quite literally, and gain the ability to move quicker as a result. These manifest somewhat differently between individuals, but are generally somewhat similar in what they accomplish even if how they accomplish it is different.

Beyond the instinctive uses, ephemera can be used in a number of ways, and even processed into different forms if the umbral starts to experiment with their ephemera. In its base form, ephemera can be used to coat the body of the umbral, causing them to blur and become slightly transparent, it can be used to affect incorporeal beings that would normally be able to avoid damage of any sort, and it can be used to avoid damage by temporarily pulling the umbral's body out of phase with reality, making them incorporeal for a few moments, though this is taxing to do. Some, more advanced umbrals have found ways to use ephemera to pass through walls and mimic many of the traits of ghosts or other spiritual creatures, even gaining flight.

There are three, relatively, well know forms of ephemera besides its base form; necrotic, energized, and astral. Necrotic ephemera has a high concentration of necromantic energies and is highly damaging to the living, barring other umbrals, and can allow an umbral to mimic the traits of corporeal undead. Energized ephemera resonates strongly with the umbral's life force, to the point where the energy stored in it shifts and it takes on an almost plasmic form that can be projected and used for both offense and defensive purposes. Astral ephemera is actually infused with very little necromantic energy, is moderately well attuned, and slightly out of phase with reality.

Necrotic ephemera is usually the first one an umbral will figure out once they start experimenting with it, the result of simply infusing more necromantic energy than normal into the ectoplasm that is made into ephemera. This form of ephemera is naturally dangerous to living things and will harm them in much the same way many necromancy spells do, draining vitality from a creature and neutralizing it, or potentially absorbing it to replenish their own. Most umbral simply coat their weapons or limbs in this form of ephemera in a fight, but it does have another use.

Skilled users of necrotic ephemera have found they can actually make themselves more similar to the dead, not just the spiritual type either. The piercing, often lethal scream of a banshee, the unnatural durability of a zombie, the curse of a mummy's flesh, the poisonous tears of a weeper, the bloated strength of a famine spirit, and the unnatural aura of weakness produced by a nightwalker can all be emulated with properly shaped necrotic ephemera, often coming with a physical alteration to their form to bring them closer to what they emulate. Each ability must be discovered individually, but as long as the umbral has enough necrotic ephemera to shape within themselves, they can maintain such abilities, and the transformations associated with them, indefinitely.

Energized ephemera is a fairly straightforward form of ephemera, it is a wielded energy that can be fired off with the same strength as an arcane bolt, shaped into barriers much like a shielding spell, or formed into a solid weapon of sorts. Most of these uses are fairly simple. But, those that practice more heavily may discover other uses, such as the ability to create solid clones of themselves that can pass through their body as if it weren't there, though they can't extend far beyond the body itself or the ability to create a sludge-like substance that can be launched onto a creature to entangle them. This is all about making simple, solid or semi-solid constructs out of pure ephemera, and the ephemera is destroyed if the construct is broken, but is otherwise reusable.

Astral ephemera is by far the rarest form as it actually requires a reduction in both energy and attunement, making it rather counterintuitive to discover. It is the closest to ectoplasm of all the forms of ephemera. This form of ephemera is the most subtle as it deals with the mind and thought. By infecting someone with a bit of astral ephemera, an umbral can implant thoughts and emotions into the individual, suggest certain courses of action, and give impulses that, if they don't have the mental awareness, they may believe are entirely their own. Willpower can still let someone counter this. More astral ephemera can increase the power of these implanted thoughts, but, they become more obvious as a result, though slowly increasing the amount of astral ephemera can make it more effective. Eventually, this can lead to what seems to be a possession. Spells that purge possession or that clear the mind will purge astral ephemera, though large amounts may require multiple castings and a person so heavily affected may choose to keep going along the path they were previously set upon.

Other forms of ephemera do exist, but are far more limited in use and particularly difficult to unlock.

The shadar race has their ephemera forming a second, spiritual body with a reflection of their own mind imbued into the spiritual body. This second body's reflected mind isn't identical to their physical body, but they share a mental bond and are usually complementary in personality. This spiritual body is made of a unique form of ephemera and can be altered to project a variety of auras that empower their physical body and their allies based on how the ephemera is directed or can fuse into their physical body to induce a powerful, monstrous transformation.

This spiritual body, if destroyed, will reform naturally over time as long as the shadar's physical body still lives. The spiritual body can also live past their physical death, for a short time, which can be used as a focus to bring back their physical body if they can find someone able to do so.

Elementalism

Genies are a powerful race of beings, magically potent like all elementals but with a physical body that does much to sustain them rather than relying on their innate magic to do so, leading to them having a number of advantages over other elementals. However, it is the gift, or curse, of Wish Casting that makes them as well known and sought after as they are. Combined with their elemental nature, wish casting allows a genie to make alterations to reality, to a degree. However, these are somewhat limited and tainted by the element they are aligned with and are restricted based on the strength of the genie themselves, most genies can't achieve truly world changing effects, and even large scale changes are often outside their power. Most simply use wish casting to conjure, control, and expand on their ability to control an element because of this, with only the Noble Genie offering any real power beyond that.

There are four varieties of genie, the fire aligned efreeti, the water aligned marid, the earth aligned dao, and the wind aligned djinni. Out of them, only the djinni appear fully human, the rest have more monstrous traits aligned with them, though even the djinni have common traits. Efreeti more closely resemble orcs with the size of an ogre and the horns of a goat, their skin is almost universally red with an almost visible heat haze around them at all times and hair that is made of fire, literally. Marid have a fish-like appearance, with traits common to koi, eels, axolotl, and catfish being the norm, though carp-like marid do exist as well, they tend to be fat or stocky when compared to the other genies, akin to a dwarf. Dao are the most elemental in appearance, having the look of a carved statue, often with plants growing from their form, particularly moss and vines, they are also surprisingly small, about the size of a halfling or gnome. As stated before, the djinni appear almost entirely human, but they are universally tall (nearly seven feet), muscular, and red headed. Older djinni tend to go mostly bald, leaving a single patch where their hair will continue to grow, like a naturally occurring ponytail, even in females this is the case.

Genie wish casting is based around a storage vessel - urns, jars, lamps, and seashells are the most common examples - that their power collects in, this collected power is then distilled, removing much of the elemental nature from it. This distilled power is then used, with a touch of elemental magic, to induce the various changes a genie may wish to create, though it can take quite a bit of collection to get an appreciable amount done. Most genie jealously guard their vessels to avoid someone else getting a hold of them, because of they do, the energy within will jump to their will, only held back by the Genie being close by, effectively binding the genie to the thief unless they choose to allow them to take the power for themselves. This often results in the genie granting a few wishes with the energy stored to reclaim the vessel after the fact, often using Pact to enforce the deal, in order to gain back most of the energy held within. The strength of a genies wish casting is based on their ability to remove their elemental affinity from the wish energy within their storage vessel, and few will use it quickly as some must store it for years to effectively gain anything potent, while Noble Genies may only need a few weeks to achieve the same results.

Genasi, the children of genies and mortals, possess much the same magic as a full blooded genie, however, they lack the ability to collect the energy used for wish casting externally, instead keeping it stored within themselves, something that makes it nearly impossible to separate their elemental nature from the energy itself. This means that most genasi cannot do much more than elementalism, however, because of the way wish casting works, this elementalism is often conceptual in nature, making even the genasi quite potent.

Regardless of element, every genie and genasi will find that the energy they generate replenishes better under certain circumstances and worse under others, largely due to the very conceptual nature of their power making certain flows of energy more effective under one condition while hampering it in the other. For this reason, many genie and genasi will attempt to live in regions that accelerate their power accumulation, or at least don't hinder them. These are also conditions that they generally enjoy being under as well.

Efreeti and fire genasi are able to shape their power to achieve many of the effects of fire. Physically burning things, melting things down, and even drying things out is easily accomplished with this power, as is the generation of heat, smoke, and other fire adjacent elements, they can also conjure and direct such elements with a great deal of ease. Conceptually, however, is where things get interesting. Stoking the fires of passion, burning out corruption, making themselves faster and stronger by burning more fuel, turning themselves into smoke for short range teleportation, and burning the karmic signature of a person to give them ill fortunes for a time. Efreeti in particular use that last ability to twist a wish, particularly poorly worded ones, into something that comes at a price, often in a way that causes pain or suffering in the one that made the wish initially.

The power used by efreeti and fire genasi replenishes faster when in hot or dry climates, when angered or impassioned, or when dancing. Access to the magic also has the effect of making the efreeti and fire genasi more graceful despite often being much larger and cumbersome in appearance, and many are known for their dance-like style of fighting resulting from the features that make their power regenerate faster.

Marids and water genasi emulate rivers and seas with their power, somewhere between the other three forms of genie in ability. Simply wielding water gives a great deal of control over the battlefield, and those that learn to turn it to ice and mist are even better as they can set up physical barriers while obscuring the battlefield and using flexible whips of water to strike around them. Conceptually, however, marids can be much more subtle, and much more forceful. Dissolving things away like acid, changing the flow of thoughts, shifting force applied both by themselves and those around them, washing things away, healing, and inducing a state of serenity that can hide things just beneath the surface. All are commonly used by the marid, but more so is the rage of the sea, when water starts to crash and the waves get larger and larger, adding momentum and overwhelming others with a force that just keeps growing. This is the true potential of the marid.

The power used by the marid and water genasi replenishes faster in damp, humid conditions, when underwater or in a cold place, or when in the extremes of calm placidity or raging movement. Meditation and battle frenzies offer much the same boost despite being completely opposite each other. Marid and Water genasi are the most well balanced in terms of how their magic affects them physically, though many do prefer flexible weapons such as chains, rope darts, and whips because of the motion involved. Both marid and water genasi can breath underwater.

Dao and earth genasi are inclined to the inevitability of earth and the mysteries that lie beneath. Dao naturally are capable of shifting earth and stone, however, most are able to pick up the ability to manipulate plants and fungi, with metals being a little more difficult. Most dao use their elementalism to offer persistence to themselves, resisting changes to their form, hardening their skin and muscle, adding weight to themselves or their strikes, and drawing on nourishment from the earth itself. However, more esoteric abilities exist, such as the ability to meld into the earth and glide through it as if it were water or the ability to induce physical growth in themselves. Dao and earth genasi also possess the ability to enter a dormant state where their body hardens to an impossible degree, they slowly regenerate, they cease to age, and their abilities are preserved. This state enhances the dao's use of wish casting in general, but at the cost of slowing their thoughts and rendering them completely immobile. There are many cases of dao being mistaken for deities of earth due to this.

The power of earth and stone is constant, meaning that as long as the dao or genasi is near or touching the ground, they will regenerate their power, similarly true if they are holding still, the less they move the faster they gain this power, but, they regenerate it slower than most other genie do. Dao find that their physical strength is better than other genie through their magic, but also that they lack the need to breath, meaning their stamina is greatly enhanced compared to other genies. Dao tend to favor heavier weapons, axes, large swords, and hammers due to how well they react to the magic used by them.

Djinni and air genasi are more aligned with the freedom and movement of the air, favoring the more esoteric features of wind rather than the more direct manipulation. Direct manipulation isn't as useful for a djinn as it is for other genies as they cannot normally compress enough air to make it actually damaging or forceful enough to affect others, however, they do use it to deflect projectiles. Well practiced djinni and air genasi can control lightning and sound as well, giving them more useful elements to manipulate. A djinni can use their elementalism to absorb electricity to replenish their reserves of power, and not just for elementalism, sense where air isn't, free themselves from bonds of the mind, spirit, and body, become as light as the wind itself to fly, generate mirage-like illusions that distort where something really is, and disperse into wind for a few moments. However, the greatest ability a djinni, or air genasi, can manage is the Breath of Life, where they infuse their breath with a bit of wish energy and life force to revive the recently dead, or bring life to that which was never alive. This does, however, consume a large amount of life force to accomplish, which can kill most genasi, and even djinni are permanently weakened by doing so.

Djinni have the fastest natural rate of generating wish energy, however, they do not gain as much out of favorable or unfavorable conditions. The ideal conditions for a djinni is the weather just before a storm, when you can smell rain on the air. Because of their control over wind, many genasi favor ranged weaponry, bows, crossbows, slings, atlatls, and thrown weapons are all common fair for them, though many favor throwing knives or tomahawks.

There is one more type of genie that has yet to be mentioned, the Janni, a type of lesser genie that is generally on par with a genasi in ability, but, they have a unique advantage no other genie has, the are aligned with all four elements, to a very small degree, but enough to be noteworthy. While they do have a single element they are best with, represented by tattoo-like markings on their skin (White for Air, Red for Fire, Green for Earth, and Blue for Water), they have a secondary reserve that contains the other three elements and can bend the way they manifest their own element with the concepts of the others, albeit only in small ways. As an example, an Air Janni could use their ability to conjure lightning, but infuse it with the essence of water to make it flow like water would or disperse it like smoke in the air to cause stinging pain, like a thousand small static shocks, to anyone in the cloud. They do, however, lack the full strength of a genie, the ability to store their power externally, and their reserves tend to be smaller due to it being split up.

Some janni have been known to undergo rituals that give them the other elements at full strength, similar to a ritual of propagation, giving them full access to other elements and a slightly larger reserve of the universal power they possess.

Janni are able to use this universal form of the energy on its own, accessing unique abilities that are subtle, taking the more obscure concepts within each element and combining them to a degree. This gives the janni the ability to subtly manipulate luck, or, more accurately, the karmic print of a being. The janni doesn't truly direct the luck itself, merely suppressing or enhancing it, enough to potentially matter in keeping someone alive or not, but always a gamble as they don't know what it will do or how it will manifest, and it may just be the luck will create an opening just long enough for them to capitalize on, and if they don't recognize it, it may pass with no other effect.

Resilience

Just as people have natural affinities, there are those that have natural resistances. This is the case when it comes to Resilience. Resilience is not a power source, it is merely an innate resistance to magical effects, something everyone has to a small degree, and something that can be augmented with magic just as easily as one's strength or charisma could be. Most won't notice the effects, however, some have a naturally higher level of Resilience than others, as is the case with some varieties of dwarves that possess an inherent ability to hold off magical assaults.

It is, however, the jotunbrud that show what Resilience can truly do. While giants are naturally resistant to magic, to quite a degree even, the jotunbrud beat them out. Giants rely considerably on their size to mitigate the effects of magic from the smaller races on them as most spells are designed with foes their size, jotunbrud, however, have the same level of resistance despite being considerably smaller and more prone to these magics as a result. Jotunbrud also seem to draw extra resilience from their physical condition, the better their physical health and fitness, the better their Resilience is, something not found in giants. This is based on pure physicality, magic used to enhance their physical abilities would not improve their resilience.

In particular are the goeth, creations of a titan from long ago, titans whose blood runs through the entire race's veins, making every single goeth a jotunbrud as well. These beings, possessed of the Resilience of a jotunbrud for generations, have discovered a method by which they can modify it. Mathematical formulae and equations that, if used correctly, can redirect how their Resilience manifests. One equation may make them more resistant to magical fire, but less so against magical lightning, while another equation could turn their magical Resilience, in whole or in part, to physical Resilience and still another could make them less resistant towards beneficial spells, enhancing the effects of healing magic, while bolstering their resistance to curse-based magics. Anyone can learn these equations, though it is far less useful to non-jotunbrud individuals.

Simply knowing these equations isn't quite enough, these equations must be run through and imprinted into the mind to make the proper alterations to Resilience, however, once done, the Resilience will maintain the change until it is reset to its default or a new equation is run. A mistake in the equation can be quite dangerous as it could, potentially, change how it manifests to the point of reversing the effect, making them more vulnerable to what they're trying to make themselves resistant to instead, though that would require a serious error to occur.

Knowing the equations does have a minute effect, those with only a baseline level of Resilience, on par with the average human, will find that their resilience increases by a small amount after they know enough equations, to about the level of one of the dwarf variants naturally resistant to magic once they know a good ten to twenty equations. This has no further effect beyond that.

It is possible similar equations could be used for more, however, as of yet, no one has found any that work with other powers, though a goeth and eider are working on a potential use for combining Resilience and Life Force to see if they'd work in tandem.

Life Force

While normally not considered its own magic system, Life Force is an energy that is quite useful, and in fact necessary for true life to exist. Besides the obvious example, possessing greater levels of life force extends one's life span, accelerates the rate at which they heal, gives improved stamina, provides resistance to poison, disease, infection, and death-based magics, and gives increased potential. This effect, however, is not linear, possessing more life force provides exponentially increased benefits. Oddly, humans possess the same amount of life force as longer lived races like elves, the base life span of a race does not seem to be determined by life force, but instead on how well that life force cycles through the body.

As mentioned, the effects of life force are exponential in nature, so a human with double their normal amount of life force won't simply heal twice as fast, instead healing in days what would take weeks and in hours what would take days. They would also live nearly five times longer than the average human. There is considered to be a ceiling on how much life force someone can possess, with most agreeing it's roughly ten times the norm, at which point the person becomes effectively ageless and heals fast enough that they don't seem to actually be injured by attacks. Conceptual and esoteric attacks would be the only way to truly harm such an individual. This has not, however, been seen before and is merely a theoretical ceiling. The highest naturally occurring example is the troll, which possesses roughly four times the amount of life force as other species.

Obtaining more life force is a difficult prospect and is considered not worth it by many, however, there do exist methods that aid someone in growing their total life force, regardless how inefficient they are. Rituals are the most well known, rituals designed to extract the life force directly from living things, distill it into a form that can be taken in, and absorbed by the ritual's target. These rituals are incredibly inefficient, but can be used on a large scale to allow them to counter that downside, to a degree, even so, the greatest example only got someone to nine times the human norm by sacrificing an entire kingdom's worth of people, and it drove him mad in the process.

Alchemy can similarly improve one's life force, though the ingredients necessary are exceptionally rare and valuable for the amount of life force they grant. It is a much safer method, though even this can have downsides as the side effects of the potions needed can be quite severe. The rarity and expense of ingredients isn't the only thing holding this back, in many cases the potions only provide a fraction of a percent increase in life force, enough to extend one's life a few years and be a little hardier, but the amount of investment makes it impractical for most to even attempt. Not to mention the amount of skill an alchemist needs to successfully make such a potion.

Another, less well understood method, draws inspiration from Mana Cycling. This method does not seem to actually grow one's life force and instead refines how well the body utilizes it, effectively allowing a person to extend their lifespan, with humans able to reach the point of living as long as elves with regular use of this method. It also allows the person using this method to *regain* lost life force, something otherwise impossible to do, and while certainly not fast, it is a useful tool. Those that regularly use this method and spend life force to empower other magics have actually found they're able to increase the total amount of life force they have, giving them a way to increase their life force over time. This is, however, slow going and requires a careful balance of using life force and recovering it. It can take decades or centuries to reach double the amount of life force with this method.

While the benefits of longer life and rapid healing are a boon, life force itself isn't very potent on its own, not without mixing it with another power first. Life force acts as a catalyst for other powers and can use mere drops of it to augment another power significantly, this does, however, weaken the individual and shorten their lifespan, sometimes considerably so. Overuse can even be lethal, though some think the risk worth it.

A common misconception is that a great many creatures interact with life force, but this is largely false, rather, most cases where life force is said to be used, it is instead vital essence, a byproduct of life force's mere existence and both a source of healing and a means by which the soul is bound to the body. Vital essence, in large quantities, makes it harder to kill an individual, heals them, and, in fact, provides many of the benefits ascribed to life force.

It is known that there is a bit of deviation in the amount of life force one can possess, with some races or individuals naturally possessing more or less. This is usually the result of a mixed bloodline, both ways. A more useful example of this is the troll blooded, individuals that have some troll in their heritage. This is usually not the result of actual procreation, but instead magical methods to introduce a troll's regenerative abilities into someone, though there are cases of natural troll blooded. Such magics have a high failure rate, however.

The troll blooded possess two to three the amount of life force as their normal race, with natural born ones usually being closer to the high end. This has several effects, the most well known of which are the regeneration (healing in hours what would take weeks and actual regen, not just healing) and the extended lifespan (several centuries for humans, longer for longer lived races), though the stamina is a close second, however, it is the fact that troll blooded individuals naturally regenerate used life force that makes the process of becoming one so appealing, despite the inherent dangers and potential mutations such a thing can cause. This life force regeneration is similar to the speed at which the final method of life force expansion above works and can stack with that method.

Another example of a race with heightened life force is the eider, a race descended from trolls and possessing the same benefits as a troll blooded. This does, however, mean that the eider, as a race, have been studying and utilizing life force as a power source for generations, which has resulted in the development of a supernatural form of martial tradition based on the shaping of life force within their bodies. While not as strong as many other sources of power, these can be used at all times with little expenditure of power, in fact, many have no expenditure at all, a fact which makes them quite a bit more reliable than other forms of magic out there. These abilities are often referred to as Ealain Beatha, meaning Life Arts.

The Ealain Beatha may have been developed by the eider, but they will freely teach them to other races, though they do explain that without a strong life force most won't get very far in using them. The techniques work much like a ritual enchantment, creating a self contained and self sustaining flow of life force within the body that can be used to generate an effect, with more life force available, more of these techniques can be used simultaneously and more power can be put into them. Ealain Beatha are subtle abilities, even more so than those utilized with delirium, making it hard to actually realize something is being used.

Necromantic Power

This power is only found in enough quantities to class as a power within the Ra'ghul and the Thralls. This power is similar in many ways to Necrotic Ephemera in that it allows the recreation of abilities similar to other forms of undead. However, unlike with Ephemera, the powers created here can be permanently added to the body. This power can also be used a bit like Mana to create spell matrices, however, the effects of the spell matrix are changed and twisted to a darker form by the power used to create and fuel them. It is impossible to heal with this power, for example, though mending the undead is much easier to accomplish.

The energy used to fuel these abilities is naturally aggressive and degenerative, raw applications can be quite harmful to those touched by this power, even the Ra'ghul can be harmed by this energy if it is in a high enough concentration when they use it, though it can be safely shaped into simple forms that can act like weapons, such as an axe or a staff. The exception is the Ra'ghul's claws, which are immune to the harmful effects of the energy. Even without this, they are highly resistant to these effects.

One final benefit of this energy is that grafting is eased by its presence, able to return the dead flesh grafted into unlife and rapidly bringing it towards the unliving state of the Ra'ghul. For this reason, some Ra'ghul have begun to look into the grafting process and how it may be applicable to themselves, with some looking into how they can apply a similar trait to other races. This has brought some nerves from those that have met Ra'ghuls and know their origin lies in the Hostel of Screams.

Drone Creation

The drone production abilities of the Boska race is quite impressive, and largely unique in the demiplane as a whole, with only Pact users of certain patrons able to show a similar ability, though they lack the fine control and ability to create specialized drones like the boska can. Boska are able to initiate hormonal changes within the egg-like structures their drones emerge from, causing the drone to mutate and change in form considerably. A boska can effectively mimic most arthropods in their drones, mixing and matching components they've learned to replicate to make more unique and specialized drones, though the more complicated and potent the drone, the longer it takes to incubate, though locking some abilities behind metamorphosis or a nymphal transformation can ease the burden.

These drones naturally enter a bond with the boska that made them that is similar in some ways to the familiar bond, the links of dream, and the symphony of rhythm, but isn't tied to any of these sources. This gives the boska innate control over every drone in their swarm down to the smallest movement and the multitasking ability to maintain that control over each individual drone. More intelligent drones are instead linked in a less complete manner and are able to communicate back and forth with the boska.

The boska naturally produces a substance that acts to feed their drones, of which each drone needs very little, even the large ones would only need a drop to sustain themselves.

Divinity

Divinity is the power of gods, and only gods may wield it in its pure form, even priests who directly draw their power from a god will be given a mixed form of power closer to false divinity than true divinity. Divinity is a highly effective source of power, acting much like the soul or life force in the way it boosts other abilities, but unlike these other powers, divinity is able to replenish itself. In most gods, this requires the faith of others directed towards them, but for elder gods, this divinity regenerates naturally without the need for such devotion.

Divinity has many uses, however, it's main use is to enhance the god that possesses it. A god is defined by their domains, and anything related to those domains is enhanced by the mere presence of their divinity, a good of the forge could create arms and armor with artefact levels of enchantments without ever touching a source of power, not even needing to channel their divinity into it, and with just a touch of divinity, could push it to artifact of power levels. This works best for things directly related to their domain, but even those only tangentially connected find themselves with some degree of enhancement. Additionally, crafting something related to their domain, even if they don't have a craft themed domain, can achieve much the same result as the forge domain would allow, albeit more restrictive in what can be made.

Divinity can also be used in much the same way as mana with a ridiculous level of efficiency, forming spell matrices that are highly resilient and efficient at a whim to cast potent spells without actually spending much of their divinity in the process, and if they possess mana as well, they can apply this trait to their base mana reserves, though it can only be used for this form of divine casting. This can even form effects normally thought to only be possible with rituals. This works best with spells naturally aligned with their domains in much the same way their skills are enhanced, however, even those unrelated find the spell matrices formed more durable than most archmages can accomplish. This also automatically applies the effects of dormant mana, and protection and enhancement mana, to the god even while it is active, reinforcing the body of the god heavily. This is true of both their actual mana and their divinity that happens to act like mana.

A god, specifically greater and elder gods, can break off a portion of their divinity and give it a little shape, then plant it into a being's soul, this results in either a cleric or a paladin, depending on how it was shaped. These individuals are similar to priests but have greater access to the divinity they wield and often with fewer restrictions placed on it, but with the god able to gain more insights into the individual and even give messages or visions to them as a form of direction, regardless where they are. This is partially handled by the fragment of divinity acting as an extra mind for the god and monitoring them even when the god is too busy to give it a personal touch. This fragment can be reclaimed at will or, if an elder god, made permanent to potentially allow them to become a Saint, a demigod that has renounced godhood in order to serve instead, or progress down the path of godhood themselves.

Gods, specifically greater and elder gods, are also able to use divinity to create servants. Angels, archons, daeva, devils, demons, the ravens of Ravenwood's conspiracy, Aberinth's messengers, all of them are examples of what can be made in this way, though in Aberinth's case he used other sources to bridge the gap for not being a true god yet. This can be done without a base for the servant to be created, but in such a case, the creature created will be without a will of its own and be more an automaton than a true creature, if a rather intelligent simulacrum. They can, however, also turn their devotees into one of these servants should they be willing, or even use blank souls as a base to do so, giving them a degree of free will. Even physical mediums, such as clay, could potentially be used for this purpose as it acts to stabilize much of the creation. The exception to this is gods of life and autonomy, who are both able to create free willed creations from the beginning.

Having divinity renders a god effectively immortal.