

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

MAGICAL STYLES™

HORROR MAGIC™



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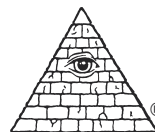
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*Now is the time. This is the hour. Ours is the magic. Ours is the power.
Now is the time. This is the hour. Ours is the magic. Ours is the power.*

– The Craft

INTRODUCTION

At first glance, **GURPS Magic** looks to be designed for fantasy – the flamboyant kind that boasts fireballs and flight spells. Its reliable “ritual *x* creates effect *y*” mechanics can feel like a poor fit to genres where magic is customarily unpredictable, even risky, while many values of *y* are too flashy for games where magic is supposed to be subtle or secret. These difficulties send many GMs to alternative systems, notably those found in **GURPS Thaumatology** and its supplements (like **Ritual Path Magic** and **Sorcery**).

Yet the **Magic** rules have the advantage of being *straightforward*: No user-specified effects that encourage those playing spellcasters to become rules lawyers and challenge the GM, as in **Ritual Path** magic. No ability-building mini-game filled with the math of enhancements and limitations, as for **sorcery**. Spells as skills surely have idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies, but they’re simple and come ready to use.

Often, all it *really* takes to adapt **Magic** to a “secret magic” game is to eliminate spells that seem too fast, reliable, or flashy for the setting, and to frame those that remain within a structure that feels less like lightning-tossing fantasy. **GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles** provides tools capable of doing that.

GURPS Magical Styles: Horror Magic offers three worked examples for campaigns where magic is kept under wraps because most people wouldn’t accept it or its wielders. Even if not truly *evil*, the magic is *unnerving* and its users secretive. While these styles suit **GURPS Horror**, they should also work

in **GURPS Thaumatology: Urban Magics** games – and conceivably in **GURPS Monster Hunters**, as alternative magic systems The Enemy can use to surprise champions.

REQUIRED BOOKS

GURPS Magical Styles: Horror Magic draws on **GURPS Magic** for its spells and **GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles** for countless concepts and perks; advanced practitioners of *Forgotten Wisdom* will want **GURPS Magic: The Least of Spells**, too. Despite its title, it *doesn’t* require **GURPS Horror** (or any other world- or genre-book).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

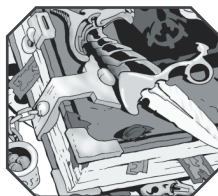
Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to hundreds of **GURPS** releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as lead creator of the **GURPS Action** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** series; work on the latter led to his design of the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game**, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with *son amour*, Geneviève.

A TRIPLE THREAT

What follows are three magical styles intended for campaigns where magic isn't as showy or widespread as it is in, say, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. Each suggests the *kinds* of people who are likely to use it while stopping short of describing orders of wizards (as *GURPS Magical Styles: Dungeon Magic* did). Formal groups need not even exist in the setting . . . these styles are well-suited to loners who've stumbled upon "lost" grimoires, and to individuals who've inherited oral traditions.

Why Limit Myself?

When magical styles are mandatory for spellcasting PCs, a common complaint is that they deprive players of the option of playing generalists, limiting Magery a lot like One College Only does without reducing its point cost. That objection is less valid in a secret-magic campaign, like many forms of horror and classic sword-and-sorcery (as opposed to hack 'n' slash) fantasy. In those genres, magic isn't the "technology replacement" it is in kitchen-sink fantasy, but a hidden, often forbidden art tied thematically to sinister forces.



Here's a game-mechanical way to see things: In settings where *Horror Magic* is used, you'd normally need a large Unusual Background – much larger than the cost difference between full and limited Magery – to have *any access at all* to magic. But to learn these styles, the Unusual Background is smaller or nonexistent (it's the GM's job to make sure of this), so the *net* cost is a bargain . . . and the players should be thankful to have access to magic at all!

A corollary is that these styles don't suit PCs in common-magic campaigns where it's possible to play generalists who enjoy access to most of what's in *GURPS Magic*. They might still work for creepy NPCs, though – as befits this supplement's title! In particular, they're good ways to give any cultist, dabbler, or hedge wizard access to magic despite the setting's social controls on magic; e.g., tuition fees and Wizards' Guild membership. Of course, PCs may want to avoid expenses, elitism, and gatekeeping, too; if so, the GM might permit *them* to learn these styles in place of no-holds-barred magic.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. We can be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what's new at gurps.sjgames.com.

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers *GURPS* print items, plus PDFs of our books, supplements, adventures, play aids, and support . . . including exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to warehouse23.com.

Pyramid (pyramid.sjgames.com). For 10 years, our PDF magazine *Pyramid* included new rules and articles for *GURPS*, plus systemless locations, adventures, and more. The entire 122-issue library is available at Warehouse 23!

Internet. To discuss *GURPS* with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. You can also join us at facebook.com/sjgames or

twitter.com/sjgames. Share your brief campaign teasers with #GURPShook on Twitter. Or explore that hashtag for ideas to add to your own game! The web page for *GURPS Magical Styles: Horror Magic* can be found at gurps.sjgames.com/horrormagic.

Store Finder (storefinder.sjgames.com): Discover nearby places to buy *GURPS* items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many *GURPS* book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for *GURPS* releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

STYLE GUIDE

The following information appears for each style:

Style Name: Descriptive but *generic*; consider changing this to suit your campaign.

Style Cost: The cost to buy Magical School Familiarity and put 1 point in each required spell and skill.

Style Prerequisites: Non-spell prerequisites for the style's *required* spells and skills.

Keywords: Words that describe the magic or its users, to help the GM decide when and where to use it.

Description: Deeper insights into the style and how to use it in the campaign.

Required Skills and Spells: Skills and spells that must be bought at the 1-point level to gain access to the style's advanced teachings.

Perks: Magic Perks available to stylists with Magical School Familiarity and all required skills and spells. Practitioners may buy one such perk per 10 points in the style's spells, plus another from whatever list the GM deems "general" per 20 points in spells.

Secret Spells: Spells available to stylists who've bought the style's required elements and relevant Secret Spell perks.

Optional Traits: Advantages, disadvantages, skills, etc. that are *likely* but not required for stylists.

Spell List: The style's spells for the purposes of Magical School Familiarity, Magic Perks, etc. All but secret spells can be learned in play simply by paying points. All three styles use alternative prerequisites that replace standard ones. Spells that work differently from standard versions get footnotes.

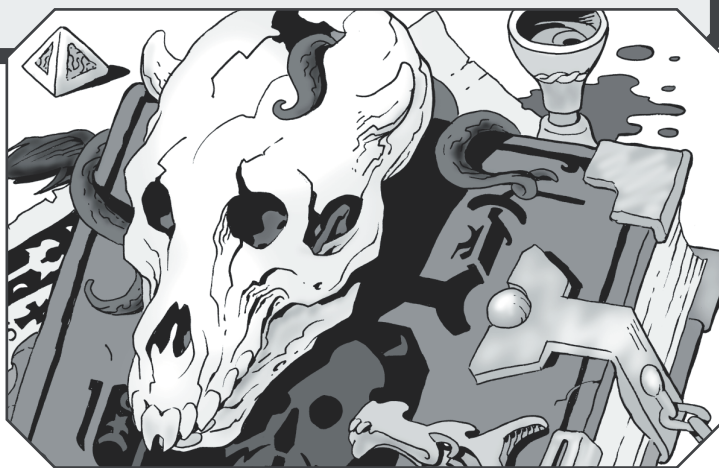
Secrets: A *secret material* is a special substance the stylist can prepare if they have the associated Secret Material perk. A *secret spell* is available only to full-fledged stylists who have the relevant Secret Spell perk and the correct prerequisites.

Design Notes: A box on the game-mechanical thinking behind the style.

Who Uses This Stuff?

To help the GM match philosophies and capabilities to NPCs – and to give players a better idea of what they're getting into, if the GM permits these styles to PCs as the only way to learn magic or as a way to circumvent restrictive social oversight – here's a quick summary:

Cult Secrets (pp. 5-7) is for wizards who cooperate in large ritual workings. They may do so in the name of a demon or even a true god, or they might be faithless power-seekers who find strength in numbers – but to outsiders, they're *cultists*. This is the stuff of robed figures who exchange secret signs under cover of night. There's almost always a megalomaniac in charge (often



the person who dug up the grimoire!), but this individual may be less "archmage" than group leader, their power more social than magical.

The Dark Path (pp. 8-10) is aimed at individuals who've stumbled upon the Wrong Books and decided that magic is a risk worth taking. It's filled with shortcuts that appear to have been placed there deliberately by forces that *want* users to get in over their heads as quickly as possible. It would be easy to assume that this is a devil (or *The Devil*), but that isn't the only option. Perhaps the art's mortal masters benefit from the errors of those who've gone too far, too fast.

Forgotten Wisdom (pp. 10-13) isn't as cultish or dangerous as the other two styles. It might even have been "white magic" at some point, but now it's viewed as superstitious and ignorant at best, an affront to faith at worst. It's the kind of thing you'd run into at a "charms and potions" shop in the rundown part of town, or in the hands of the crazy cat lady who lives in the haunted house. While more social than the Dark Path – it involves customers and perhaps apprentices – its covens rarely reach Cult Secrets size.

Power, Corruption, and Lies

Gamers with large **GURPS** collections might ask why **Horror Magic** doesn't automatically impose downsides like **Power Corrupts** (**GURPS Horror**, pp. 146-148), **Black Magic** (**GURPS Magic**, p. 156), and **Spiritual Distortion** (**GURPS Thaumatology**, pp. 93-94). The answer is that its styles are meant to cover not only evil, soul-selling sorcerers, but also wizards in settings where magic's shady reputation is chiefly *social*. Which isn't to say that such practices can't evoke fear or disgust because they damn their adherents or turn them into psychopaths! The GM who wants such outcomes can declare that these styles use one of the systems cited above – or possibly several of them. For instance, maybe each brings down a different "punishment," or perhaps Forgotten Wisdom (pp. 10-13) is exempt because its devotees have full-fledged Magery and great potential to do good. The matter is left *optional* because it's entirely possible for magic to be horrific not for what it does to its users, but for what its users do with it.

CULT SECRETS

10 points

Style Prerequisite: Magery 1 (Ceremonial Magery, -40%).

Keywords: Conspiratorial; Hierarchical; Ritualistic; Secretive.

Religious groups and occult philosophical fraternities are often accused of dabbling in “black magic”; a few openly profess to do so. These are classic antagonists in horror and sword-and-sorcery tales, and not out of place in the pulp, conspiracy, and urban fantasy genres. Even superheroes encounter cultists – magical powers are easier to overlook in a world where people fly and shoot energy blasts, and enable bad guys to challenge supers without *being* supers.

Traditional cults of magicians worship *something*, although what that is varies widely. Historically, the gods of conquered or oppressed peoples – worshiped in secret – were most likely. More recently there are the deities of ancient civilizations studied by modern occultists, The Devil (especially during the Spanish Inquisition and, starting in the 1980s, the “satanic panic”), and Things Man Was Not Meant To Know from cosmic horror tales.

Yet other cults purloin the names of gods and demons as codewords, and exploit the trappings of religion to deflect suspicion from their real activities. If they keep religious philosophies, it’s without genuine faith. Or they might resemble religions because they adopt similar organizational models.

Almost all cults have hierarchies, advancement through which gives increased access to secrets – be those passwords, handshakes, and silly hats, or magic spells. This helps shield the cult from social attack, much as a “cell” system protects spies and dissidents from discovery. Attaining high rank in a cult *might* represent spiritual ascension, but is more surely and immediately a way to command underlings – to wield social power.

Cult Secrets suits any of the above types of cults when they wield working magic. It divides spells into tiers that are learned successively – alongside mundane secrets – as the cultist rises in rank. It couches that magic in gestures and beliefs, and works it through rituals, that are at least superficially religious.

In keeping with the cult theme, Cult Secrets requires Ceremonial Magery (**GURPS Thaumatology**, p. 23). To add flavor, this might be granted and improved through study, though that’s optional, making Magery a prerequisite rather than a component of the style. This requirement means that all magic *must* use *Ceremonial Magic* (p. B238 and **GURPS Magic**, p. 12); thus, cultists work magic exclusively in groups, and “strategic” spells are favored over “tactical” ones almost to exclusion.

What any particular cult *does* with its magic depends on its nature and campaign role. Usually, advancing the cult’s social clout – behind-the-scenes wealth and power – is high on the agenda, at least for the leaders. That might be everything, but crazier cults seek to improve their *spiritual* clout (whatever that means!), unleash Armageddon, or summon cosmic entities to destroy reality.

Required Skills: Hidden Lore (Cult Secrets); Hidden Lore (*one* of Demon Lore, Spirit Lore, or similar); Occultism; Philosophy or Theology; Religious Ritual.

Required Spells: Any four of Magelock, Mystic Mist, Nightingale, Sense Observation, Wall of Silence, and Watchdog.

Perks: Area Spell Mastery (any Area spell on list); Astrological Ceremonies (Cult Secrets); Attribute Substitution (any spell on list, based on Will); Combat Ceremony (any spell on list); Continuous Ritual (any spell on list); Cult Rank 1-5; Knower of Names; Magical Lawyer; Mass Magician; Mystic’s Stupor; Sanctum 1-5; Secret Mage; Secret Spell (Greater Summons or Sacrifice); Special Exercises (FP can exceed HT by 100%); Spirit Contract; Super-Sympathy (Ritual Space); Willful Casting.

Secret Spells: Greater Summons; Sacrifice.

Optional Traits

Attributes and Secondary Characteristics: Improved IQ, Will, and FP.

Advantages: Allies (lesser cultists); Danger Sense; Energy Reserve; Honest Face; Languages (long-forgotten, angelic, demonic, etc.); improved Magery (Ceremonial Magery); Mind Shield; Social Chameleon; further social advantages.

Disadvantages: Enemies (rival cultists, even authorities); Fanaticism (the cult); Greed; Megalomania; Paranoia; Secret; Sense of Duty (the cult).

Skills: Acting; Administration; Diplomacy; Fast-Talk; Hidden Lore (any other); Intimidation; Leadership; Savoir-Faire (High Society); Strategy; Teaching; Thaumatology.

“You said this wasn’t a cult.”

“Secret society. There’s a difference.”

*– Jennifer Bosworth, **Struck***

Spell List

These spells are organized as one might expect from a hierarchical secret society: into tiers associated with progressively smaller circles of wizards. Much of each tier is needed to learn spells of the *next* tier, ensuring that it takes time to rise in power. Be aware that “power” doesn’t match prerequisite count in **GURPS Magic**, but the cult’s priorities – foremost among which is *keeping its secrets*.

Initiate (Cult Rank 0)

Initiate spells are for securing the ritual area against mundane threats: being watched, overheard, barged in on, etc. In addition to passive defenses against sapient beings, they include protection against pests and fire – but *not* anti-magic. Even the greenest cultist is expected to participate in such rituals. All Initiate spells require Magery 1 (Ceremonial Magery).

Fireproof	Repel Birds	Repel Vermin
Magelock	Repel Fish	Sense Observation
Mystic Mist	Repel Mammals	Wall of Silence
Nightingale	Repel Reptiles	Watchdog

Apprentice (Cult Rank 1)

Apprentices are still trusted mostly to secure the ritual space, but their spells consist of more-active defenses against mundane interlopers (alongside Lure and Will Lock to trap them as sacrifices), spirits, and hostile magic. These require *any six* Initiate spells (most often Magelock, Mystic Mist, Nightingale, Sense Observation, Wall of Silence, and Watchdog) and Magery 2 (Ceremonial Magery).

Astral Block	Lure	Scrywall
Avoid	Materialize	Spell Shield
Banish	Pentagram	Teleport Shield
Emotion Control	Repel Spirits	Will Lock

Journeyman (Cult Rank 2)

Journeyman are the cult's backbone. Their magic focuses on summoning entities to perform deeds the cult can't or would prefer not to do directly. Learning their spells requires

all of Astral Block, Banish, Materialize, Pentagram, Repel Spirits, and Teleport Shield – it's possible to be held back by learning the "wrong" spells as an Apprentice!

Animation (VH)	Planar Summons†	Summon Spirit
Create Animal*	Solidify	Teleport Other (VH)‡
Create Servant*	Summon Demon	
Create Warrior*	Summon Shade (VH)	

* Learned via Cult Secrets, "Create" spells actually summon beings from *elsewhere*. Those entities are subject to Banish *instead* of Dispel Creation.

† Versions depend on the setting.

‡ Works normally, but usually cast to "summon" nearby people.

Master (Cult Rank 3)

Master spells affect crops, seas, and the weather without summoning an intermediary. They're used to boost the cult's wealth and power by aiding agriculture, shipping, etc. or interfering with rivals. Since there's a risk of the outcomes being seen as unnatural, these spells are limited to trusted members; learning them requires *any five* Journeyman spells.

DESIGN NOTES: CULT SECRETS

This is an *applied* style – it's about rote ritual, not abstract study – and closely resembles a temple style, although faith isn't mandatory. The GM should select a Hidden Lore skill (customarily Demon or Spirit Lore) covering otherworldly forces that grant magical power, plus a Philosophy or Theology specialty for the associated cosmology. Alongside those two skills, all cultists require Hidden Lore (Cult Secrets) to confirm membership through handshakes, jargon, titles, etc.; Occultism for a broader grasp of the supernatural; and Religious Ritual for rites, religious or not. Optional skills assist with concealing cult involvement (Acting and Fast-Talk), manipulating outsiders to serve cult goals (Diplomacy and Savoir-Faire), indoctrinating and organizing members (Administration, Intimidation, Leadership, Strategy, and Teaching), and "advanced studies" (Thaumatology and more Hidden Lore).

Initiates learn spells to defend the cult. These build on the style's occult skills, not traditional prerequisite spells. The cult accepts any four of six spells as the gateway to initiation, not to encourage individualism (far from it!), but to leave Initiates with more to learn – another two spells – before advancing to Apprentice.

That's five skills and four spells. With Magical School Familiarity, style cost is $5 + 4 + 1 = 10$ points.

The style's most coveted perks assist ceremonial magic: Area Spell Mastery (to make big spells more versatile), Astrological Ceremonies, Combat Ceremony, Continuous Ritual, Knower of Names, Mass Magician, and Special Exercises (for more FP to contribute to rituals!). Other key emphases are secrecy (Secret Mage and Secret Spell), the ritual space (Sanctum and Super-Sympathy), willpower (Attribute Substitution, Mystic's Stupor, and

Willful Casting), and negotiating with tricky spirits (Magical Lawyer and Spirit Contract). Cult Rank exists, but doesn't *always* track magical knowledge.

Spells above Initiate level generally have durations long enough, areas large enough, or effects powerful enough to make ceremonies worthwhile. These are restructured into a tier system that *totally disregards* standard prerequisite counts for the sake of better fitting the way cults work. This is balanced by the high style cost, the many spells needed to progress, and the fact that all the magic is *ceremonial*. The secret spells fall outside the hierarchy – don't overlook them!

Optional traits fall into three bins: Some increase raw power, either skill (IQ and Magery) or energy (FP and Energy Reserve). Others are linked to keeping secrets, like Danger Sense to detect trouble, Honest Face and Social Chameleon to avoid inquisition, Languages outsiders can't understand, and Will and Mind Shield to defeat mind probes; such conduct may protect a genuine Secret or be mere Paranoia, and often accompanies Sense of Duty, even Fanaticism to the cause. The third set occur mainly among leaders, who seek power (Greed and Megalomania), often making friends and foes on the way (Allies and Enemies); the GM might add Illuminated (p. B60) in some campaigns.

The style's required spells need Magery 1 when learned using its restructured spell list, so that's a style prerequisite. This can't be One College Only – despite the short spell list – but *must* be Ceremonial Magery (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 23), which offers the same discount. *Exception:* In common-magic worlds, this might be the limit of what cult investiture can grant, but people with *unlimited* Magery may be welcomed.

Bless Plants	Current	Tide
Blight	Dry Spring	Warm
Clouds	Rain	Waves
Cool	Snow	Wind
Create Spring	Storm	

Grandmaster (Cult Rank 4)

Grandmaster spells either produce grossly unnatural effects in the world (Earthquake and Volcano – and Restore Mana, in settings where mana might be depleted), or deal in blessing, cursing, and uncursing people. These are considered risks, liable to create new enemies. All call for *any seven* Master spells and Magery 3 (Ceremonial Magery).

Bless	Lesser Geas (VH)	Restore Mana (VH)
Curse	Remove Curse	Volcano
Earthquake		

Apex (Cult Rank 5)

If Apices exist, they command magic the likes of which would never go unremarked without extraordinary planning: people suddenly change their values, the dead return, life springs from nothing, landscapes shift, and swirling passages appear between locations – or worlds. These require *all seven* Grandmaster spells.

Alter Terrain (VH)	Mass Zombie (VH)
Create Gate (VH)*	Move Terrain (VH)
Great Geas (VH)	Resurrection (VH)
Golem (VH)†	

* Learned this way, Teleport, Timeport, and Plane Shift aren't needed, but gates can only be between places and planes of existence – never *times*.

† Enchant isn't required; roll vs. Golem. Enchantment is ceremonial already – don't further increase casting time. Used for flesh golems ("new life") and the traditional clay golem, unless the GM rules otherwise.

Secret Spell: Greater Summons (VH)

Special

Summons something far beyond mere animals, spirits, or even demons – most often a manifestation of an archdevil or god. Forget about control! When the spell is cast, make a reaction roll, ignoring *all* modifiers except that for whatever the GM decides *this specific entity wants right now*, which can be up to +5 for something dangerous or +10 for near-impossible stuff like sacrificing the sitting head of state to the Demon Lord of Strife. It's up to the GM whether the caster(s) know what this need is.

On a "Good" or worse reaction (15 or less), the being destroys the caster(s) outright in whatever way suits its nature: demon lords rip out souls, fire gods produce hundreds of dice of Essential Fire, creator gods *unmake*. The same happens on any critical failure.

A result of "Very Good" (16-18) means the entity appears briefly and departs without doing harm – though it might mention what it *really* wants for next time.

A roll of "Excellent" (19+) results in the being granting one wish on a par with Great Wish (*Magic*, p. 62), which must be in keeping with that entity's role and disposition.

This spell is relatively easy to learn and quick to cast (50 minutes using ceremonial magic), but *profoundly* draining – usually requiring the whole cult and several external energy sources – and *incredibly* risky.

Cost: 1,000.

Time to cast: 5 minutes.

Prerequisites: Magery 3 (Ceremonial Magery), five Journeyman spells, and Secret Spell (Greater Summons).



Secret Spell: Sacrifice (VH)

Special

Makes the life force released by the sacrifice of a living being available to energize another spell. Cast Sacrifice first, at the moment the caster(s) kill the victim; the slaughter is part of the ritual, and must involve a melee attack or similar "hands on" method. The second spell has to begin immediately after this, without delay, and Sacrifice counts as a spell "on" during its casting.

The extra energy available for the second spell equals the subject's IQ multiplied by the *lower* of HT or HP (so small animals with IQ 1-4 and HP 1-2 are rarely worth it).

Cost: None.

Time to cast: 1 hour.

Prerequisites: Magery 3 (Ceremonial Magery), seven Master spells, and Secret Spell (Sacrifice).

THE DARK PATH

10 points

Style Prerequisite: Magery 1 (Radically Unstable Magery, -10% or worse).

Keywords: Bibliophilic; Haphazard; Reckless; Selfish.

It's a classic horror trope that can show up in any genre where the supernatural exists and is potentially dangerous, if not *evil*: An alienated misfit or book-smart-but-unworldly loner encounters a sorcerous grimoire. Reading it, they rapidly acquire powers they don't truly understand or control. Convinced of their brilliance, they proceed to use their magic to take revenge on those who mocked them, or to claim what they believe society owes them. The mixed results leave them seeking *more*, drawing them into a downward spiral.

Someone is writing these magical texts. In some settings, it's no accident that they leave them lying around for people with more angst than brains to find – presumably, the shady authors, anyone from powerful black magicians to The Devil, stand to gain from power-mad eccentrics causing chaos with magic. Whatever the truth, the writings outline a path to magical power that's quicker than painstaking study and drills: the *Dark Path*.

The Dark Path is an exceedingly loose style suited to classic “nerds” who are gifted at bookish subjects like library research and translating old texts, but socially inept. They might start out skittish and fearful, but then they get a taste of power that gives them new confidence – too much of it – and are transformed into selfish, careless maniacs who'll do anything to learn more magic. If they aren't careful (and sometimes even if they *are*), they'll become monsters.

Those who walk the Dark Path almost never *start* as mages. Early studies grant them Radically Unstable Magery (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 26), and this reveals ever-better shortcuts to power. These lead to regular backfires, a problem the typical practitioner tries to solve by acquiring even more power: Such Magery is nearly always improvable through study – as high as Magery 6 without Special Exercises, even if the cap on unlimited Magery is lower.

And those “secret masters” who leave texts on black magic lying around? They don't *have* to exist, but it makes more sense to treat the Dark Path as a style if they do. In all likelihood, these shadowy figures don't practice what they preach; they're doing it for their own reasons. Two secret spells hint at those reasons, and non-stylists who somehow acquire the right perks *can* learn them.

Required Skills: Hidden Lore (Magical Writings); Research; Speed-Reading; Thaumatology.

Required Spells: Detect Magic; Identify Spell; Mage Sense; Mage Sight; Seek Magic.

Perks: Blood Magic; Convenience Casting (Copy, Scribe, and similar bookish spells); Fast Casting (any spell on list); Flexible Ritual (any spell on list); Improvised Items 1-3; Improvised Magic (Dark Path); Intuitive Cantrip (Controlled Disadvantage or Magical Analysis); Life-Force Burn 1-5; Limited Energy Reserve 1-5 (Dark Path); No Gestures (any spell on list); No Incantations (any spell on list); Paraphernalia Pro; Sanctum 1 or 2; Scroll-Reading (any); Secret Spell (Invest or Order from Chaos); Secret Words 1-5; Special

Exercises 1 or 2 (Wild Talent); Thaumatomagical Double-speak; Wizardly Dabbler.

Secret Spells: Invest; Order from Chaos.

Optional Traits

Advantages: Daredevil; Eidetic or Photographic Memory; Fearlessness; Language Talent; Languages (any number of them!); Less Sleep; improved Magery (Radically Unstable Magery); Single-Minded.

Disadvantages: Curious; Gullibility; Impulsiveness; Insomniac; Jealousy; Loner; Obsession (Find a specific book or spell); Overconfidence; Selfish; Weirdness Magnet.

Skills: Archaeology; Connoisseur (Literature); Cryptography; History; Linguistics; Literature; Occultism.

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole
of the Law.*

– Aleister Crowley,
The Book of the Law

Spell List

The Dark Path is a screaming slide to hell – magic learned haphazardly, with little real training – so its spells don't have other spells as prerequisites, only Magery levels! In this way, it resembles the clerical or druidic magic of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. But unlike priestly spells, these ones require mana as usual for wizards, and can't be prayed for . . . they must be found in grimoires, which the GM can make as common or as rare as suits the campaign.

Below, “RUM” stands for Radically Unstable Magery; see *GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 26.

RUM 1: Aura, Detect Magic, Identify Spell, Mage Sense, Mage Sight, Recover Energy, Seek Magic, and Sense Mana.

RUM 2: Analyze Magic, Armor, Beast-Rouser, Clumsiness, Daze, Death Vision, Debility, Decay, Dull Sense, Encrypt, Fear, Fireproof, Foolishness, Forgetfulness, Frailty, Hinder, Ignite Fire, Lockmaster, Master, Missile Shield, Night Vision, Panic, Remove Reflection, Remove Shadow, Shield, Silence, Terror, Vexation, and Weaken Will.

RUM 3: Ancient History, Apportation, Blight, Borrow Language, Copy, Create Fire, Dispel Magic, Dullness (VH), False Aura, Foul Water, Fumble, Gloom, Hide, Hide Emotion, Hide Thoughts, History, Madness, Mage-Stealth, Memorize, Mindlessness (VH), Pain, Poison Food, Prehistory, Recall, Scribe, See Secrets, Seeker, Sleep, and Stench.

RUM 4: Agonize, Astral Vision (VH), Choke, Dancing Object, Gift of Letters (VH), Gift of Tongues (VH), Magic Resistance, Nauseate, Nightmare, Sensitize, Sickness, Slow Healing, Strike Blind, Strike Deaf, Strike Dumb, Strike Numb, Vigil (VH), and Weaken Blood.

RUM 5: Ethereal Body (VH), Invisibility, Steal Attribute (VH), Steal Beauty (VH), Steal Energy, Steal Skill (VH), Steal Vitality, and Stop Healing.

RUM 6: Curse, Maleficence (VH), Permanent Madness (VH), Pestilence, Steal Youth (VH), Strike Barren, and Summon Demon.

Given the Dark Path's nature, the GM shouldn't hesitate to add or remove *anything* to adjust it to the campaign. When adding spells, find "Prerequisite Count" on the table under *Restructuring Prerequisites (GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*, p. 17) and read "Level" as Radically Unstable Magery level. Spells that fit the style's recurring themes of dealing with writings and magic (preferably both), and sneaking around subtly cursing people, might drop a level or even two; ones that threaten to disrupt a secret-magic game, including any flashy spells allowed, can go up a level or two. Anything with a final level above RUM 6 is unlikely to be balanced.

Secret Spell: Invest (VH)

Regular; Special Resistance

Binds a *willing* subject as a permanent magical asset of the caster. Caster and subject must spend 24 hours together in "ritual meditation." A third party within 10 yards, or any interruption beyond eating, drinking, and personal hygiene, spoils the casting – start over.

At the end of that time, the caster spends the energy and casts the spell. On a success, the subject must answer, "Do I accept this investiture?" The spell binds them only if they respond "Yes." There's no way to bind someone unwilling – but also no requirement to reveal the full truth about the spell!

A non-mage bound by Invest gains Magery 1 (Radically Unstable Magery, -50%) [8] for free. Someone with Magery replaces it with however many levels of limited Magery its cost would buy, rounding *down*; e.g., Magery 2 [25] becomes Magery 4 (Radically Unstable Magery, -50%) [23]. The caster gains nothing right away . . . but each time their subject suffers a magical backfire (which is likely), a roll of 3 or 18 on the *Critical Spell Failure Table* grants the "master" one free character point in addition to its other effects! Distance has no effect on this.

The subject can buy Radically Unstable Magery down to -10% with earned points, but cannot remove the limitation completely. Even Remove Curse can do nothing.

DESIGN NOTES: THE DARK PATH

The Dark Path is an *experimental* style for loners who sift through "forgotten" writings seeking magical power. Hidden Lore (Magical Writings), Research, and Speed-Reading cover poring over books of forbidden lore, while Thaumatology turns gleaned knowledge into spells. That's it for skills – the style's appeal is that it's light on nonmagical learning. Optional skills (for patient seekers!) help locate and decipher ancient manuscripts: Archaeology, Cryptography, Literature, etc. Occultism joins these because prudent magicians study general supernatural weirdness, whether or not that's *necessary*.

Required spells share the mission of the required skills: ferreting out magic. Seek Magic leads the practitioner to magical phenomena; Detect Magic, Mage Sense, and Mage Sight narrow the search upon arriving; and Identify Spell provides understanding. Collectively called "awareness" in style jargon, these are prerequisites for all deeper secrets – though not for specific spells.

Followers of the Dark Path start with four skills and five spells. Adding Magical School Familiarity, cost is $4 + 5 + 1 = 10$ points.

Unsurprisingly, many of the style's perks permit fiddling with the parameters of known magic (Fast Casting, Flexible Ritual, No Gestures, and No Incantations) and working the barely understood kind (Improvised Items, Improvised Magic, Wizardly Dabbler, and Special Exercises for Wild Talent). Others concern texts: Convenience Casting for bookish spells, Paraphernalia Pro for juggling books and scrolls, and Scroll-Reading. Seemingly by design, a few perks that endanger the caster are in reach: Blood Magic, Intuitive Cantrip (Controlled Disadvantage), Life-Force Burn, and Secret Words (making backfires even worse!). Lastly, the Dark Path encourages self-styled "archmages" with Limited Energy Reserve, Sanctum, and Thaumatological Doublespeak.

Spells beyond those required include things like Copy, Encrypt, Gift of Letters, History, Memorize, and Scribe for dealing with writings – and Lockmaster and See Secrets for stealing them, Fireproof for protecting them, and Vigil for late nights reading them. Numerous spells work directly with magical energies, items, and beings; e.g., Analyze Magic, Aura, Dispel Magic, Magic Resistance, and Recover Energy. Then there are endless curses that stop short of flashy damage effects; advanced maledictions are permanent or "buff" the caster simultaneously (the Steal spells). Tricks like Ethereal Body, Hide, Invisibility, and Mage-Stealth enable the wizard to do all this magic-hunting and cursing stealthily. A pinch of flashy effects and defenses appear to impress plebes. And who'd pursue a style without Summon Demon? Secret spells exist for possible secret masters.

Optional traits are Languages (often aided by Language Talent) for reading old books, Less Sleep for time to peruse them, Single-Minded for coping with distractions, and Eidetic Memory for retaining lore; these habits can descend into Insomniac and Obsession. Most adherents of the Dark Path are egocentric types who don't share (Jealousy, Loner, and Selfish). Their resolve to barge forward into risky magic often manifests as Daredevil and Fearlessness, typically at the cost of Curious, Impulsiveness, Overconfidence, or – after enough backfires – Weirdness Magnet. This list includes Gullibility but *omits* improved IQ because wisdom isn't a defining feature of the style's practitioners; if secret masters exist, they target the unwise. Anyway, devotees find Magery easier to improve than IQ.

The Dark Path has *no* spells that require less than Magery 1, so that's a style prerequisite. This can't be One College Only and *must* be Radically Unstable Magery (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 26) – the -10%, -30%, and -50% levels are all acceptable. Mages without this limitation can't pursue the style!

But if they learn Invest, they *can* use points it earns them to eliminate the limitation.

Invest doesn't count as a spell "on" for the caster, but they can have only one "asset" per two full Magery levels (typically three subjects, since the spell requires Magery 6). As only around 1% of a subject's critical failures grant a point, there's an incentive to go for the maximum and encourage those people to use poorly understood magic regularly.

Duration: Until the subject dies!

Cost: 30.

Time to cast: 24 hours.

Prerequisites: Magery 6 (not necessarily Radically Unstable Magery), False Aura, Foolishness, Permanent Madness, Steal Energy, and Secret Spell (Invest).

Secret Spell: Order from Chaos (VH)

Special

Attempts to harvest the energy released by *someone else's* magical backfire. Must be cast as a "Blocking" spell the instant the caster witnesses another mage critically fail a casting, though it doesn't actually block anything. The GM decides whether a backfire counts as "witnessed"; when in doubt, make a *Per*-based Thaumatology roll.

Order from Chaos is cast at -1 per yard to the unfortunate wizard. The subject is *not* that person, however, but their

catastrophe. Thus, their abilities and defensive spells have no effect on the casting.

Any success recovers energy points equal to margin of success, to a maximum of the cost of the other wizard's spell, not reduced for their high skill. It's irrelevant where the energy originally came from: FP, HP, Energy Reserve, external power source, etc. The harvested energy is available for the caster's *next* spell, which they must begin at once (on their next turn in combat, within one second otherwise); Order from Chaos counts as a spell "on" during its casting. Energy in excess of that needed is lost.

Ordinary failure recovers no energy and *costs* 1 FP. *Critical* failure means the other wizard's backfire somehow worsens to include the caster: injury affects them both (and anybody between them!), harmful spells that go astray are drawn to the caster of Order from Chaos, detectable effects reveal that person's presence, demons are hostile to both parties, and so on. This is a great opportunity for GM creativity!

Duration: Energy must be used immediately. Cannot be maintained.

Cost: None (1 on failure).

Prerequisites: Magery 5 (not necessarily Radically Unstable Magery), Recover Energy, Steal Energy, and Secret Spell (Order from Chaos).

In Chaos Magic, beliefs are not seen as ends in themselves, but as tools for creating desired effects. To fully realize this is to face a terrible freedom in which nothing is true and everything is permitted, which is to say that everything is possible, there are no certainties, and the consequences can be ghastly.

– Peter J. Carroll, *Liber Kaos*

FORGOTTEN WISDOM

10 points

Style Prerequisites: Magery 1 (not One College Only) and Naturalist skill.

Keywords: Folkloric; Practical; Quirky; Spiritual.

A common assumption in modern-day tales of the supernatural is that more people believed in magic in the past. Maybe the magic faded or wasn't present in the first place – but an alternative is that magic did and does exist, and only *belief* in it has faded. It lives on in the shadows, practiced by traditional shamans and healers, most often in the form of charms sold at *botánicas* and hoodoo shops.

In historical settings, such beliefs may be more mainstream. Powerful organized faiths object to the competition for the hearts, minds, and – so they claim – *souls* of the masses, driving magic underground. Yet folk practices are popularly regarded as benefiting everyday life more than Big Religion, and continue despite efforts to supplant them.

And in fantasy, "cunning folk" might be frowned upon not because they work magic – there's magic everywhere! – but

because they're seen as a challenge to the establishment. Wizards' guilds, academies of magic, the Royal Magicians, and so on constitute an oligopoly that excludes rustic "witches" and magic-using commoners. The latter groups therefore conceal their arts, and without access to formal training, grow quirky.

Forgotten Wisdom offers a way to represent magic suppressed because it challenges the intellectual, religious, or economic status quo like this. It's strange and limited, but powerful despite that. It isn't innately "black" – indeed, it encompasses many blessings and cures – but detractors *portray* it that way, and it does have enough curses to be used for misdeeds. In backgrounds with horror elements, its abusers raise plagues and zombies, while champions of the people battle these forces despite resistance from the authorities.

This style emphasizes not just the spiritual but also the *material*. Beyond the window-dressing of star charts and tarot cards, it empowers functioning potions (Herb Lore), “charms” (Improvised Items, along with Amulet and Talisman spells), sinister poppets (Malefice), weapons for battling spirits (Ghost Weapon), and crystal balls (Crystal Ball). Practitioners can work magic without their props, though, and enjoy full-on Magery!

Required Skills: Esoteric Medicine (any); Fortune-Telling (any); Herb Lore; Occultism.

Required Spells: Astral Vision; Aura; Death Vision; Detect Magic; Sense Spirit.

Perks: Astrological Ceremonies (Forgotten Wisdom); Attribute Substitution (any spell on list, based on Per); Convenience Casting (any spell the GM believes suits *household* tasks); Covenant of Rest; Improvised Items 1-3; Improvised Magic (Forgotten Wisdom); Intimidating Curses; Intuitive Cantrip (Aid, Avatar, Corpse Smart, Eye of the Storm, Good with Animal, Mystic Gesture); Knower of Names; Magical Lawyer; Mundane Magic (Aura as Detect Lies, Beast Speech as Animal Handling, Charm as Fast-Talk, etc.); Mystic’s Stupor; Named Possession; Obscure True Name; Paraphernalia Pro; Sanctum 1 or 2; Secret Mage; Secret Material (any alchemical potion); Secret Spells (Hedge Magic); Shaman’s Trance; Special Exercises 1 (IQ can exceed 20); Speedy Enchantment; Spirit Contract.

Secret Spells: See *Secret Spells: Hedge Magic* (p. 13).

Optional Traits

Attributes and Secondary Characteristics: Improved IQ and Per.

Advantages: Cunning Folk (**GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents**, p. 9); Energy Reserve; Luck; improved Magery; Spirit-Talker (**Talents**, p. 15); any of Allies (spirits), Blessed, Channeling, Medium, Oracle, See Invisible, Spirit Empathy, or Visualization the GM permits.

Disadvantages: Epilepsy; Reputation (creepy, crotchety, superstitious, etc.); Spiritual Distortion (**GURPS Thaumatology**, p. 94); Weirdness Magnet; self-imposed rules (p. B121) like Code of Honor (Professional), Disciplines of Faith, Sense of Duty (clients or spirits), and Vow.

Skills: Exorcism; Fast-Talk; Fortune-Telling (any other); Hidden Lore (Spirit Lore); Merchant; Propaganda; Smuggling; Streetwise; Teaching.

Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

– William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Spell List

Forgotten Wisdom could be summed up as “the subset of all spells that line up nicely with folk traditions.” Prerequisites are standard where possible, but adjusted not to stray outside the style’s lore where necessary. An important tendency is looking into the spirit world (or *talking* to spirits!) to obtain information about the material one, and gazing at auras to learn about people. Magery 3 shows up regularly for the powerful stuff – often alongside the need to know many

spells – but this is balanced by practitioners having an easier time learning a number of highly thematic spells.

Spell	Prerequisites
Affect Spirits	Solidify
Age (VH)	Magery 3 and Curse
Amulet (VH)*	Talisman for appropriate spell
Astral Block	Repel Spirits and Summon Spirit
Astral Vision (VH)	Aura and Sense Spirit
Aura	Detect Magic
Banish	Dispel Possession
Beast Speech	Magery 1
Bind Spirit (VH)	Command Spirit and Entrap Spirit
Bless	Magery 2 and any 10 “blessings” (marked †)
Bless Plants†	Magery 1
Body-Reading	Lend Vitality
Charm	Command Spirit and Master
Cleansing†	Purify Earth
Command Spirit	Summon Spirit and Turn Spirit
Counterspell	Magery 1
Create Spring	Magery 3 and Bless
Crystal Ball (VH)*	Magery 2 and Divination (Crystal-Gazing)
Cure Disease†	Magery 1, Minor Healing, and Relieve Sickness
Curse	Malefice
Death Vision	Magery 1
Detect Magic	Magery 1
Detect Poison	Magery 1
Dispel Magic	Counterspell and any 12 other spells
Dispel Possession†	Magery 2 and Turn Spirit
Divination‡	Magery 2, Mage Sight, Seeker, and suitable Fortune-Telling
Dream Projection	Dream Sending
Dream Sending	Dream Viewing
Dream Viewing	Peaceful Sleep
Dry Spring	Magery 3 and Curse
Entrap Spirit	Pentagram and Turn Spirit
Final Rest†	Magery 1
Ghost Weapon (VH)*	Solidify
Hair Growth†	Minor Healing
Healing Slumber†	Magery 2, Minor Healing, and Peaceful Sleep
Identify Spell	Detect Magic
Know True Shape	Aura
Lend Energy†	Magery 1
Lend Vitality†	Lend Energy
Mage Sight	Detect Magic
Magic Resistance†	Magery 1 and any 7 spells
Malefice (VH)*	Magery 2 and Seeker
Master	Beast Speech
Materialize	Summon Spirit
Mind-Reading	Aura
Mind-Search (VH)	Mind-Reading
Minor Healing†	Lend Vitality
Mystic Mark	Aura and Mage Sight

Spell	Prerequisites
Neutralize Poison†	Cure Disease
Nightmare	Magery 2 and Dream Projection
Oath	Magery 3
Peaceful Sleep†	Lend Energy
Pentagram	Magery 2 and Magic Resistance
Permanent Forgetfulness (VH)	Magery 3, IQ 13+, and Curse
Pestilence	Magery 3 and Curse
Predict Earth Movement	Astral Vision
Predict Weather	Astral Vision
Protect Animal†	Magery 1 and any 7 spells
Purify Earth†	Remove Contagion
Purify Water†	Remove Contagion
Rain	Predict Weather
Recover Energy	Lend Energy
Relieve Addiction†	Neutralize Poison
Relieve Madness†	Lend Vitality and Peaceful Sleep
Relieve Paralysis†	Stop Paralysis
Relieve Sickness†	Lend Vitality
Remove Contagion†	Cure Disease
Remove Curse	Bless and Curse
Repel Spirits	Banish
Resist Disease†	Remove Contagion
Restore Hearing†	Magery 2 and Minor Healing
Restore Memory†	Magery 2 and Minor Healing
Restore Sight†	Magery 2 and Minor Healing
Restore Speech†	Magery 2 and Minor Healing
Rider Within	Beast Speech
Seeker	IQ 12+ and Astral Vision

Spell	Prerequisites
Sense Spirit	Death Vision
Shapeshift Others (VH)‡	Magery 3 and Curse
Solidify	Materialize
Steal Beauty (VH)	Magery 3 and Curse
Stop Bleeding†	Lend Vitality
Stop Paralysis†	Magery 2 and Minor Healing
Stop Spasm†	Lend Vitality
Storm	Magery 2 and Rain
Strike Barren	Magery 3 and Curse
Summon Spirit	Magery 2 and Death Vision
Suspended Animation	Healing Slumber
Talisman (VH)*	Magery 2 and spell to be opposed
Turn Spirit	Sense Spirit
Turn Zombie	Turn Spirit and Zombie
Zombie	Lend Vitality and Summon Spirit

* Enchantments are *always* Very Hard but *don't* require Enchant – use the spell's level alone, which must still be 15+. The Speedy Enchantment perk enables casting these spells in modest amounts of time, and is usually learned alongside them.

† “Blessings” below the level of Bless that can count as prerequisites for that spell.

‡ All specialties share the same *spell* prerequisites. To learn any Divination spell, the wizard must know the associated Fortune-Telling skill; Astrology, Cartomancy, and Crystal-Gazing are common. Shapeshift Others is generally for bugs, rats, toads, etc.



Secret Materials: Alchemical Potions

Herb Lore is normally less capable than Alchemy, rarely able to create more than cures, antidotes, and perhaps healing potions. However, those who master Forgotten Wisdom can translate their knowledge of many spells into potent, even flashy results!

Each Secret Material perk pertains to *one* elixir on pp. 213-219 of **GURPS Magic** (or from any other supplement describing elixirs). Manufacturing this requires a laboratory (**Magic**, p. 211), the usual amount of time, and an Herb Lore roll at the elixir's standard penalty to Alchemy. It *doesn't* require expensive ingredients, but the GM should require an hour of herb-hunting per \$100 of nominal value, followed by a Naturalist roll at the penalty used to create the elixir.

Example: A Fertility elixir (**Magic**, p. 217) calls for \$1,500 in ingredients, takes 20 weeks to brew, and requires an Alchemy-5 roll. A Forgotten Lore wizard with Secret Material (Fertility) could spend 15 hours hunting for herbs, rolling at Naturalist-5, and then spend 20 weeks creating the elixir, rolling at Herb Lore-5.

The GM decides what Secret Material perks to allow. This might reflect how flashy the effects are, how “traditional” they feel, or something like “must be available in potion form.” Economics *might* matter, but the prices in **Magic** won't make a high-tech wizard rich; the Fertility elixir in the example may net \$11,000 in a rare-magic setting, but that's for two days of herb-hunting and 20 weeks of brewing, and equivalent to a little over \$2,300/month – just another Average job at TL7-8.

If batches are permitted, the magic isn't rare and *the entire lot* might fetch only that price.

Secret Spells: Hedge Magic

Forgotten Wisdom doesn't have a small number of full-fledged secret spells. Instead, it has a *single* Magic Perk – Secret Spells (Hedge Magic) – that adherents may select to gain access to *all* IQ/Average spells the GM is willing to permit from **GURPS Magic: The Least of Spells**. While not individually potent, these add a potential 77 spells to the style, many of which might be unknown to the setting's other wizards (or at least to followers of power-hungry styles like Cult Secrets and the Dark Path).

These spells count as part of Forgotten Wisdom for all purposes. Points in them add to total points in spells when determining the wizard's allotment of Magic Perks. If one of the style's Magic Perks seems applicable to an IQ/A spell – often

true for Convenience Casting and Mundane Magic – that's a permitted specialty.

Stylists with the Secret Spells (Hedge Magic) perk may spend earned points to acquire up to four levels of Hedge Magician (**The Least of Spells**, p. 19) at 5 points apiece. This doesn't "use up" further perks or require Special Exercises – the Secret Spells perk grants the option. As the Talent description explains, Hedge Magician and Magery *both* add to IQ when learning IQ/A spells.

Lastly, practitioners who learn IQ/A spells can create the low-powered items for them described on pp. 4-5 of **The Least of Spells**. They don't require the Enchant spell; simply roll against their skill with the spell in question, taking into account Hedge Magician *and* Magery. They do require Magery 2; this is directly or indirectly a prerequisite for all the Enchantment spells on the style's list, and represents the minimum magical talent needed to create lasting "charms."

DESIGN NOTES: FORGOTTEN WISDOM

Forgotten Wisdom is an *applied* style, specifically a folk style – the kind of art that crotchety elders who pursue the Old Ways learn to serve their community or make money. Occultism is *essential*, because such magicians must be experts on curses and hauntings. Esoteric Medicine, Fortune-Telling, and Herb Lore cover cures, readings, and potions, respectively. Optional skills include Merchant above all (the GM may even require it!), more Fortune-Telling, Propaganda to attract believers, Fast-Talk to convince doubters, Smuggling for dubious ingredients, and Streetwise for the shadier side of these activities. Some senior magicians become feared by spirits (Exorcism), learn their secrets (Hidden Lore), and take an apprentice (Teaching); others remain dabblers.

Together, the required spells provide "the Sight." This is the ability to perceive clients' auras (Aura), peer into the spirit world (Astral Vision and Sense Spirit), sense magic (Detect Magic), and see the future to some extent (Death Vision). These feats are prerequisites for the style's magic for gleaning information, which works by consulting spirits and analyzing auras.

Four skills, five spells, and Magical School Familiarity mean the Forgotten Wisdom style costs 4 + 5 + 1 = 10 points.

The many and varied perks start with the trappings of folk magic: star charts (Astrological Ceremonies), spirit invocations (Covenant of Rest, Magical Lawyer, Spirit Contact, and Shaman's Trance, plus Attribute Substitution to locate magic-using spirits with Perception), ominous warnings (Intimidating Curses), True Names (Knower of Names and Obscure True Name), trances (Mystic's Stupor and Shaman's Trance, again), and a ritual space (Sanctum) stocked with occult tools (Paraphernalia Pro). That last category encompasses charms, which might be one-off (Improvised Items), personal (Named Possession), or *potent* (Speedy Enchantment). Practicality is also important, with many Convenience Casting, Intuitive Cantrip,

and Mundane Magic perks, as well as seat-of-the-pants casting (Improvised Magic). Not all adherents keep things modest – the greatest manifest superhuman wisdom (Secret Exercises allowing IQ 21!), yet conceal their power behind an unsophisticated façade (Secret Mage).

Advanced magic tracks everything discussed so far. Recurring themes are spirit-workings (Affect Spirits, Bind Spirit, Command Spirit, etc.), which extend to consulting with spirits for knowledge (as with Predict Weather, Seeker, and even Divination); sleep and dreams (Healing Slumber, Peaceful Sleep, and the Dream spells); and reading auras for thoughts and secrets (e.g., Know True Shape and Mind-Reading). Helpful spells are often the main reason to hire a magician, and Forgotten Wisdom offers everything from baldness cures (Hair Growth), through rain-dances (Rain) and agricultural blessings (Bless Plants and Purify Earth), to protection from cattle mutilators (Protect Animal). Balancing this are curses, *starting* with Curse and getting nastier from there. There are also enchantments for creating related magic items (Amulet, Crystal Ball, Ghost Weapon, and so on) – and rituals to produce "voodoo dolls" (Malefice) and even zombies.

Optional traits focus on great wisdom (improved IQ or a narrower Talent) and impressive sensitivity to the universe and to spirits (high Per and capabilities like Blessed, Medium, Oracle, and Visualization – or just higher Magery). Advanced stylists acquire the favor of spirits; this might manifest subtly as Luck, as Energy Reserve drawn from invisible helpers, or outright Allies. On the downside, folk wizards have a reputation – and often a Reputation – for fits (Epilepsy) and odd behavior codes. Messing with the wrong forces can incur Spiritual Distortion or Weirdness Magnet.

The required spells need Magery 1, while the required Herb Lore skill calls for Naturalist skill, making both style prerequisites. Naturalist *isn't* a style component in itself – buy it separately.

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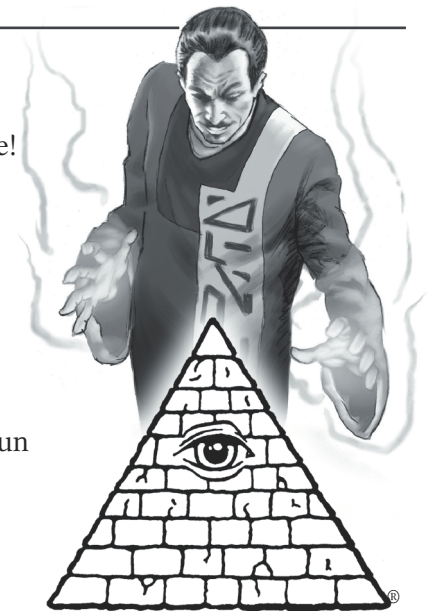
Books are a uniquely portable magic.

– Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*

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