



SPIRIT MAGIC



# LEGEND

## SPIRIT MAGIC

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# SPIRIT MAGIC

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Spirit Magic is the practice of animism and ancestor worship. Spirit magicians call upon spirits which manifest their powers on behalf of their summoner or binder. These beings have many names... dryads, nymphs, diseases, ghosts, nightmares, elementals, ancestors; yet in truth, are all sentient fragments of magical energy from which everything is derived. A spirit does not teach or use magic, rather they are magic.

Spirits flow between the mundane plane and the spirit plane, eternally transferring the power of magic to the mundane world and back again.

Spirit magicians interact with these beings, utilising the spirit's magic to augment or protect themselves. Such sentient immaterial beings are powerful allies, being capable of independent action and manifesting their powers for unlimited periods of time.

## The Spirit Plane

The spirit world is a place which exists tangentially to the material world. Nothing physical can exist there, only the immaterial. The spirit world is populated by many spirits, which are linked to the natural geographical features, animals and plants of the material world. Also present are the faint *souls* of mortal beings whose spirits are still bound to a material body. These appear as pale shadows and are hard to perceive.

The landscape of the spirit plane is abstract, similar to the terrain of its counterpart, but the size, colour and vividness of individual features are dependent on the spirits that inhabit it. Thus a wild, craggy mountain in the real world may appear as a tremendous spirit on the spirit plane, whereas an urbanised region might show as grey lifeless area full of translucent apparitions.

A soul or spirit which inhabits a physical body or item is defined as being *corporeal*. A corporeal spirit cannot enter the spirit world until drawn forth from its material residence. A soul pulled from its physical body up onto the spirit plane, or a spirit which resides there, is considered *discorporate*. Whilst discorporate, souls are separated from the senses and sensations of their body.

## How Spirit Magic Works

Spirit magicians do not use spells to find or influence the spirits from which their power derives. Instead they learn two mystical skills, Spirit Walking and Spirit Binding. The first enables them to perceive spirits and spiritually enter the Spirit Plane. The second allows them to summon, bind and dominate spirits in spirit combat.

## Spirit Walking (POW+CON)

This skill represents the spirit magician's awareness of the Spirit Plane and its denizens. Anyone with this skill can, with a successful roll, detect (but not observe) the presence of spirits within a range of their POW in metres. The skill is capable of far more – but such secrets are jealously guarded by tribal shamans and only revealed to those who progress higher in a spirit cult's hierarchy. Each further level of knowledge allows the skill to be used in new ways, permitting observation, communication and eventually freedom to travel the Spirit Plane.

Utilising any of the following abilities requires entering a trance-like state, which takes a number of minutes equal to the Species Maximum POW minus their Characteristic POW and costs a single Magic Point.

If the Skill Test is successful then the spirit magician can perform the following dependant on his rank:

- \* Follower – Can see and identify spirits within range.
- \* Votary/Seer – Can communicate with spirits within range.
- \* Shaman – Can project their own soul onto the Spirit Plane.
- \* High Shaman – Can drag the souls of others onto the Spirit Plane with them, at a cost of 1 extra Magic Point per additional person. Unwilling participants resist using their Persistence in an opposed roll against the Spirit Walking skill of the High Shaman.

Shaman and High Shaman may travel the Spirit Plane to observe and locate other spirits. The skill provides an abstract understanding of the geography and nature of the region and the shaman can travel up to his skill's value in kilometres away from his body. From the Spirit Plane a shaman who succeeds in a Perception test, can also distinguish the spirits of corporeal creatures in the material world and thus hunt for particular species or even seek out specific people.

If the roll is a critical success then entering the trance is achieved in a single minute. If the roll is fumbled, the shaman is barred from entering the spirit plane for a full day.

## Spirit Binding (POW+CHA)

Spirit Binding is used to bind spirits into fetishes and control their actions once bound. Additionally, it can be used to summon and coerce a known spirit to perform a single deed for a mutually acceptable service. The POW of the largest spirit which can be bound or controlled cannot exceed three times the critical range of this skill. Thus a character with a Spirit Binding skill of 45% could control spirits of up to 15 POW.

The binding skill is also used for spirit combat – using mental domination to overcome immaterial beings in a battle of willpower. In this case the value of the Spirit Binding skill is used to calculate the amount of damage inflicted by the spirit magician during spirit combat.

## *Spirit Damage*

<b>Skill Value</b>	<b>Magic Point Damage Inflicted</b>
01–20	1D2
21–40	1D4
41–60	1D6
61–80	1D8
81–100	1D10
101–120	2D6
121–140	2D8
141–160	2D10
161–180	2D12
181–200	3D10

If the Spirit Binding roll is a critical success, then maximum damage is inflicted. If the roll is a fumble, then the shaman overstrain's himself and sustains the rolled damage to his own Magic Points!

## *The Fetch*

A fetch is a shaman's guardian spirit, which is usually related in form or nature to the totem spirit of his tribe or cult. In order to become a shaman, a spirit magician must first locate his fetch in a dangerous initiation ritual. Such spirit-quests involve the re-enactment of his cult's mythic foundation to locate his guardian and culminate in a dangerous battle against the traditional enemy of his practice.

The fetch aids the shaman, protecting and guiding him in the spirit world. It is in every way his spirit brother.

The benefits of a fetch are:

- \* The shaman can see spirits, souls and magical auras without needing to enter a trance.
- \* The shaman can transfer the Magic Points of the fetch to replenish his own.
- \* The fetch can disincorporate the soul of a mundane living being, who may resist with an opposed roll of his Persistence against the spirit's Disincorporation skill.
- \* The fetch can possess the shaman's body whilst he is disincorporate, protecting it.
- \* The fetch can substitute itself instead of the Shaman in spirit combat (if in the same location).
- \* The fetch and shaman are in permanent mental contact and are aware of each other's senses.
- \* The shaman may invoke any power or ability his fetch knows and likewise the fetch may cast any Common Magic the shaman knows.
- \* The bond between shaman and fetch is not vulnerable to magical dismissal.

The detriments of a fetch are:

- \* The fetch may influence the personality of the shaman depending on its totem nature (a bear spirit fetch may cause the shaman to become soporific during the winter).
- \* The fetch may draw upon the Magic Points of the shaman in times of dire need.
- \* The fetch will abandon the shaman if he betrays the teachings of his shamanic tradition.

A fetch starts with 200 skill points to be assigned to its skills. Fetches can grow in experience just as the shaman does. If desired, a shaman can transfer any or all of his skill improvement rolls to his fetch instead.

## Locating and Gaining Spirits

Spirits can be found in the spirit world inhabiting objects or locations relevant to their elemental source, be it an animal or object. Most are found in remote places where they can dwell without the magical disturbances which accompany higher civilisation or the crowding of other, possibly hostile, types of spirit. Often the location is a place of striking or beautiful appearance but in the case of more transient elements or creatures the locale can shift. River spirits, for example, will obviously be found in rivers and streams, but they could be located anywhere along these from the source to the mouth.

Locating a spirit normally requires a shaman to travel on the Spirit Plane to seek out a suitable specimen. In some cases a spirit can be stumbled upon by complete accident, in others the home of a specific spirit may be a secret known to the seeker's shamanic tradition.

Once located, the magician may attempt to gain control over the spirit, either by negotiation or binding.

## Negotiating with a Spirit

To bargain with a spirit for its aid, the spirit must be willing to negotiate and the supplicant able to communicate with it. This requires the supplicant to be of at least Votary rank and successfully enter a ritual trance. Conversely the supplicant can be disincorporated by a shaman's fetch, the Spirit Walking skill of a high shaman, or the spirit itself, so that bargaining is performed directly on the Spirit Plane. Once communication has been established, the supplicant may either request the spirit's aid to perform a single task in return for performing a like service for the spirit; or he may offer to form an alliance with the spirit, in which case the supplicant gains its name with which it can be summoned in return for seasonal propitiation.

	Dice	Average	<i>Traits:</i> Life Sense, Magic Sense, Possession
STR	—	—	
CON	—	—	<i>Common Skills:</i> Common Magic, Influence, Insight, Lore (Shamanic Tradition), Lore (Spirit World), Perception, and Persistence
DEX	—	—	
SIZ	—	—	
INT	2D6+6	13	<i>Spirit Advanced Skills:</i> Disincorporate (INT+POW), Spectral Combat (POW+CHA)
POW	2D6+6	13	
CHA	2D6+6	13	
<i>Combat Actions</i>		3	
<i>Magic Points</i>		13	
<i>Movement</i>		20m flying	
<i>Spirit Damage</i>			<i>Refer to Spirit Damage table, using Spectral Combat skill</i>
<i>Strike Rank</i>		+13	

Such bargains can be settled by Games Master fiat, or resolved with an Opposed Test of suitable skills, such as the supplicant's Influence skill versus the spirit's Persistence. Failure to reach an accord has no further effect. Fumbling the roll however, may cause the spirit to react angrily.

## Binding a Spirit

To capture and bind a spirit instead, the binder must enter the Spirit Plane (using the same methods as with negotiating) and engage it directly in spirit combat. If he is able to beat the spirit down to zero Magic Points and its POW does not exceed the limit set by his Spirit Binding skill, he may then bind it into a physical object; usually an item with ritual and congruent significance. Such objects, once bound with a spirit, are known as fetishes.

The recipient of a bound spirit does not necessarily need to have captured it himself. Shamans may locate and bind spirits for other tribal members. However, once the spirit is passed over to another, the recipient must perform all duties and responsibilities concerning it and it counts against the *recipient's* maximum number of spirits they can hold at any one time.

The maximum number of spirits which can be held by a spirit magician depends on cult rank:

- \* Follower: 1.
- \* Votary:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of CHA.
- \* Seer:  $\frac{1}{2}$  of CHA.
- \* Shaman:  $\frac{3}{4}$  of CHA.
- \* High Shaman: All CHA.

If this number is ever exceeded, then the strongest spirit(s) break free, possibly extracting revenge if they were hostile to the binding.

## Using Bound Spirits

Spirits which are held within fetishes are tied to the Material Plane. Whilst within its fetish a spirit cannot be harmed by hostile magic, other spirits, or break free of its binding – if imprisoned against its nature. However, whilst contained within the fetish, the beneficial magical power of the spirit cannot be accessed either.

To use a spirit, the magician must first call it forth from its fetish. This takes a single Combat Action. Once freed, the spirit manifests as a ghostly shape forming a whirling intangible aura about its owner. It is only *directly* observable to those who have invoked their Spirit Walking skill, or can see magic. Once loosed from its fetish the spirit becomes vulnerable to magical attacks, or the attentions of other spirits.

Commanding a released spirit is a free action but requires the owner make a successful Spirit Binding Skill Test to ensure that his instructions are understood and followed. Each attempt costs a single Magic Point. If the roll is failed, hostile spirits may act maliciously against the best interests of their owner. Fumbling the roll breaks the binding, returning the spirit to the Spirit Plane and potentially turning on him if hostile.

If the spirit's POW is greater than the limit set by the user's Spirit Binding skill, any attempt to command it fails.

Spirits may range up to their owner's POW in metres. Recalling a spirit back to its binding fetish is automatic.



The greatest strength of spirits is that their effects are *persistent*, lasting as long as it is let out from its fetish. This can make spirit magicians formidable foes, yet their spirits are vulnerable to spells such as the Banish, Spirit Block, or even blasting them with some form of magical damage. Once dismissed or destroyed, the spirit is gone for good until a new replacement can be summoned. Thus most practitioners of shamanism tend to keep their spirits carefully hidden away in fetishes until the most propitious time to use them.

## Spirit Combat

Spirit combat can only occur on the Spirit Plane. Since the souls of mortal beings are tied to their flesh, they cannot enter the Spirit Plane naturally without aid; and are therefore normally insulated from spiritual attack. Likewise spirits which have been *bound* to a physical fetish are tied to the material world and removed from the Spirit Plane.

However, many spirits such as those of diseases, predatory animals or the malevolent dead, have the ability to *discorporate* the soul of a corporeal creature. This literally drags the mortal's spirit out of its body and fully into the Spirit Plane. Once there, they become vulnerable to spiritual combat. In addition, some mortals such as shaman can learn to *discorporate* themselves and High Shamans can even bring others with them into the spirit world. Other methods exist too. Some narcotics and rare herbs are said to be able to separate the soul from the body and there are even spells that can replicate the effect magically.



## What is a Fetish?

A fetish is a ceremonial physical symbol, usually portable, that embodies magical power. Any form of item can become a fetish for a spirit but amongst primitive cultures fetishes tend to be items made from an item associated with that spirit. Thus, a fetish holding a tiger spirit might be a necklace of tiger teeth; or an ancestor fetish might be a bone from the ancestor's body.

Fetishes are jealously guarded by their owners and it is usually taboo to touch a shaman's fetish unless specifically invited to do so by its owner.

Encountering a spirit on the Spirit Plane does not necessarily mean that combat will inevitably occur. Many encounters, even with spirits who have reincorporated a mortal, can be peaceful, mutually beneficial and informative. However, if the spirit is hostile then battle generally follows. Fleeing spirit combat is impossible for souls who do not have the Spirit Walking skill, or some form of magic to escape from the spirit world.

Spirit combat is run in a very similar way to physical combat, save that lacking physical bodies on the Spirit Plane, Attributes are calculated using different characteristics. A spirit or reincorporated soul's *spiritual attributes* are calculated the following way:

**Combat Actions** are determined from its average of INT and POW, rather than the average of DEX and INT.

**Strike Rank** is calculated from the average of INT and CHA, instead of the average of DEX and INT.

**Magic Points** are calculated as normal but are used by spirits and souls as their Hit Points.

**Spirit Damage** is based upon the value of a spirit's *Spectral Combat* skill or a soul's *Spirit Binding* skill; see the Spirit Damage Table (page 4). If a reincorporated Adventurer lacks Spirit Binding, they use half the value of their Persistence on the table instead.

Spirit combat progresses just like normal combat. Initiative is rolled and the character or spirit with the highest adjusted Strike Rank goes first, the second highest goes second and so on. Thus a Spirit Combat can be run simultaneously with physical combat using the same SR countdown.

Instead of weapons, most spirits have a *Spectral Combat* skill which they use in spirit combat. Spirit magicians use their Spirit Binding skill instead, whereas those uninitiated in spirit magic must rely on half of their raw Persistence skill. Attacks are made by rolling an Opposed Test between the attacker and the defender, using their relevant skills.

If the attacker wins the Opposed Test they inflict an amount of damage equal to their Spirit Damage to the opponent's Magic Points. If the defender wins, then no damage is incurred.

## Spirit Domination – Optional Rule

In many genres the soul of a possessed victim can sometimes fight against the spirit dominating him, temporarily regaining control of their own body before the possession is re-established. In settings supporting such circumstances Spirit Combat is permitted within the material world but only if both spirits are concurrently occupying the same body or fetish.

If the defender runs out of Combat Actions with which to defend themselves, then they are left wide open and the attacker may attempt to make an unopposed attack roll. A character engaged in spirit combat may forgo their attack in order to cast magic instead.

Combat continues until one of the combatants is reduced to zero Magic Points. At this point the loser may automatically be either Possessed (if mortal), Bound (if a spirit), Exorcised (if currently possessing a mortal) or Dissipated (destroyed). If the dissipated spirit was a reincarnated mortal, then the physical body dies with the destruction of its soul. Some spirits can recover from being dissipated if they have the *Recurring* trait.

## Possession and Exorcism

A possessed creature is one whose control of their physical body has been usurped by another spirit or soul. This is normally the result of losing a Spirit Combat, whereupon the victor entwines itself around the defeated soul and rides it back to the loser's corporeal body in the material world. There are two forms of possession, Dominant and Covert.

Dominant Possession occurs when the possessing entity literally takes complete control of the possessed body. The victim is fully aware that its body has been taken over but is absolutely helpless, unable to take any action at all. The possessor does not have access to any of the memories, skills or magic of the possessed but substitutes its own instead.

To detect a dominant possession requires a successful, unopposed test of either Perception if viewed magically, or Spirit Walking.

Covert Possession is when the spirit hides in the body of the possessed, riding it like a hitchhiker. The victim retains complete control over his body and remains completely unaware of his possession, unless the spirit chooses to inform him of its presence. Some spirits take over the victim's body at night when they are sleeping, thus keeping their existence secret – save for inevitable physical exhaustion and fleeting nightmares. Another example of covert possession is a curse or disease spirit which infects that creature with some form of debilitation. No manner of magic or healing will stop the effects until the spirit responsible is somehow cast out.

Detecting a covert possession requires a successful Opposed Test of the investigator's Perception (if viewed magically) or Spirit Walking skill versus the spirit's Stealth skill.

No creature can ever purge *itself* of a possessing entity. They may only be exorcised by a *separate* individual defeating the possessor in spirit combat, or by successfully casting a specific type of expulsion magic. If the original body of a mortal possessor has been killed in its absence, then its soul dies when it is exorcised. Spirits merely return to the spirit plane.

Needless to say, a possessing spirit or soul can willingly abandon a possession at any time – unless they have been maliciously *bound* to that particular body.

## Spirit Types

There are many forms and types of spirits. They range in power from minor sprites all the way up to the Great Spirits who may be seasonal storm winds, plagues, turbulent rivers, terrifying wildfires or huge mountains.

- \* A spirit can be an incarnation of an abstract magical or natural effect.
- \* A spirit can be a collective soul of a species of plant or animal.
- \* A spirit can be the venerated soul of a dead ancestor.
- \* A spirit can be the vengeful remnant of a dead creature.

All spirits are sentient, although the degree of sentience and freewill is likely to be dictated by the nature of the spirit. Ancestor spirits, for example, will display all the intelligence and coherence of their mortal form; but nature spirits are likely to see, view and articulate themselves in ways that reflect their origin. Shamans are capable of communicating with spirits, interpreting their sometimes incoherent ways of communicating, through their training and exposure to the spirit world.

## *Ancestor Spirits*

Ancestor spirits are the souls of family members who reside on the Spirit Plane after death. A spirit magician who quests on the Spirit Plane will only ever encounter ancestors with whom he has a relationship, finding both venerated ancestors and despised enemies. Such spirits continue their existence in houses, halls, tribes or communities resembling those they occupied before death.

Spirit magicians may ask questions or request aid from their honoured ancestors; or conversely attempt to bind and imprison an enemy ancestor, preventing it from being called upon by their foes.

Ancestor spirits are a source of knowledge. They possess skills in which they excelled during their life, the mastery of which has prompted their continued veneration. The spirits of those who died without noteworthy deeds tend to fade and dissipate, once their immediate descendants pass on. Thus most ancestor spirits are noted heroes, remembered many generations after their death.

Normally an ancestor spirit may only be summoned to the material world by a spirit magician of direct descent. If no blood tie exists, a shaman must travel to the home of that ancestor on the

## *Designing Spirits*

Most of the spirits listed here are simply examples of an almost infinite range of possibilities. To help Game Masters create new and unique spirits, use the following guidelines:

- \* A spirit usually provides a single advantage. This can be either knowledge, an attribute (not characteristic) boost, a Heroic Ability, domination of a particular species, or inflicting a detrimental effect.
- \* Whatever the advantage, it has to be capable of being a permanent effect – being constantly on. The effect must also be balanced according to other comparable spirits, Divine Magic and Sorcery.
- \* The magnitude of the spirit's advantage is always proportional to its POW. Since many spirits have a variable amount of POW, you can have weak to great versions of most sorts of spirit.
- \* The majority of spirits by default possess a minimum Spectral Combat skill equal to their POWx5% and a Persistence of POWx4%. Those which attack mortals by discorporation have a Discorporate skill of POWx5% and those which *covertly* possess victims also have a default Stealth skill of POWx4%.

Spirit Plane. Once summoned or located, the spirit can be asked questions concerning the family line, or events which happened during its lifetime. Such requests only require the successful use of the Influence skill and cost nothing further.

Alternatively, the spirit magician may request the ancestor's aid in performing an important deed. Such appeals come at a cost, usually involving a personal sacrifice (a treasured item, a habit, a relationship and so on) and votive gifts to that particular spirit. This veneration keeps the memory of the ancestor alive, promoting his continued existence. In return the ancestor will possess the body of its descendant. This bargain places the supplicant at a dangerous disadvantage since he cannot prevent the ancestor from using his body in any way the spirit likes. Unsympathetic ancestors often succumb to long forgotten passions, or attempt extreme acts to further their renown – being in little danger of personal harm if their host dies.

However, most venerated ancestors are content to remain in the peace of the afterlife. To prove both themselves and the task are worthy of its stature, the magician must defeat his ancestor in mock Spirit Combat. If the descendant is defeated, then the ancestor considers the request below their dignity and refuses aid. If the ancestor is defeated, it is roused into providing aid and will possess their descendant.

Whilst possessed, the spirit magician may substitute certain of his own skills for the heroic level skills of the ancestor. The older and more powerful the ancestor, the higher its skill mastery. They normally know 1d3+2 skills at a heroic level of 90%+POW. Warrior ancestors have combat skills, shaman ancestors have spirit skills, hunter ancestors have stealth and tracking skills and so on. In addition, every ancestor has 1d3 Heroic Abilities.

Whilst possessing the body of a descendant, the ancestor cannot be called upon by other tribal members. For this reason, an ancestor spirit usually only remains until it has achieved the objective for which it was summoned. Since ancestors refuse to be bound into fetishes (unless forced to by an enemy shaman) they do not count towards the normal limit of spirit bindings.

INT – As per mortal of the species.

POW – Usually 1d10+10 and greater.

CHA – As per mortal of the species.

Skills (at 90+POW%): Choose from any skill relevant to the ancestor's profession and culture, plus Persistence at  $POW \times 4\%$  and Spectral Combat at  $POW \times 5\%$ . Ancestors know as many points of Common Magic as they have POW. Lacking fetishes, they do not have any bound spirits but can summon favoured spirit allies they used during their life (shaman still have their fetch however).

## *Bane Spirits*

Bane spirits strive to absorb the essence of other spirits. Due to their entropic touch, the Magic Point damage they inflict is permanent and spirits dissipated by them are forever destroyed.

Bane spirits are so abhorred by most shaman that they are often bound and imprisoned in remote or accursed locations, preventing them from causing harm. They are rarely used, save by the insane, or those driven to suicidal revenge. If constrained to a fetish, bane spirits can be sent against other spirits to engage them in spirit combat. If the bane spirit wins, it consumes the defeated spirit, destroying it utterly, including other bane spirits.

Their characteristics are 1d6 for INT and CHA and a POW which ranges from 3d6 upwards.

## Elemental Spirits

These spirits originate from the elements, *Air, Darkness, Earth, Fire, Moon and Water*. They are the same beings summoned by such spells as Elemental Summoning but a spirit magician can invest their powers within his *own* body.

For example, a shaman could bind a fire elemental and use it to give himself a burning touch, an earth elemental to move himself through earth and rock, a water elemental to survive underwater and swim fast and so on.

An elemental spirit's INT, CHA and abilities are equal to an elemental of corresponding size. The spirit's POW is 1D6+6 for the equivalent of a 1 cubic metre elemental. Each further +6 increases its size by another cubic metre.

## Guardian Spirits

These spirits originate from the Spirit Plane and ward the summoner from hostile magic. They are often found in places where vast sorceries have been cast, or holy sites where a god invoked his immortal power. They can also be drawn to intense concentrations of magic, large ceremonies or battlefields for example.

A guardian spirit protects the holder of its fetish by interposing itself before offensive spells. The spell must first overcome the Persistence of the guardian spirit. If it fails, the spell is negated. If the spell overcomes the spirit, it continues onto the spirit magician, who may then also resist the spell.

The spirit can neutralise spells of up to one Magnitude for every three points of its POW. If the spell's Magnitude is greater, the spirit is unable to affect it. If a magic spirit encounters an anti-spirit spell, such as Spirit Block or Banish, it may attempt to resist the spell, before it is affected.

Guardian spirits characteristics are 2d6 for INT and CHA and have a POW which ranges from 3d6 upwards

## Nature Spirits

These are the spirits of natural things which live and grow in the material world. Sometimes specific animals or plants are worshipped as totems – the spiritual guardian and strength of a tribe. Spirit magicians who devote themselves to a particular species in this way are always on friendly terms with spirits related to their totem but suffer neutral or hostile reactions from other nature spirits.

Nature spirits embody a myriad of different abilities depending on the plant or animal they originate from. In general each spirit should encompass **one** of the following effects, something which represents a quality expressed by its species' corporeal form. If two or more nature spirits *with the same ability* are used at the same time by the same magician, only the stronger spirit will take effect.

- \* Boost an attribute – Armour Points, Damage Bonus, Hit Points, Magic Points, Movement or Strike Rank.
- \* Dominate species – Can control behaviour of members of its own species (even plants!).
- \* Increase a skill – Gain a bonus to a skill used by that species.
- \* Manifest a Trait – Use a Trait possessed by the species, such as a special sense or movement.

- \* **Combat Manoeuvre** – Grants a specific combat manoeuvre which can be automatically used if they succeed in the relevant attack or parry, in addition to any they may have gained for the better level of success.

The intensity of the effect is equal to either:

- \* The number of steps an Attribute is increased, such as increasing Hit Points by 2 on each location would be two steps.
- \* The number of creatures which can be controlled simultaneously.
- \* Each 10% increase to a skill .

The Characteristic POW of nature spirits is based on the intensity of their effect. A level 1 intensity spirit has a POW of 1d6+6, an intensity two spirit a POW of 1d6+12, an intensity three spirit a POW of 1d6+18 and so on.

Spirits which embody Combat Manoeuvres or Traits are the exception. Those which grant a Combat Manoeuvre have a minimum POW of 1d6+18 (1d6+24 for critical only manoeuvres); whereas those which grant Traits have a minimum POW of 1d6+12 and sometimes more if the particular effect warrants it.

The other characteristics of a nature spirit match those of its corporeal cousins. A lion spirit would have an INT of 5 and a CHA of 5, for example. If no example characteristics are available for the species, they can be randomly generated by rolling 1d4+2.

Some example nature spirits follow. Remember that these are individual spirits and others of their kind may be more or less powerful.

*Rhino Hide* (Intensity 3 boost AP, rhino spirit) – INT 3, POW 20, CHA 3. CA 2, SR +3, HP 20, Spirit Damage +1d10. Persistence 80%, Spectral Horn 100%. Increases the natural Armour Points of the magician by 3 points. These do not affect the wearing of additional armour, or reduce Strike Rank.

*Strong Claw* (Intensity 1 boost Damage Bonus, bear spirit) – INT 5, POW 10, CHA 5. CA 2, SR +5, HP 10, Spirit Damage +1d6. Persistence 40%, Spectral Claw 50%. This spirit boosts the Damage Modifier of the magician by one step, a shaman whose Damage Modifier was normally +1d2 would be increased to +1d4.

*Tawny Might* (Intensity 2 boost Hit Points, griffin spirit) – INT 6, POW 16, CHA 7. CA 2, SR +7, HP 16, Spirit Damage +1d8. Persistence 64%, Spectral Gore 80%. Adds an extra 2 HP to each location of the magician.

*Green Vigour* (Intensity 4 boost Magic Points, oak spirit) – INT 1, POW 25, CHA 1. CA 3, SR +1, HP 25, Spirit Damage +2d8. Persistence 100%, Spectral Roots and Branches 125%. Increases the magician's Magic Points by 4.

*Long Hoof* (Intensity 3 boost Movement, horse spirit) – INT 4, POW 22, CHA 5. CA 3, SR +5, HP 22, Spirit Damage +2d6. Persistence 88%, Spectral Hoof 110%. The spirit boosts the magician's Movement by 3 metres.

*Swift Thought* (Intensity 2 boost Strike Rank, mongoose spirit) – INT 4, POW 17, CHA 5. CA 3, SR +5, HP 22, Spirit Damage +1d10. Persistence 68%, Spectral Bite 85%. Augments the Strike Rank of the magician by 2 points.

*Fang Brother* (Intensity 1 Dominate Species, wolf spirit) – INT 5, POW 9, CHA 5. CA 2, SR +5, HP 9, Spirit Damage +1d6. Persistence 36%, Spectral Bite 45%. Spirit will allow the magician to dominate and control a single wolf.

*Tenacious Life* (Intensity 2 Increase Skill, ivy spirit) – INT 1, POW 14, CHA 1. CA 2, SR +1, HP 14, Spirit Damage +1d8. Persistence 56%, Spectral Hoof 70%. Increases the magician's Resilience skill by 20%.

*Sharp Ears* (Intensity 2 Manifest Trait, bat spirit) – INT 3, POW 18, CHA 3. CA 2, SR +3, HP 18, Spirit Damage +1d10. Persistence 72%, Spectral Squeal 90%. Magician gains the Echolocation Trait.

*Savage Snip* (Intensity 3 Combat Manoeuvre, praying mantis spirit) – INT 3, POW 23, CHA 3. CA 3, SR +3, HP 23, Spirit Damage +2d6. Persistence 92%, Spectral Foreclaw 112%. Grants the automatic free use of the Choose Location combat manoeuvre whenever the magician succeeds in his attack.



### *Sickness and Curse Spirits*

Sickness and curse spirits are malevolent beings which attack and covertly possess mortals. Once in possession they emulate specific disease effects (see page 78 of the *Legend Core Rulebook*).

Sickness spirits tend to gather (on the Spirit Plane) near the bodies of the recently dead, attracted by the eventual departure of its soul. From there they usually lay in wait for mortals to approach and follow them until they sleep or pass into an unconscious state. At this point they use their Discorporation skill to drag the target's soul onto the Spirit Plane. If they succeed in defeating the victim in spirit combat then they covertly possess him and inflicting the effect of their disease.

Curse spirits are similar in effect to sickness spirits but they are normally captured by shaman at sites of great disaster and misfortune. Once bound they are used as offensive weapons to overtly possess the spirit magician's enemies.

Both types of spirit have an INT and CHA of 2d6. Their POW can range from 1d6+6 upwards. The bigger the POW the stronger they are in spirit combat and the more difficult to exorcise once discovered. Each +6 grants an additional disease/poison effect (see Poisons & Diseases, page 78 of the *Legend Core Rulebook*).



# SHAMANISM FOR FUN AND PROPHETS

*Legend* introduces a new, free-form system of Spirit Magic mixing a blend of academic realism and fantasy. The rules provide a toolkit of ideas that can be used to create many different kind of **animistic** traditions but the openness of the system can make it hard to know where to start or how to fit spirit magic into your own campaign. This article provides answers to questions that have been asked and tools to help bring spirit worship to life in any campaign. This is the first of two articles: the second will expand upon the range of spirits and spirit encounters available to spirit worshippers.

Animism is the broadest term for a worldview in which the world is infused by spirits, and shamanism is just one type of animism. *Legend* focuses on shamanism but the rules can accommodate most forms of animism. For example, Shinto or 'folk Hinduism' can be seen as animistic practices as can ancestor worship among the Romans and ancient Greeks. And, as can be seen in any bookshop, many new age beliefs are fundamentally animistic. *Legend* spirit magic is as applicable to the modern world as it is to the ancient.

## Spirit Cults & Traditions

Although most spirit worshippers will be a member of a cult, the organisation is unlikely to be anywhere near as formal as a divine cult or sorcery school. Spirit cults are more likely to be loose affiliations or may simply consist of members of single family or clan or tradition of veneration of spirits. Such traditions share one simple insight: the world is alive. Each rock, plant, animal and each cloud, pool and storm has its own spirit. Such spirits themselves, especially the spirits of ancestors, may also be members of a tradition or be friendly towards a particular tradition. Other spirits may simply have no interest in the mundane world. Some may be actively hostile to members of a particular tradition.

Because there are so many ways to approach spirit worship, cults tend to be diverse but as a rule of thumb each spirit cult tends to have access to five or six types of spirit with whom it is friendly and when added up, these spirits will usually offer 7-12 different benefits. Smaller spirit cults have access to fewer friendly spirits.

Nearly all cults will have access to ancestors and guardian spirits plus a number of nature spirits depending on the cult's background. Cults with particular elemental affiliations will have access to elemental spirits. Curse and bane spirits are not usually part of a tradition and any spirit magician attempting to bind them into service is taking a serious risk.

## Defining Spirits

The denizens of the spirit plane are varied and diverse. Spirit magic allows practitioners to approach spirits in two ways: as beings with which they can communicate and as entities which can be bound to service. A spirit magician's most frequent interaction with spirits will be through the use of the Spirit Walking skill to communicate with them. In this respect spirits are non player characters who can be interacted with during game sessions. Spirit



Binding is the skill of persuading or forcing a spirit into service or protecting oneself from harmful spirits. *Legend* provides a basic breakdown of spirit types and how to quantify what benefits a bound spirit might provide. The two key elements anyone wishing to bind a spirit needs to know about it are its Intensity and its attitude towards the spirit mage.

## Intensity

Intensity is an attribute of spirits. When it comes to Spirit Magic, the Intensity of a spirit measures the benefit it can give to the spirit's controller as well as how difficult it is to command. The greater a spirit's POW, the greater its Intensity. A spirit's Intensity can be calculated from the following table.

### *Spirit Intensity Table*

<b>Intensity</b>	<b>POW</b>	<b>POW Range</b>	<b>Typical POW</b>
1	1D6+6	7-12	10
2	1D6+12	13-18	16
3	1D6+18	19-24	22
+1	+6	+6	+6

## Attitude

Each spirit has an attitude towards magicians who approach it. Some will be friendly, others neutral and some hostile. Spirits belonging to the magician's tradition will most likely be friendly. Neutral spirits consist of both those belonging to traditions which are not hostile to the shaman as well as those not considered part of any tradition. Hostile spirits are those belonging to enemy traditions or are inherently antagonistic due to mythic, runic or elemental oppositions. The attitude of a spirit towards a spirit magician affects how it will react to being approached, to being bound and what it might do if it ever escapes a binding.

## Binding Spirits

The *Legend* rules leave it up to the players and Games Master in any campaign to determine the precise procedures for gaining spirits with the assumption each campaign will generate its own guidelines. There are, however, some common elements that are likely to underlie most Spirit Magic traditions.

Worshippers of a spirit cult gain spirits through undertaking a ritual in collaboration with a shaman to bind a spirit into a fetish. The shaman searches the spirit plane for a suitable spirit for the supplicant, defeats it in spirit combat and then binds it to a fetish that has been prepared by both shaman and supplicant. While the shaman journeys, the supplicant fasts and mediates, purifying himself in preparation for the gift of the spirit. The bound spirit counts against the owner's limit, not the shaman's. Although there is nothing stopping a non-shaman undertaking the search and binding a spirit by himself, the task is dangerous and would be frowned on by other members of the community.

Shamans will usually only provide spirits to members of the same tradition or in recompense for great favours and they will only bind friendly spirits associated with their cult in this manner. The fetish costs the recipient one Improvement Roll per point of Intensity of the spirit. This cost represents the time and personal development needed for a spirit worshipper to make themselves worthy of the gift. The ritual usually takes a week and at the end of

the week the player should roll the spirit's characteristics randomly based on the spirit's Intensity. It is possible the spirit gained may be too powerful for the adventurer to control.

Spirits with an Intensity of 5 or more are likely to have a POW of over 30 and a spectral combat skill of 150% or more meaning that only the greatest of the High Shamans can defeat them in spirit combat unless several shamans join together in a Concert. Such actions should be played out rather than relegated to Down Time.

Once bound to the mundane plane in a fetish a spirit can no longer regenerate Magic Points nor can it perceive the world around it so the spirit lies quiescent until either temporarily released or the fetish is broken.

An adventurer may 'upgrade' the spirit in a fetish to a more powerful spirit of the same type by paying the difference in Improvement Rolls. For example an adventurer with a fetish containing an Intensity 2 Nature spirit can upgrade it to an Intensity 3 Nature Spirit by paying 1 Improvement Roll. They can also replace the spirit with the same type of spirit of the same Intensity if they wish and they can persuade a shaman.

Remember shamans are not magic item factories. Each shaman is a combination of priest, doctor, teacher, lawyer, undertaker and spiritual border guard for their community. Most of their time is taken up with mundane affairs and they have very little time for the extensive work required for creating fetishes. Most community members may gain a fetish as an adulthood ritual and maybe at one other rite-de passage. Shamans have more important things to do than provide magic items for wandering adventurers.

## Using Fetishes

A bound spirit must be released from its fetish in order to use its ability. To release the spirit the magician simply spends a single Combat Action: this does not cost any Magic Points and automatically succeeds without any skill test required. Commanding a released spirit is more difficult. The spirit magician must use a free action, spend one 1 Magic Point and succeed at a Spirit Binding skill test in order to make a successful Spirit Command Test. The Magic Point is spent regardless of whether or not the Spirit Binding skill roll is a success. A free action is an action that can be performed at the same time as a regular Combat Action. Generally, one free action can be performed per Combat Action. Therefore a spirit magician can spend 1 Combat Action to release the spirit and, as part of the same action, try to Command the spirit. This is how a spirit magician normally attempts to control their spirits because a spirit released from a fetish without being commanded can act as it sees fit until it is brought under control. If the spirit is a hostile one, such as a curse spirit, it may take the chance to immediately attack the owner of the fetish.

A critical success when trying to Command a spirit means the attempt costs no Magic Points. A failed attempt to Command the spirit means that the spirit magician must wait until their next Combat Action to try again. While a spirit is under the owner's control it will perform its orders to the best of its abilities but if the owner wishes it to perform a new action, he will have to make a new Spirit Command Test. There is always the possibility of losing control of a spirit and the more powerful a spirit is, the more dangerous it is likely to be if the owner loses control.

Commanding a spirit currently under its owner's control to return to its fetish automatically succeeds and does not cost any Magic Points; this is an effect of the binding ritual. If however

the owner does not have control of the spirit he will have to make a successful Spirit Command Test to order the spirit back into its fetish. Given the potential risk of uncontrolled spirits it is no surprise shamans will only provide their followers with friendly, easy to control spirits.

A fetish created by a spirit magician can only be used with the Spirit Binding skill. Should someone come into possession of a fetish but not have the Spirit Binding skill then they will not be able to use the fetish. However he could take the risk of breaking the fetish and hoping that the spirit will be grateful. As an optional rule it is possible to release a spirit from a fetish by spending 1 Magic Point. This does not naturally give any control over the spirit but fans of Sinbad tales may see ways to utilise this rule creatively.

A fetish holding a spirit will take on some of the spirit's essence over time. So a bear tooth holding a bear spirit may seem dozy in winter or take on bearish odour. Fetishes holding curse or sickness spirits may emit a miasma inducing minor symptoms in the holder, making such fetishes extremely unpleasant. On the other hand, a stone holding a Salamander Spirit will be warm to the touch, which may occasionally be useful.

Breaking a fetish immediately frees the spirit it contains and allows it to return to the spirit plane. A freed spirit may attempt to flee back to the spirit plane or, if hostile, possibly attempt to attack the owner who imprisoned it. Malicious shamans sometimes trap places with easily broken fetishes containing dangerous spirits.

The visual effects of using a fetish will vary depending on the setting. In a pseudo-historical setting the spirit's effects would be invisible to the naked eye. In fantasy setting the magician might take on certain visual cues or the shadow might change. In an epic fantasy campaign perhaps the snarling figure of a wolf might surround the magician, seeming to lash out at enemies.

## Shamans and spirits

The previous section looked at how to gain and use a fetish provided by a shaman. This section examines how a shaman can gain spirits by journeying to the spirit plane and binding spirits to service. Using Intensity as a measure of a spirit's power, the table below shows what the shaman's required minimum skill in spirit binding along with the cost in Improvement Rolls to bind a spirit.

### *Spirit Hunting*

<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Spirit Binding Skill Minimum Requirements</b>	<b>IRs</b>
1	61%	1
2	81%	2
3	121%	3
4	141%	4

For friendly spirits, the minimum skill requirement is reduced by 20%. In addition, a shaman may pay 1 additional Improvement Roll for friendly or neutral spirits in order to reduce the minimum spirit binding skill requirement by another 20%. So, a shaman spending 4 Improvement Rolls and approaching a friendly spirit of Intensity 3 needs a minimum spirit binding skill of 81% rather than the usual 121%. These figures are based on shamans acquiring spirits during Down Time and represent a minimum of risk and maximum guarantee of

success. It takes 1D6 days of Down Time to find and bind a friendly spirit, 2D6 days to find a neutral spirit and 2D6+6 days of careful planning to safely find a hostile spirit that can be bound.

The Spirit Binding Skill requirement to find a spirit on the spirit plane and defeat it in spirit combat is not the same as the requirement needed to control a spirit already bound into a fetish. A spirit magician with a Spirit Binding skill of 40% is able to control a bound spirit of up to POW 12. However that same spirit will probably have a spectral combat skill of 60% (POWx5%) and would be likely to defeat the magician if he attacked it in spirit combat. It takes a higher skill to find and bind a spirit than it does to merely control one already bound in a fetish.

Of course players can have their shaman characters undertake quests to find spirits during play sessions. In this case there is no Improvement Roll cost involved and they can tackle more dangerous spirits with help from allies. Such sessions are full of roleplaying opportunities.

## The Shaman's Fetch

Not every Shamanic tradition features fetches and those that do vary in the nature of the fetch. In some traditions the fetch is the awakened "other half" of the shaman. In this case the fetch and shaman are two sides of the same soul with the fetch perceiving the Spirit Plane while the shaman exists on the mundane plane. In other traditions the fetch is a spirit (often an animal guide) who is drawn to the shaman to become their spiritual partner. In both cases the prospective shaman must undertake a successful Vision Quest in order to gain the fetch. This is a dangerous ritual, and it may cripple or kill the shaman if he fails to complete it successfully.

The precise abilities of a fetch vary widely between traditions. In cases where the fetch is the shaman's other half the fetch often provides the shaman with the ability to shapechange. If the fetch is an animal guide then the shaman may gain the ability to communicate with such animals, control them or gain traits of the animal; this is commonly the case with the animal nomad shamans in Glorantha.

A fetch is never bound into a fetish. In some cases a shaman may create an item referred to as a fetish, which is used to focus their relationship with their fetch but this is generally a matter of tradition and does not usually have a game effect.

This is potentially a huge advantage and Games Masters will have to decide whether concerts exist in their campaign and how easy it is to find a teacher for the Concert skill. By default it is rare skill and it is recommended you do not introduce it into a game until you feel comfortable with spirit magic.

## Spirit Allies

Over time a shaman gradually makes contact with many spirits. Rather than binding them all to service, most Shamans attempt to strike bargains; they provide something the spirit wants and the spirit undertakes some service. In game terms, such spirits are effectively contacts and act as non player characters. Some spirits are willing to enter into a more formal arrangement by providing the Shaman with their name, becoming an ally of the shaman. In response the Shaman agrees to undertake some sort of repeating task or to uphold a geas or compulsion. On the most abstract level assume the task will cost the shaman one Improvement Roll per year to represent the service or inconvenience.

Summoning a spirit contact or ally requires the shaman to make a Spirit Walking skill test and spend 1 Magic Point; this takes a single Combat Action and the Magic Point is spent even if the skill test fails. It will usually take 1D6 minutes before the spirit arrives. If the spirit is a contact then the shaman must succeed at the Spirit Walking skill test or else the spirit does not appear. If it is an ally it will appear regardless of the skill result unless the Shaman fumbles. In either case, if the skill test is a critical success the spirit will appear at the end of the Combat Round.

Some allies may be willing to undertake tasks for the magician or even fight for him by disincorporating an enemy but this should be a relationship that unfolds over time in play. Most spirits are no more capable of interacting with the mundane world than mortals are capable of interacting with the spirit world. A shaman can however use their Spirit Walking skill to summon a consenting spirit to the mundane world. A High Shaman can use their Spirit Walking skill to forcibly drag a spirit to the mundane plane if he overcomes the spirit's Persistence.

## Spirit Powers

There are four ways in which a spirit magician can use a spirit's powers. The simplest and safest way is the augmentation provided by nature and guardian spirits. The spirit gives the magician a benefit by impressing itself upon the magician's soul and is easily returned to a fetish. Elemental spirits however require embodiment, a harder and more demanding act. A weak magician who incautiously embodies an elemental spirit risks being consumed by it. Finally, ancestor spirits possess the magician, taking complete control. Should an ancestor not wish to depart there is little the unfortunate magician can do. Finally some spirits such as curse and sickness spirits are freed to attack a victim. The danger in this act is that if the magician is weak the spirit may turn on him instead.

## Ancestor Spirits

Unlike the other spirits which are generally bound for their abilities, ancestors are venerated by spirit magicians and their aid is requested. If the ancestor agrees to aid it possesses the spirit magician's body. As the spirit magician's body is the link to the mundane plane no fetish is required, instead there must be a blood link between the host and the ancestor. The ancestor may agree to inhabit the body of a willing third party provided a blood link exists.

Some ancestors are prepared to temporarily inhabit an item of great significance to the ancestor in order to be manifested for some purpose. The item might be an altar, family sword, a crown or even a significant place such as a tree in a secret grove. The ancestor will voluntarily enter the item as if it were a fetish and wait to be released when it will perform one agreed upon service. Being bound in this way is extremely unpleasant so the expectation is that this will only last a few hours. Any longer and the spirit may extract penance at the first possibility. Regardless of whether the ancestor is inhabiting a body or object it counts against the number of spirits able to be controlled by a spirit magician.

Although ancestor spirits of Intensity 1 exist they tend to be too weak and too little known to be venerated outside of maybe a small family shrine. All venerable ancestors tend to be Intensity 2 or greater and were notable heroes in their time. Since they died, the veneration they have received is likely to have further enhanced their POW. We will present a simple system for designing ancestor spirits of any Intensity.

All ancestor spirits know the Lore and Culture skills of their people and region at 90% plus their POW. They also know Persistence at POWx4%, and Spectral Combat at POWx5%. In

addition, for each level of Intensity an ancestor spirit can choose one additional skill which it knows at 90% plus its POW and pick twice from the following list:

- another skill at 90% plus POW;
- Discorporate skill at POW\*5%;
- one Heroic ability;
- one Common Magic spell at the maximum Magnitude it can memorise (as well as Common Magic skill at 90% plus POW if it is not already known);
- has a fetch. (The ancestor is a shaman. The Fetch's characteristics are equal to the ancestor's +1D6-1D6. For example an ancestor with a POW of 20 has a fetch with a POW of 20-1D6+1D6.)
- has a spirit ally of one less Intensity than the ancestor which will appear within 1D3 Combat Rounds of being summoned by the ancestor through use of the Spirit Walking Skill. These allies will not themselves usually bring allies. That said, ancestors of Intensity 6 or greater may control a whole army of spirits.

These abilities will cover most options but, of course, players and Games Masters should feel free to be as creative as they want in designing ancestor spirits to fit the needs of their campaign. Remember as well that the most common interaction with ancestors is likely to be the use of Spirit Walking to talk with them or request aid other than possession. Over the period of a campaign, some ancestors may become recurring non player characters, with their own agendas.

## Curse, Sickness and Bane spirits

Although these spirits can be bound for later use they are never used to augment the spirit magician, rather they are sent against an enemy. They are hostile to all traditions save those perverse enough to revere them. The Intensity of Curse & Sickness spirits measures the number and severity of the conditions they can inflict on a target once they have possessed the victim. Each condition requires one or more points of Intensity, so an Intensity 2 Curse spirit can inflict two Intensity one conditions or one Intensity two condition. Diseases tend to be a package of conditions so you can assess the Intensity of the Disease spirit carrying a particular disease by looking at the conditions it causes.

- Intensity 1: Blindness, Confusion, Contagious, Deafness, Dumbness, Exhaustion, Fever, Hallucination, Maiming, Mania, Nausea, Unconsciousness.
- Intensity 2: Agony, Bleeding, Paralysis, Sapping.
- Intensity 3: Asphyxiation, Death.

See *Legend* (page 79) for a description of the effects of each condition. Unlike 'normal' diseases, conditions caused by spirits do not recover naturally even with application of healing skills. Some Higher Magic spells may work for a while if their Magnitude is greater than the spirit's Intensity. Thus a Divine Spell to cure blindness of higher Magnitude than the possessing spirit's Intensity will work but unless the spirit is driven out, the effects will gradually return.

## Elemental Spirits

The differences between the elementals summoned by priests and wizards and the elemental spirits bound by Shamans are subtle but significant. An elemental is summoned to the mundane plane and embodied within the appropriate source. A shaman is capable of embodying an elemental spirit, which means that shaman's body itself becomes the elemental. Elemental

spirits of high POW are often intelligent and self-willed. As with any spirit, the potency of the embodied elemental spirit depends on its Intensity.

A Spirit Magician can bind an elemental spirit into a fetish in the normal manner but the fetish must be chosen carefully for even while bound some of the elemental spirit's power is manifested. A fire elemental must be bound into a fetish capable of withstanding heat while an water elemental's fetish will become damp and clammy.

When the spirit magician releases an elemental spirit from a fetish it does not need any source material but while uncontrolled it will gravitate to the nearest source of its element within range of the binding object. By itself it is just a spirit and has no significant effect on the mundane plane. The spirit's power does not truly manifest until the spirit magic controls and embodies it through use of the Spirit Binding Skill. As with any control attempt, the spirit magician must succeed at the skill and spend 1 Magic Point as a Free Action. If the spirit magician succeeds, their body itself becomes the elemental. A spirit magician embodying a sylph transforms into a vortex of buffeting winds while a one embodying a gnome will sink into the ground as if they were some type of earthen whirlpool.

While embodying an elemental spirit, the spirit magician cannot turn off or dampen the effects. Furthermore, returning the elemental spirit to the fetish is far more difficult than for other spirits as the magician must make a successful Command Roll in order to successfully force the spirit back into the fetish. Finally, while in his elemental form, the spirit magician is vulnerable to opposing elements just as an elemental is. For all these reasons, embodying a powerful elemental spirit is never lightly undertaken.

A spirit magician embodying an elemental spirit essentially becomes an elemental of size based on the spirit's Intensity as outlined on the table below.

### *Elemental Spirit Size Table*

<b>Spirit Intensity</b>	<b>Elemental Size</b>
1	1 cubic metre
2	3 cubic metres
3	6 cubic metres
4	10 cubic metres
5	15 cubic metres
+1	+6, +7 and so on cubic metres

The magician's STR, DEX and Hit Points are replaced by the spirit's values (which are rolled as normal for an elemental of its SIZ when first encountered) and he gains all the abilities (including its weaknesses) of the elemental. When the elemental spirit is returned to the fetish, any damage done to the magician while embodying the spirit is divided evenly between all his Hit Locations (rounding up as usual). For example if a human took 23 points of damage while in elemental form then he would take 4 points of damage to each of his 7 locations once he returned to human form.

Shamans forming concerts to control huge elemental spirits face particular problems. Although a concert with 300% in Spirit Binding could theoretically control a bound elemental spirit of 90 POW the leader of the concert would have to embody an elemental of some 120 cubic metres. Remember that all concert members need to be within a few metres of each other, which means they risk being incinerated, drowned or otherwise affected due to the



sheer scale of the elemental. Furthermore, if the concert breaks down as well as the potential backlash the shaman embodying the elemental spirit will no longer be able to control it.

Although embodying an elemental spirit can be extremely impressive it also opens the magician up to new problems. Like an elemental, a magician embodying an elemental spirit will take double damage from the opposing element and can be neutralised by an opposing elemental of the same size or bigger in cubic metres. Reducing the magician to 0 Hit Points while embodying the elemental spirit instantly breaks the fetish and frees the spirit, possibly also killing the magician in the process. Spells able to dismiss elementals (such as the divine spell Dismiss Elemental or the sorcery spell Banish) will free the elemental and destroy the fetish if the effect is great enough to affect an elemental of the appropriate size or POW.

A common optional rule is to allow elementals to mutually annihilate each other. Generally Fire and Water cancel each other out while Earth and Air also oppose each other. Different settings have different elemental cosmologies. Opposed elementals can annihilate each other it by inflicting damage equal to their Hit Points directly to each other. Alternately any attacks launched by an elemental inflict double damage to their opposed element. For example, an air elemental with 21 Hit Points is grabbed by an earth elemental with 32 Hit Points. The air elemental takes 32 Hit Points damage and is dispersed while the earth elemental suffers 21 Hit Points damage; it has been severely knocked about by the air elemental but still standing.

## Nature Spirits

These spirits augment the spirit magician's abilities exactly as described. It is possible to augment Combat Actions but that requires a minimum Intensity of 2, giving +1 Combat Action per point of Intensity after the first (so an Intensity 3 spirit gives +2 Combat Actions). Magicians cannot command their spirits to augment others' abilities: it is the bond between magician and spirit that allows the augmentation.

When designing Nature and Guardian spirits for non player characters there is no need to determine all its skills and characteristics in advance as they can always be figured out on the fly. Usually it is enough to write something like: Armour Points +2 (Bear spirit, Intensity 2, POW 14).

Finally, nature spirits do not have to be bound to be useful. Higher Intensity spirits will be fully sapient and can be negotiated with to undertake tasks, gather information or come to the spirit magician's aid.

## Spirit Combat

Spirit combat occurs only on the spirit plane and requires both participants to be there. High Shamans can disincorporate corporeal beings through spending one Magic Point and pitting their Spirit Walking skill against the target's Persistence as a Combat Action. The target has to be within range of the skill (the Shaman's POW in metres). Spirits using the Disincorporate skill likewise must spend one Magic Point and a Combat Action to disincorporate a corporeal being whose soul they can perceive and who is within their POW in metres on the spirit plane. Naturally they can keep trying for as long as they have Magic Points but if the target successfully resists with a critical then it is reasonable to assume the target is immune to being disincorporated by that particular shaman or spirit for at least a week. As disincorporation is an extremely powerful ability then one option is to increase the cost for multiple attempts against the same person by one Magic Point each time. So the first attempt at disincorporation



costs 1 Magic Point, the second costs two, the third costs three and so on. This will prevent spirits from simply trying over and over again until they succeed.

Once both participants are on the spirit plane Spirit Combat may continue until one side has been reduced to zero Magic Points. The winner does not have to take advantage of the loser and it is important to remember that spirit combat can represent any kind of contest from a battle of wits to an artistic performance; it does not always have to be a grim battle to the end. The same mechanic is used but how it plays out depends on the beings involved.

## Spirit Combat and bound spirits

Spirit combat happens on the spirit plane and a fetish (or other binding object) binds a spirit to the mundane plane so it follows logically that a spirit bound in a fetish cannot be commanded to attack an opponent in the spirit plane. A spirit magician wishing to use a curse, sickness or even bane spirit this way must therefore free the spirit by breaking the fetish. Of course, breaking the fetish frees the spirit from the magician's control so there is no obligation for the spirit to do what the magician wants. Indeed there is now nothing stopping the spirit from turning on the person who freed it. Generally the procedure is that the magician points the fetish at the victim and promises the spirit freedom if it attacks the target. Usually it will agree because its nature is to attack and possess corporeal beings and also because usually the magician who bound it is more powerful than the spirit. If, however, the owner is weaker than the spirit the spirit is completely free to attack its owner instead. This is yet another reason shamans are reluctant to provide these types of spirits to worshippers in their tradition.

In game terms, assume that a spirit with a lower POW than the magician will attack the intended target. Optionally, call for a Spirit Binding roll opposed by the spirit's Spectral Combat Skill. If the magician fails to win, the spirit simply departs. If the magician fumbles, or if he fails while the spirit succeeds and the spirit is of greater POW than the magician, it will turn on him instead.

Generally a spirit magician does not bind an aggressive spirit like a curse spirit to a fetish as the risks are high and the fetish is unpleasant to handle. Instead, if the magician wishes to send such a spirit against an enemy the usual procedure is to journey to the spirit plane and defeat the appropriate spirit; once defeated the shaman can compel the spirit to one service. A possession or part of the target is burnt or otherwise consumed in order to identify the target. Once the spirit has regained its Magic Points it will journey to the target and attack it. Alternately the shaman may command the defeated spirit to perform one service in the future. Such a spirit will act like a spirit contact and come within 1D6 minutes of a successful Spirit Walking skill test to attack an opponent.

The most fearsome shamans are those from traditions with friendly curse and sickness spirits. Such spirits may become allies and willingly attack victims nominated by the shaman. Once the victim is dead, the ally will return to the shaman to beg for more victims.

If spirit combat happens on the spirit plane, what does it look like back on the mundane plane? The answer to that depends on the victim's Spirit Walking skill. Someone with no ability in the skill has no way of controlling their physical body while they are on the spirit plane so when they are attacked they might writhe around and show symptoms of the attack. Someone being attacked by a sickness spirit might break out in boils and cold sweats or might vomit endlessly depending on the conditions they are fighting against. Someone who has training in Spirit Walking may be able to mostly control their body showing just small signs of stress. A shaman with a Fetch will be able to sit serenely, their body undisturbed while on the spirit plane the struggle ensues.

In campaigns with a lot of spirit combat various questions come up about how exactly fights occur and whether it is possible for one side to flee. Generally speaking, if a spirit magician is looking for a spirit to bind he must hunt the spirit, sneaking close enough to it to be able to attack it. Spirit walking corporeal beings as well as natural spirits can attack anyone within their POW in metres. While adjacent the combat looks like two enemies exchanging blows while enemies distant from each other appear to aim missiles or simply leap at each other. Like normal combat, spirit combat can generate Combat Manoeuvres although many will be effectively meaningless. The Change Range manoeuvre (or action) can be used to disengage and flee. If the fleeing spirit has a higher POW than the other spirit then once it has successfully performed a Range Change it can flee automatically. If the other spirit has a higher POW then it will be able to hunt down the fleeing spirit, though that might take some time. As a rule of thumb spirits and spirit walking mortals travel at a speed equal to their POW on the spirit plane. Unfortunates on the spirit plane without any kind of spirit walking skill are virtually trapped as they can move but can not follow a direction so they tend to drift aimlessly. Such characters trying to defend themselves in spirit combat through using half their Persistence skill are also unable to gain Combat Manoeuvres.

Characters who have Dedicated a large amount of their POW can be very vulnerable to spirit combat. One option is to rule the cost to disincorporate a character with Dedicated POW is one Magic Point plus one Magic Point for each point of Dedicated POW of the target. A spirit wishing to disincorporate a character who has 4 points of Dedicated POW would have to spend 5 Magic Points to make the attempt. This represents the difficulty of transferring the Dedicated element of a person's soul to the spirit plane. Disincorporating a character with a large amount of Dedicated POW may also draw the attention of spiritual guardians tasked to protect the faithful.

One of the primary tasks for shamans is to exorcise spirits possessing the faithful. The most common technique is to use Spirit Walking to find the spirit within its body. At this point a High Shaman can use their Spirit Walking skill to forcibly disincorporate the spirit and then either he or his fetch can battle it on the spirit plane. More junior shamans will have to rely on their fetch to disincorporate the spirit. In both cases it is usually the fetch that battles the spirit, leaving the shaman free to perform physical actions acting as a complementary skill for the fetch's combat skill. Usually this will be the use of the Healing skill but it may also include drumming, singing, dancing, burning of herbs to make the spirit drowsy and so on. That said, once the spirit has been disincorporated it may attempt to flee if the shaman or his fetch clearly overmatches it so it is often up to the shaman as to whether he wishes to pursue it.

## Spirits & Society

In societies where Spirit Magic is the main form of spirituality, spirits and fetishes are ever-present and a shaman fulfils the same role as a priest. It can be easy to forget that spirits are not just "power ups" or resources to be used. The spirits are not tools, however, they are part of the society. Most people will have a shrine to revered ancestors, a fetish holding a totem spirit and will take part in ceremonies of remembrance and revitalisation. In general, animists regard spirits in one of three ways.

- they revere their honoured ancestors and totem spirits;
- they respect the power of the spirits of the world around them;
- and they fear the malevolent spirits of their enemies.

Player characters who walk the spirit plane, binding spirits against their will and generally treating them as weapons and armour will soon gain a poor reputation both in the mundane world and on the spirit plane.

Most members of the society will know enough Spirit Walking to see the spirits around them when they meditate and enough Spirit Binding to use their fetishes properly provided they take time. It is highly unlikely they will ever engage in a life and death battle on the spirit plane (that is what the shaman is for) so for them the Binding skill represents the proper means of address, the proper visualisation and proper state of mind needed to invoke the power of the spirit within the Fetish.

The shaman is the bridge between the mortal world and the spirit world. He lives a life in two worlds and with the shaman's help, the members of the tribe can pass through to the spirit world to converse with those who have gone before. Naturally a powerful shaman tends to attract attention on the spirit plane. When viewed on the spirit plane, the shaman's soul echo is often at the centre of many spirits eager for attention. This can be highly distracting and may attract the attention of predators but a powerful shaman should have built a strong enough web of allies that most predators would rather hunt less powerful prey. Player character shamans, however, should expect occasional very unpleasant surprises...

## Trapped Spirits

Some spirits occasionally get accidentally bound to the mundane plane and become Haunts. The spirits of the dead who did not receive the proper funeral rites or who have died violently may be incapable of leaving the mundane plane. Other mortals may have been cursed or may have died before an important vow was completed or died full of hatred and rage and become bound to the mundane world. Such spirits may be bound to the bones of their corpse, a tree from which they were hung or maybe a cliff from which they jumped to commit suicide. By definition Haunts are trapped on the mundane plane and cannot disincorporate victims in an attempt to possess them. In fact most such spirits can do little but bewail their fate. Some, though, may have acquired certain powers. The list should be limited only by your creativity but some include.

- Telekinesis: the spirit has a STR equal to its Intensity, which it can use to move items around.
- Miasma: the spirit can induce feelings of dread and despair, maybe even fear and terror. The Magnitude of the effect depends on the spirit's Intensity. An Intensity 4 Haunt may be able to induce a level of Fear that is potentially lethal.
- Wraith form: the spirit is able to physically damage corporeal beings. The spirit can physically attack with a skill equal to its POW\*3% doing Hit Point damage equal to its usual Spirit Damage ignoring all physical armour. For example a spirit with a POW of 18 usually has a spectral combat skill of 90% meaning that it normally does 1D10 damage to Magic Points. When attacking physically it attacks at a skill of 54% and does 1D10 damage to Hit Points in a location ignoring all physical armour. Magical armour such as Protection still works however.
- Cast magic. Becoming a Haunt usually severs the spirit from any form of higher magic but some may retain the ability to cast Common Magic. An awful lot of Haunts consist of spirits casting magic such as Befuddle, Disruption, Demoralise, Fanaticism and so on.

Like bound spirits, Haunts cannot regenerate Magic Points normally but they are able to tap Magic Points from the natural world around them, a process that inevitably creates an unsettling area shunned by animals and where the plants are stunted and withered. A Haunt can tap the POW of any animal or plant with lower POW than the Haunt's Intensity to provide it with Magic Points up to the limit of its normal POW. Generally most Haunts must manifest in order to use any of their abilities. While a Haunt is manifested it becomes vulnerable to magical damage, however destroying it with damage simply drives it back to its binding until it has regained Magic Points through tapping its surroundings.

Dealing with a Haunt is not easy. Spirit Walking or magical senses may reveal the location of the binding object. Sometimes destroying the binding object is enough to release the Haunt but usually any attempt to release the Haunt requires determining why the spirit became bound in the first place and undoing the effects.

## Fighting Wraiths

A manifested Wraith Spirit has only one hit location and it has a number of Hit Points equal to its POW. Reducing its Hit Points to zero will temporarily drive the Wraith back to its binding for 24 hours, after which its Hit Points will be fully regenerated. The weapon the spirit uses depends on its Intensity. Each point of Intensity counts as one rank of Size and Reach so an Intensity 3 spirit could use a spectral weapon with a Size of Large and Reach of Medium. As the spirit is intangible parrying the attack has no effect normally but if a weapon is affected by some form of weapon enhancing magic then it can usually block 1 size equivalent for each point of Magnitude. As with any kind of combat both participants can generate Combat Manoeuvres where they are appropriate; being impaled by a spectral dagger is every bit as nasty as being impaled by a real one.



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