

SHADOW SWORD & SPELL



GAMEMASTER

Gamemaster

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SHADOW SWORD & SPELL

Gamemaster



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Forward	9
Chapter 1: Psionics	13
Acquiring Psionic Powers	13
New Skill: Psionics	13
Using Psionic Powers	14
Abilities	14
Action	14
Vitality Damage	14
Mass	14
Distance	14
Mental Contact	15
Power Tests	15
Attack Tests	15
Multiple Targets	16
Resistance	16
Maintaining Powers	16
Psionic Power Descriptions	17
Adaptation (Will)	17
Barrier (Will)	18
Body Control (Will)	19
Clairaudience (Will)	20
Clairvoyance (Will)	20
Combat Sense (Wits)	20
Dimension Travel (Will)	21
Domination (Will)	21
Ego Blast (Will)	21
Empathy (Will)	21
Enhance Ability (Will)	22
Enhance Senses (Wits)	22
ESP (Will)	22
Mental Contact (Wits)	22
Mind Bolt (Will)	24
Mind Reading (Wits)	24
Mind Swap (Will)	25
Precognition (Wits)	25
Psionic Knife (Will)	26
Psionic Slam (Will)	26
Psychic Assault (Wits)	26
Psychic Sense (Wits)	26
Psychic Shield (Wits)	27
Psychometry (Wits)	29
Sense Minds (Wits)	29
Suggestion (Will)	30
Suspension (Will)	30
Telekinesis (Wits)	30
Telekinetic Blast (Wits)	32
Telekinetic Grip (Wits)	32
Telekinetic Shield (Wits)	32
Telepathy (Wits)	32
Telepathy (Will)	34
Teleperception (Wits)	34
Advanced Psionic Techniques	34
Extending Psychic Shields	35
Psychically Aiding Others	35
Telekinetically Wielding Weapons	35
Telepathic Eavesdropping	35

Chapter 2: Settlements	39
Settlements: A Definition	39
Settlement Statistics	40
Law	40
Criminality	40
Corruption	40
Culture	40
Knowledge	40
Economy	41
Buying Power	41
Government	41
How Statistics Work	41
Assigning Stats	42
Traits	42
Academic	42
Anarchy Reigns	42
Busybodies	42
Closed	43
Cursed	43
Distinguishing Feature	43
Ether Focal Point	43
Hive of Scum and Villainy	43
Holy	43
Ideal Location	43
Intolerant	44
Pestilence	44
Pious	44
Poor	44
Prosperous	44
Superstitious	44
Example	44
Chapter 3: The Domain as a Character	49
The Domain Game	49
Domain Actions	49
Action Descriptions	50
Building Type Descriptions	51
Chapter 4: Domain Events	57
Archaeological Discovery	57
Assassination	57
Bad Weather	57
Bandits	57
Boomtown	57
Crime	58
Crop Failure	58
Cult Activity	58
Economic Upturn	58
Economic Downturn	58
Good Weather	58
Immigration	59
Plague	59
Smugglers	59
Squatters	59

Chapter 5: Corruption	63
Taint	63
Personal Taint	64
Altered Senses	64
Awareness	64
Cold Touch	64
Echoing Words	64
Hallucinations	64
Haunted	64
Illness	65
Repel Animals	65
Scar	65
Vision Portal	65
Altered Temperature	65
Attracted to Others	65
Blood	66
Decay	66
Malicious	66
Moving	66
Reflective	67
Repulsive to Animals	67
Scent	67
Unsettled Sleep	67
Wither Plants	67
Altered Temperature	68
Attract	68
Cursed	68
Decay	68
Infested	69
Malicious	69
Unsettled Dreams	69
Chapter 6: Gates	71
Portal/Physical Gate	71
Influence Gates	71
Sacrifice Gate	71
Summoning	71
Rifts	72
Warp	72
Chapter 7: Extra Planar Manifestations	73
Air	73
Animals	73
Children	73
Earth	73
Fertility	73
Flames	74
Food	74
Glass	74
Light	74
Plants	74
Religious Relics	74
Water	74
Weather	74

Chapter 8: Possession	77
Contest of Will	77
Effect of Possession	77
Benefits of Possession	77
Exorcism	78
Chapter 9: Dimensions, Multiverse, and Metaphysics	79
Why Planes?	79
Where do the players live?	80
Types of Cosmology	80
Quilted Multiverse	80
Inflationary	82
Quantum	83
Everett's "Many Worlds"	84
Holographic Multiverse	84
Simulation	84
Duality	86
Gygaxian/Arneson	87
Organic Structure	87
Other Models	90
The Physics of the Multiverse	91
Gravity	91
Time	92
Shape	92
Energy	93
Normal	93
Dead	93
Charged	94
Weak	94
Chaotic	94
Creating Your Own Cosmology	94
The Guidelines	95
End Notes	97

WELCOME.

Sounds kind of funny saying that at the start of a book, but this is not just any book. This is a book written for you, the **Gamemaster**. Though truth be told, I am sure there are just as many non-GMs, so welcome to you as well!

So what is this book all about?

Options.

OK, I know I say that a lot throughout my books, but it is certainly true for this one. **Shadow, Sword & Spell** is your game, and as such, you are free to run it how you want. With all this freedom, some might become overwhelmed trying to imagine new situations, or how to use the rules to craft the type of game they want. That is where this book comes in.

As I did in **Player** (and you have a copy of that book, right?), **Gamemaster** is written to bring you new ideas and new methods of using **Shadow, Sword & Spell** to create a different type of game. Within this book, numerous new ideas and expansions are presented. All of them have been used in one shape or form by not only myself, but other Gamemasters as well. So what will you find? A lot.

In **Part 1**, psionics are introduced. Of all the facets found in fantasy literature and RPGs, the presence of psionics brings a lot of baggage. For some, psionics have no place within a fantasy roleplaying game, and their inclusion is seen as not needed. Others, however, see psionics as just one of the many tropes found within fantasy, and though they might not fit within all styles of play, they should have a place as a character option. For me, psionics are just one of many possibilities found within the genre, and their inclusion is no different than allowing characters the chance to commune with Elder Gods, to summon forth earth-changing magics, or lead a unit of dragon riders into battle.

In **Part 2**, the domain rules found within **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Expert** are expanded, and the idea of having the domain as a playable character is introduced. In this type of game, the player's take on the roles of not only an individual, but the land itself. Through their actions the domain grows in power, wealth, and prestige. In addition to new options for domains, the topic of settlements is also introduced. From a small outpost to a bustling city, the settlement becomes a living, breathing entity that can cause harm or provide reward to a character.

Finally in **Part 3**, I cover dimensions and other planes of existence. Here you will find concepts and ideas that will bring new possibilities to anyone's game, including corruption (the process that takes place when a demon enters into the physical world) and possession of a character by an extra-planar creature. The multiverse and other possible realities are also discussed, and with them rules and guidance so you can create your own cosmology for your game.

Gamemaster, as is the case with **Player**, is another set of tools for your **Shadow, Sword & Spell** game. Use them to create the game you want.

Part

One



SCOTT ACKERMAN 12

BEFORE JUMPING INTO THE RULES, let's get one thing out of the way: Gamemaster provides no definitive answer to the question: "what are psionics?" Why?

No one answer exists that satisfies everyone. Psionics, in a world filled with magic, alchemy, and monsters, simply exist. If one accepts the existence of magic in the world, why not also the idea that human brain has powers locked deep within, usable by those who possess with the ability to tap into them?

The exact origin, whether it be a consequence of quantum mechanics, an application of chaos theory, a race of explorers from another dimension, or a method of meditation which unlocks the mind's hidden potential, is left for Gamemasters to decide for their own campaigns. Likewise, if a GM wishes to make psionics something more overtly

"mystical," they are welcome to do so. All discussions of psionics follow this pattern, thereby avoiding specific assumptions that might contradict an individual GM's choice for their own campaign.

There is, however, at least one basic assumption made when it comes to psionics in **Shadow, Sword & Spell**: they are a natural phenomena and not magical in nature.

WHAT DO YOU CALL THEM?

One of the most often asked questions that arising from psionics is simply: "What do you call someone who uses psionics?"

The answer is always the same: whatever you want to call them. Now granted, this might not be a good answer for some. Yet, as stated numerous times, this is your game.

For simplicity's sake, I use the term Mentalist. For me this feels and sounds right for the game. Other terms you can use are psychic, psionacist, psi, mindbender, or mind mage. If none of these names click with you, feel free to come up with your own.

Acquiring Psionic Powers

Mentalists acquire powers by purchasing them in the same manner as skills. Everyone, no matter their birth, social status, wealth, or even race, has the potential to unlock the power of their mind. Players, at the time of character creation can decide that their character has psionic powers, or after a few adventures, might decide that they have unlocked the potential of a great power lying in their mind. The GM is the final arbiter of what constitutes a good cause in this case, based on their own judgment and the nature of their campaign.

New Skill: Psionics

Psionics (Will)

Emphasis (each maneuver)

Similar to how magic works in *Shadow, Sword & Spell* in regards to gaining and learning new spells, psionics is similar. This skill covers the aptitude of being able to use psionics, and each emphasis covers one specific psionic power.

Using Psionic Powers

Unless otherwise stated in their descriptions, all psionics use the following guidelines.

Abilities

Powers are associated with a single ability, just like skills. The ability is noted in parentheses after a power's name.

Action

Using psionics takes a particular amount of time, as given in their descriptions. Most powers take one round to activate, while others take a longer amount of time. Mentalists using their powers are unable to do anything else while doing so, e.g., it is not possible for a mentalist to fight with a sword while at the same time using Telekinesis. Nor is it possible for a sorcerer to cast the spell *Burn* and attempt to employ ESP. Psionics require the character's full concentration, and it is not possible to do anything else, but use these powers. In addition, only one power at a time can be used.

Vitality Damage

The use of psionics is physically taxing, and each use of a power deals a particular amount of Vitality damage to the character. If a character's total Vitality damage exceeds their current Vitality, they slip into unconsciousness. Vitality damage caused by using psionics heals normally.

If the strain from using a psionic power causes the user to become unconscious, then the power effect still happens, but cannot be maintained, e.g., a character can make a psychic attack before becoming unconscious due to Vitality damage suffered, but could not establish a power such as *Domination* or *Mind Reading* and maintain its effects.

The Vitality damage of some powers is determined by circumstances. The mentalist takes damage regardless of whether the power test is successful or not, as well each time the power is retried.

Mass

Some psionic powers affect solid objects and creatures. The target numbers of these powers and the Vitality damage suffered by the character is often modified by the target's mass. When a psionic description calls for a mass modifier, find the target's mass on Table 1.1 and apply the listed modifiers.

Distance

In general, psionic powers have a fairly limited range or scope, typically touch or within normal line of sight. However, if the character wishes to do so, they may attempt to use them on a target at a great distance, but at the cost of

TABLE 1.1: MASS

<i>Mass</i>	<i>TN Modifier</i>	<i>Vitality Damage</i>
Up to 10 lbs	+0	1
Up to 100 lbs	-4	2
Up to 500 lbs	-8	4
Up to 5,000 lbs (5 tons)	-12	8
Up to 50,000 lbs (50 tons)	-16	16
Up to 500,000 lbs (500 tons)	-20	32
Up to 5,000,000 lbs (5,000 tons)	-24	64

TABLE 1.2: DISTANCE

<i>Distance</i>	<i>TN Modifier</i>	<i>Vitality Damage</i>
1 mile	+0	1
2 mile	-2	2
12 miles	-4	4
24 miles	-6	8
60 miles	-8	16
120 miles	-10	32
1000 miles	-12	64



both additional Vitality damage and a negative modifier to the target number of any psionic power tests.

Mental Contact

Some powers refer to the character being in “mental contact” with the target. This involves the use of the Mental Contact power (see below), allowing the character to “touch” another character’s mind. Targets in mental contact are considered “present” to the character regardless of the actual distance between them. What does “present” mean? It means any target within range. However, mental contact does not count as line of sight for psionic powers that specifically require it.

Power Tests

Some powers call for a test to activate, which works the same as any other test. The degree by which you roll under the target number sometimes determines the effectiveness of the power. Some powers do not require a test and operate automatically; such powers nevertheless still take an action to activate.

Attack Tests

Some powers require an attack test to affect a target, particularly in the midst of combat. Any power requiring an attack test also takes at least an action

and counts as the character's attack for that round. Powers requiring attack tests are subject to the normal combat modifiers detailed in **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic**.

Multiple Targets

Although it is easiest to use a power on one target at a time, a character can attempt to affect multiple targets with the same power, e.g., telekinetically lifting multiple objects, making mental contact with multiple minds, and so on. This requires time, skill, and effort to achieve.

Attempting to use a power on more than one target increases the target number and the amount of Vitality damage by 2 for every additional target, e.g., attempting to affect three targets at the same time incurs -4 to the TN and $+4$ Vitality damage suffered by the mentalist. In addition, the TN of any Resist tests against a mentalist using their powers on multiple targets is increased by $+2$ per additional target. If the power normally requires an action or more to use, then it requires an additional action, with the usual penalties associated with taking more than one action in a round (see **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic**, page 63).

The various targets must all be within range of the power. If the power requires mental contact, then the character must be in mental contact with all the targets. The Gamemaster has the final say on whether a power can affect more than one target at a time.

Resistance

Powers affecting others can be resisted through an opposed test that pitting the mentalist's power against the target's Resist skill. This test functions exactly like any other opposed test, as detailed in **SS&S: Basic**, page 16, but with the additional rules for opposed tests in combat described in **SS&S: Basic**, starting on page 60.

The target of a power can choose to forgo the Resist test by willingly accepting its effects—this choice is made, however, before the target knows what the effects are. This assumes a certain amount of trust between the mentalist and the target, which is often lacking in many cultures where psionic powers are viewed with great suspicion.

Maintaining Powers

Some powers are maintainable, i.e., their effects continue at the same level achieved by the initial use. This maintenance requires some concentration on the character's part, at least an action each round. Using another psionic power (or another application of the same power) while maintaining one or more powers is extremely difficult, incurring an additional -2 TN penalty, cumulative with the usual multi-action penalty (see **SS&S: Basic**, page 63).

A character distracted while maintaining powers must make an appropriate

power test with a ± 2 TN for each additional power maintained after the first. Additional modifiers may apply for damage and other distracting conditions, at the discretion of the GM. A failed psionic power test means that the character ceases maintaining all active powers. Optionally, the GM may rule that the character only stops maintaining one power for every two degrees of failure of the psionic power test (rounding down). A character unable to take any actions, due to being stunned or some other similar condition, cannot maintain powers.

Psionic Power Descriptions

Psionic powers operate similarly to skills, with a few modifications. Powers cannot be used by anyone untrained in them. A description of what each power does is included below, along with any rules for using the power. If a power costs Vitality, this is indicated. If a power requires maintenance, concentration, or mental contact, its description will indicate such.

Adaptation (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1

A character is able to adapt his body to survive in hostile environments. A successful Adaptation test adds any degrees of success achieved from it to improve the results of any Toughness-related tests to resist the effects of the environment. However, this power does not protect against falling damage or catching on fire.

Being underwater has three separate, but intricately linked hazards. These hazards are: drowning, disorientation, and physical damage associated with hypothermia. Drowning is a combination of losing mobility and loss of breath—the longer one goes without oxygen, the harder it is to keep moving. Adaptation allows character is able to breathe underwater as easily as breathing on the surface. As long as the character uses this power, they breath as normal, and suffer no ill effects from drowning. Being under water is very different from being above ground, and it is very easy for one to become disoriented and not know in which direction they are traveling. While the mentalist uses Adaptation, a simple Wits test allows them to know where they are in relation to the water's surface and their surrounding area. Finally, while this power is being used, the character is able to survive underwater as if they were native to it, i.e., their body is able to withstand the pressure of great depths, and can easily handle temperature changes.



Barrier (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1 for personal barrier; 3 for 10' radius barrier

The mentalist has trained their mind to be effective against psionic attacks directed at them. By putting up a Barrier, any mental attacks which cause damage are weakened, causing half damage. In addition, this barrier is able to be projected to protect anyone within a 10 foot radius centered around the mentalist. The barrier can be maintained, but the mentalist is unable to perform any physical or mental attacks while they do so and must pay the cost of the barrier for each round it is maintained.



Body Control (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: Varies

A character has great mental control over their body. They can make a Body Control test for a number of different tasks.

TABLE 1.3: BODY CONTROL

Task	Target Modifier	Vitality Damage
Sleep normally despite distractions	+4	1
Sleep normally despite difficult distractions	+0	2
Slow breathing to half normal rate	+0	2
Ignore pain or injury	-2	3
Body awareness	-2	3
Resist fear	-2	3
Speed recovery	-2	3
Slow breathing to one-quarter normal rate	-2	3
Willpower	-2	3
Feign death	-4	4
Overcome disease	See below	2
Overcome poison	See below	2

Body Awareness: The character is aware of their body while asleep or concentrating. This allows them to sense if they are touched or moved in any way. If they are damaged, add the attack's damage to the target number of their Body Control test.

Feign Death: By exerting supreme control over their body, the mentalist enters a deep trance nearly indistinguishable from death. A successful Observe test opposed to their Body Control is required to determine whether the mentalist is still alive. Effects that detect life still work normally. While in this state, the mentalist also suspends the effects of any disease or poison in their system for as long as they remains in the trance.

Ignore Pain or Injury: A mentalist can ignore the effects of pain or injury (see **SS&S: Basic**, page 69) while awake or asleep. If they choose, nothing can wake them, as long as they make a successful Body Control test.

Overcome Disease or Poison: By concentrating for a round, a mentalist can use a Body Control test instead of a Resist test when trying to resist a disease or poison in their system.

Resist Fear: A mentalist can override their body's natural response to fear. With a successful Body Control test, they gain a +4 bonus to the TN of any test against the effects of fear.

Sleeping: A successful Body Control test allows a mentalist to sleep in difficult conditions, including bad weather, noise, buzzing insects, and so forth. If they choose, nothing can wake them as long as they make a successful Body Control test.

Slow Breathing: A mentalist can deliberately slow the rate of their breathing so they consume less air, vital in situations where there is a limited amount of breathable air available.

Speed Recovery: A mentalist can speed their natural healing process, regaining Vitality in half the normal time, so long as they spend that time in a deep trance.

Willpower: By making a successful Body Control test, a mentalist can continue to act while disabled without their condition worsening; they still suffer additional damage normally.

Clairaudience (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1

This ability allow the mentalist to hear anything in an area they are familiar with. No matter the distance, the mentalist hears as if they were there. The radius of this hearing is the mentalist's Will \times 5-feet. The mentalist must be in the same dimension they wish to hear—this power cannot cross different planes of existence.

Clairvoyance (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1

Similar in scope to Clairaudience (see above), Clairvoyance allows the mentalist to see anything in an area they are familiar with, without regard to distance, so long there is enough light there to see; if the area is dark, the mentalist sees nothing (unless the mentalist is able to see in the dark via a ability like Nightvision (see page 193 of **SS&S: Expert**). In addition to a light source, the mentalist must be in the same dimension they wish to see—this power cannot cross different planes of existence.

Combat Sense (Wits)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 2 + Degrees of Success

A mentalist can improve their ability in combat by sensing the flow of events around them. A Combat Sense test grants the mentalist a bonus to their attacks, whether they are in melee or ranged, equal to the degrees of success achieved on the test. This bonus lasts for 10 rounds. If so desired, the mentalist can select a bonus less than the degrees of success achieved in order to reduce the power's cost.

Dimension Travel (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 5 + 2 per each additional person (+3 for something heavier that the mentalist)

This power allows a mentalist to travel to another dimension or reality. The mentalist must know about or be familiar with the location they wish to travel to; they cannot simply will themselves to a random place. This power does not protect the mentalist from a hostile environment or provide them a means of breathing, if the dimension does not have breathable air.

Domination (Will)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 6

A mentalist can control another creature's actions by dominating their mind. If used, no test is required. Instead, the target must make a successful Resist test or fall under the control of the mentalist. The mentalist can force the target to perform any action they wish, within the limits of their abilities. The mentalist is aware of what the target is experiencing via their mental link, but does not receive direct sensory input from them. Targets forced to take actions against their natures receive a new Resist test with a bonus to the TN, ranging from +1 to +4, depending on how contrary to the target's nature the GM rules the action to be.

Ego Blast (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1

By concentrating their psychic energy, the mentalist is able to project a force of power at a target up to 50 feet away. The blast of mental energy does DV 2(24) damage.

Empathy (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 3

By spending one round in deep concentration the mentalist is able to instill in a target an emotional change of their choosing. This state can be hate to love; seriousness to silly, authoritative to flirtatious. The range is a number of feet equal to the mentalist's Will × 10 feet. The emotional change is able to be resisted, and by spending more Vitality the mentalist can make it harder to resist: for every 3 points spent, the target suffer a -1 TN (up to a maximum of -6 TN) to their Resist test.

Enhance Ability (Will)

Performed On: Others, Self

Cost: 3

The mentalist can improve their Toughness or Quickness for a short period of time. An Enhance Ability test adds a bonus to either the mentalist's Toughness or Quickness for 10 rounds. The degrees of success achieved indicate the amount of the bonus. If desired, the mentalist can split the bonus equally between Toughness or Quickness.

Enhance Senses (Wits)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 3

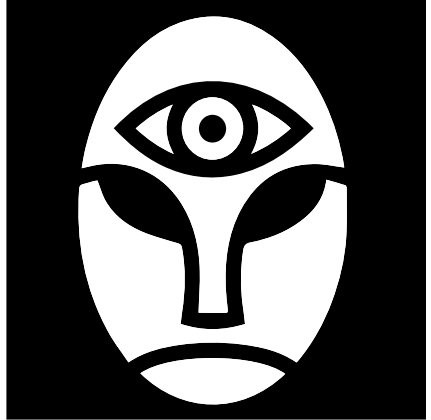
A mentalist can enhance their normal sensory abilities. An Enhance Senses test adds a bonus to Observe tests (or any other tests the GM rules benefit from improving the mentalist's senses). The degrees of success achieved indicates the amount of the bonus.

ESP (Will)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 1

A mentalist is able to read the current surface thoughts of a target. The range is equal to a number of feet equal to their Will \times 10. ESP only allows for current thoughts, like what card a person is holding or what their first thought is when they are asked a question. This power cannot be used to read deeper thoughts or dig into the target's memory for information. This power does not require a mental attack, but it does need concentration, thus no other action can be performed.



Mental Contact (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 2 + distance modifiers

A mentalist can make psychic contact with another mind. If the target has a Psychic Shield, the mentalist must make a Mental Contact test to overcome it. An unwilling target gets a Resist test to avoid contact. If the test is successful, no contact is made. If the mentalist does not want the target to know that

they are attempting to making mental contact, they can make a Mental Contact test against the target's Empathy or Psychic Shield (whichever is higher). If the target succeeds, they become aware of the mentalist's attempt, whether they succeed or fail.

While in mental contact with another creature, the mentalist and their target communicate at the rate of normal speech, "hearing" each other's transmitted thoughts. The mentalist can also send a single visual image each round instead of speaking. Both the mentalist and the target can choose to lie or omit information, as they are "speaking" to each other telepathically, not reading each other's thoughts.

Mental contact is two way, meaning that the mentalist is in "mental contact" with the target for the purposes of using psionic powers and vice versa. If a friendly mental contact turns hostile, the target can make a Resist or Psychic Shield test to break the contact. Once the target has failed such a test, they cannot break the contact. The intruder is in their mind until they choose to break contact or some outside force interferes, such as a distraction or another power such as Psychic Shield. If mental contact is broken, any other psionic powers the mentalist is maintaining that require mental contact are also broken.

Deathcry: If a creature the mentalist is in mental contact with dies, they must make a Resist or Psychic Shield test to avoid being stunned and unable to act for 1 round by the psychic feedback. Since mental contact is two way, this applies to any creature in mental contact with another. A creature can deliberately avoid letting out a deathcry when it dies by making a Resist test.

Psychic Grappling: A mentalist can initiate a psychic grapple with any creature with which they are in contact (see "Advanced Psionic Techniques" on page 34).

Psychic Shout: While in mental contact with another creature, a mentalist can hit them with a "psychic shout" (the mental equivalent of screaming in their ear). A psychic shout takes 1 action and the creature must make a Resist test or be stunned and unable to act for 1 round. A mentalist can initiate mental contact and psychically shout in the same round.

Rapport: Two or more characters with the Mental Contact power can enter a psychic rapport with each other, an intense state of mental contact. Each character establishes mental contact with the other (who must be willing). Characters in rapport are like one mind, each instantly aware of everything the other thinks and experiences, and cannot deliberately lie or deceive each other. Characters in rapport can enhance their psychic abilities in a Psychic Gestalt (see "Advanced Psionic Techniques" on page 34).

Mind Bolt (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 10

This powerful ability is one that takes as much out of the mentalist as it does their opponents. By focusing for one round, the mentalist is able to radiate a blast of mental energy effecting all within a 30 foot radius centered on the mentalist. The damage this blast of power causes is DV 3 (36).

Mind Reading (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 4

A mentalist can read information from another creature's mind by making a Mind Reading test, with the final degrees of success determining the level of information to which they gain access. The mentalist can locate one piece of information per round as an action so long as they continue to concentrate.

Surface Thoughts: The mentalist can learn what the subject is thinking. A successful Bargain test against the target's Empathy causes the target to think consciously about a particular piece of information the mentalist is looking for, such as a password or name, allowing them to pick it from the target's surface thoughts.

Associations: The mentalist picks up emotional and informational associations with the target's surface thoughts. For example, if the target is thinking about someone, the mentalist knows how the target feels about the person, what their relationship to the target is, and why the target is thinking about them.

Short-term Memory: The mentalist can access the target's memories of the past week or so, picking up on recollections and associations from that time.

Long-term Memory: The mentalist can access any of the target's conscious memories, although the information is only as accurate as the subject recalls.

Subconscious: The mentalist can access the target's subconscious, giving them access to memories and information the target may not consciously recall (due to trauma or simple forgetfulness). It also grants the mentalist insight into the target's psyche, such as their deep subconscious desires, fears, and the like.

TABLE 1.4: MIND READING

Level of Access	Degrees of Success
Surface Thoughts	0-2
Associations	3-5
Short-term Memory	6-8
Long-term Memory	9-11
Subconscious	12+

Mind Swap (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 9

A very nasty power, this allows a mentalist to force themselves into the mind of another. The range of this is a number of feet equal to the mentalist's Will \times 5. The target is able to resist a mind swap, and if successful, the attack fails. A successful mind swap has the mentalist able to move into and out of the target's mind. While in another's mind, the mentalist is able to call upon the rudimentary or instinctive knowledge, but not any acquired or learned knowledge. What this means, is that a mentalist who swaps mind with a skilled swordsman is able to fight like the swordsman, but does not know where the swordsman lives, or where they hide their wealth.

Precognition (Wits)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 9 for active precognition, 1 for spontaneous visions, 0 for danger sense

A mentalist receives visions of future events, as if they were actually present at that time. The visions they receive are by no means assured: the future can be changed by the actions of those in the present.

Active Precognition: The mentalist can attempt to the future of a particular person, place, or object with which they are in contact (including themselves). They must be able to see or touch the target of their power.

Spontaneous Visions: Precognition may spontaneously activate at the GM's discretion when a mentalist is in contact with a subject with particularly strong "vibes," or there is a momentous event approaching in the future.

Danger Sense: Whenever a mentalist would normally be surprised (see **SS&S: Basic** page 62), they can make a Precognition test. If successful, they are not surprised and can take act normally, even if their companions are surprised.

The GM should make Precognition tests secretly so that the player does not necessarily know if a particular vision was accurate or not. Consult the table below for the results of a precognitive vision, based on the results:



TABLE 1.5: PRECOGNITION

Degrees of Success	Result
0-2	A vague vision of the future that may be accurate
3-5	An accurate glimpse at the future
6-8	Awareness of how long before a particular event occurs
9-11	Awareness of the people involved in a particular future event
12+	Awareness of the time, subjects, and location of a future event. Near-complete knowledge of a particular future event and everything involving it

Psionic Knife (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1/round

By concentrating, the mentalist is able to focus their mental energy in their hand, creating a edged weapon. This knife is able to be used in hand to hand combat and is able to cause damage equal to DV2(12).

Psionic Slam (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 2

By focusing their mental energy, a mentalist is able to create a wall of force directed against a target to cause damage. This power is usable against only one target, and the range is equal to the mentalist's Will × 5-feet. The damage this slam causes is equal to DV 3(36).

Psychic Assault (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 4

A mentalist can psychically attack another creature's mind in their line of sight or with whom they are in mental contact with. The damage done is equal to their Psychic Assault ranks, plus the degrees of success achieved.

Psychic Sense (Wits)

Performed On: Object, Others

Cost: 0 for sensing power use and mental contact, 1 for sensing psychic signatures and tracing

A mentalist can sense the use of psionic powers by making a Psychic Sense test to perceive any such use in their vicinity, as well as to detect an attempt at mental contact, to detect and read the psychic "signature" left behind by psionic power use, or to trace the source of a psychic manifestation.

Sense Psionic Use: The GM makes a Psychic Sense test for the mentalist in secret as a reaction whenever psionics are used in their general area. If the user of the power has an active Psychic Shield (see below), this is an opposed test. In addition, the TN of the test is decreased by -1 for every 3 meters between the mentalist and the user or target of the power (whichever is closer). A successful result means that the mentalist senses the power being used and knows which discipline it falls under, but not necessarily the power used. The mentalist also knows the general direction and distance to the source of the power and its target, if both are within their range. If the mentalist succeeds by 5 degrees of success or more, they know the exact psionic power used. If they succeed by 10 degrees of success or more, they recognize the user of the power, if already known to them.

Sense Mental Contact: The mentalist makes a Psychic Sense test against a telepath's Mental Contact test to know when someone is trying to secretly gain mental contact with them. If the mentalist wins the opposed test, they sense the attempt, although they may not be able to avoid it (depending on their Psychic Shield and Resist tests).

Sense Psychic Signature: A mentalist can sense old uses of psionic powers in a particular area. They must achieve 3–5 degrees of success to detect that a power was used in the area in the past, 6–8 degrees of success to determine what power was used and roughly when, and 9–12 degrees of success to know exactly what power was used and what (or who) it was used on.

Psychic Tracing: A mentalist can trace the origin of any psionic power that they can detect. Each requires a separate test. The TN is usually unmodified, but a target who does not wish to be detected can make an opposed Psychic Shield test. Distance is not a factor, but the mentalist must have detected the power use before it can be traced. When used on old psychic signatures, this gives the mentalist the power's origin and target at the time it was used, but does not provide information as to their current whereabouts.

Psychic Shield (Wits)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 0

A mentalist can shield their mind from psychic influences when they are the target of any psionic power that grants a Resist test. The attacker must make an opposed power test against the target's Psychic Shield. If the target achieves more degrees of success, the attack fails. If the attacker achieves more degrees of success, the power works normally, although the target may still make a Resist test. A mentalist may voluntarily lower their psychic shield at any time, or raise it just as easily. Otherwise, a mentalist's shield is assumed to always be active, even if they are unconscious or sleeping.

Overcoming Psychic Shields: An attacker can attempt to use extra effort to overcome a mentalist's psychic shield and can reinforce it at the same time. For each point of Vitality damage that the attacker is willing to suffer, they reduce the mentalist's degrees of success by 1, but no lower than 0. For each point of Vitality damage the mentalist is willing to suffer, they increase their degrees of success by 1 (but not higher than achieved through the test). This process takes no actual time, but an attacker trying to avoid notice cannot use extra effort.

Shields and Maintained Skills: Once a psionic power has overcome a mentalist's psychic shield, it continues to affect them as long as the user maintains it. The mentalist is still entitled to their normal Resist tests (if any), but their shield no longer protects them. Once the attacker needs to make a new power test, the mentalist's shield comes into play and must be overcome again.

Deathblock: In extreme cases, a mentalist can prevent mental tampering of

any sort by setting a "deathblock." Thereafter, if the mentalist fails both Psychic Shield and Resist tests against a psionic power that requires mental contact, their mind collapses in on itself rather than bend to the invading psyche. In essence, the mentalist dies rather than allowing the power to affect them. Among other things, this prevents the mentalist from being telepathically interrogated, controlled, or altered in any way.

Deathblocks are a last line of defense. A mentalist who achieves mental contact with another mentalist can tell if there is a deathblock in place unless there is a deliberate attempt to hide it, in which case an opposed Psychic Sense and Psychic Shield test is required to do so. A mentalist can set a deathblock for specific circumstances, such as to protect a specific piece of information, or only to guard against specific powers, like Mind Reading or Domination. The mentalist who sets the deathblock always chooses whether to activate it and can choose to deactivate it at the last second, if necessary.



Psychometry (Wits)

Performed On: Objects, Others

Cost: 6 for active psychometry, 1 for spontaneous visions

A mentalist can “read” psychic impressions from places and objects, getting images of their pasts, as if they were actually present at a particular event. The mentalist can use this power in two ways.

Active Psychometry: The mentalist can attempt to see the past of a particular person, place, or object with which they are in contact. They must be able to see or touch the object to use this power. This requires an action and a Psychometry test.

Spontaneous Visions: The mentalist’s power may also spontaneously activate at the GM’s discretion when they are in contact with a subject with particularly strong “psychic resonance.” This also requires a Psychometry test.

The GM should make Psychometry tests secretly so the player doesn’t necessarily know if a particular vision was accurate or not. Consult the table below for the results of the vision, based on the test.

TABLE 1.6: PSYCHOMETRY

Degrees of Success	Result
0-2	A vague vision that may not be accurate
3-5	A brief and accurate vision of the events
6-8	A longer vision of the events, encompassing everything that took place in a particular place and time
9-11	The ability to “rewind” the vision backward or forward in time to review the event
12+	The ability to track the vision backward through time and space to trace and event to its origin

Sense Minds (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 1

A mentalist can determine the presence and location of other minds within 100 feet. With a successful test, the mentalist can determine their approximate number, their general type (animal, sapient, etc.), and their approximate location. The larger the number of minds present, the more general the information tends to be. Psychic Shield opposes Sense Minds. A Psychic Shield test that yields more degrees of success than a mentalist’s Sense Mind test allows a creature to go unnoticed.

Suggestion (Will)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 4

A mentalist can implant suggestions into the minds of others. The suggestion must be worded in such a way as to make the activity sound reasonable. Asking a creature to stab itself, throw itself off a cliff, or some other obviously harmful act automatically fails. However, a suggestion that a pool of acid is actually pure water and that a quick dip would be refreshing is another matter. If the target's Resist test fails, the suggested course of action is followed for up to 30 minutes per power rank, or until the course of action is complete, whichever comes first. The mentalist can specify conditions that trigger a particular course of action, in which case the duration is counted from when the triggering event occurs. A very reasonable suggestion may impose a penalty of 1 or 2 on the TN of the Resist test, at the GM's discretion.

Suspension (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 4

By concentrating and focusing their psychic powers, a mentalist is able to enter into a trance-like state resembling death. While in this state the mentalist for all appearances seems dead. While in this state the mentalist is aware of their surroundings, and though they feel the passage of time, it is much slower. In this state, the mentalist does not need to breathe, nor do they feel heat or cold. A mentalist in this state can stay in it as long as they want. However, for every 5 years spent in suspension, the mentalist begins to crave food and drink. Leaving this state takes a number of rounds equal to Will.

Telekinesis (Wits)

Action: 1 (Maintenance)

Performed On: Objects

Cost: Varies

A mentalist can move objects with the power of their mind in their line of sight. Use **Table 1.1** (page 15) to determine the difficulty and Vitality cost of such an action. A mentalist can move an object a distance of 2 meters per Telekinesis rank per round. If two mentalists vie for control of an object, use opposed Telekinesis tests. If a creature is holding an object, use an opposed Telekinesis and Body test. The winner controls the object for that round.

Moving Creatures: Using Telekinesis on a living being allows it a Resist test. If the test fails, consider the target an object. If the test succeeds, the power has no effect.

Striking with Objects: A mentalist can hit opponents with telekinetically controlled objects. This requires a Telekinesis test and the object deals damage,



using the Vitality damage dealt to the mentalist as its Damage Value. So, a 500 lb object thrown by Telekinesis has a DV 4.

Moving Multiple Objects: A mentalist can attempt to move multiple objects at once. Use the target difficulty of the heaviest at -2 for each additional object (regardless of mass) and increase the Vitality damage by 2 for each additional object. The mentalist cannot strike a target with multiple objects as part of the same action.

Fly: A mentalist can telekinetically lift their own body. This requires a Telekinesis test at TN -6 (regardless of the mentalist's own mass) and allows flight at a speed of 20 feet per rank of Telekinesis. Doing so costs 8 Vitality points.

Telekinetic Blast (Wits)

Performed On: Others

A mentalist can attack with a blast of telekinetic force against a target in their line of sight by making a Telekinetic Blast test. If the attack is successful, the blast does damage equal to the ranks in the power, plus the degrees of success. In addition, the target must achieve more degrees of success on a Quickness test than the mentalist achieved or fly back 20 feet and be knocked prone.

Telekinetic Grip (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 4

A mentalist can grasp other creatures in their line of sight by making a Telekinetic Grip test. If successful, the grip does damage equal to the ranks in the power, plus the degrees of success. If the target makes a successful Resist test, they takes half damage. Armor and other forms of physical protection do not reduce the damage dealt by Telekinetic Grip.

Telekinetic Shield (Wits)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 2

A mentalist can create a psychic barrier that protects them from attacks. The shield lasts for 10 rounds but requires no effort to maintain once created. It lasts until the mentalist is rendered unconscious or its duration expires. The mentalist can renew an existing telekinetic shield before it runs out without using an action, suffering the Vitality cost for invoking the power again but with no additional test required. The degrees of success determine the armor value of the shield. This value is added to any such values acquired from wearing physical armor.

TABLE 1.7: TELEKINETIC SHIELD

Degrees of Success	Armor Value
0-2	2
3-5	5
6-8	10
9-11	15
12+	20

Telempathy (Wits)

Performed On: Others

Cost: 1

A mentalist can sense the emotional states of other creatures by making a Telempathy test. The target gets to make a Resist test. Whether the mentalist succeeds or fails, the target does not know that the mentalist is reading their emotions. If the target's Resist test fails, the mentalist gets a general idea of their emotions and mood. This grants the men-

TABLE 1.8: TELEMPATHY

Degrees of Success	Skill Bonus
0-2	+1
3-5	+2
6-8	+3
9-11	+4
12+	+5



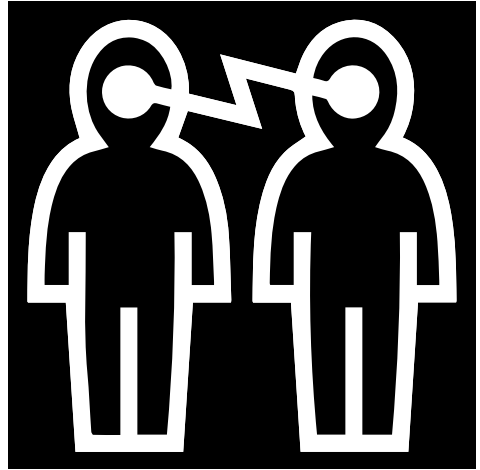
talist a bonus on the next test they make against the target within the next 10 rounds, using any of the following skills: Bargain, Diplomacy, Empathy, Intimidation, and Socialize (although the GM may allow the bonus to be applied to other skills if they deem it appropriate).

Telepathy (Will)

Performed On: Self

Cost: 1/1 per each additional person

A classic power, telepathy allows a mentalist to connect to another's mind and communicate directly with them. This telepathy allows for two-way communication, as long as both speak for the same language. A mentalist is able to connect a number of other individuals equal to their Will.



Teleperception (Wits)

Performed On: Objects, Others

Cost: 2 + distance modifiers

A mentalist can sense distant events as if they were present there by making a Teleperception test. If successful, the mentalist can observe the target, which is then considered in their line of sight for the purposes of other psionic powers. The vision lasts for as long as the mentalist maintains it, but their ordinary senses are overridden, so they are unaware of what is happening near them while they are observing events elsewhere. Teleperception creates a psychic disturbance that creatures with Perception 6 or better can detect. Any such creature can make a Perception or Psychic Sense test, opposed by the mentalist's Teleperception test. Non-psychic creatures get the intense feeling of being watched. Creatures with psionic ability see a ghostly or shadowy image of the mentalist observing them. Consequently, the observing mentalist is then considered in the target's line of sight for the purposes of psionic powers.

Advanced Psionic Techniques

While the psionic powers above cover most of their applications, there are some advanced uses of them described in this section. Gamemasters should consider these techniques optional. While they can add detail and tactical options to psychic characters, they also increase the complexity of psionic powers, which may not be desirable in every campaign.

Extending Psychic Shields

A mentalist with Psychic Shield can extend their shield to protect others at the cost of strain and a reduction in shield effectiveness. The subjects to be protected must be either in the shield user's line of sight or in mental contact. Extending a psychic shield takes an action and costs 2 points of Vitality per additional subject protected by the shield. Each additional subject reduces the mentalist's effective Psychic Shield rank by 2, but cannot be reduced below rank 1. All protected subjects receive the normal benefits of the Psychic Shield at the effective rank, and the shield user controls the entire shield. The extended shield can be maintained by paying the Vitality cost every 10 rounds and the user can withdraw any or all of the extended shield freely at any time.

Psychically Aiding Others

A mentalist in mental contact with another character can use their action to grant them a +2 bonus on Resist tests or for any skill test where the mentalist's skill rank is equal to or greater than the subject's. Characters can also psychically aid others in shaking off mind-affecting powers, abilities, or conditions.

Telekinetically Wielding Weapons

Rather than simply striking opponents with random objects, a mentalist may wield a melee weapon telekinetically, enabling it to fight by "remote control." Telekinetically picking up a weapon requires an action, and attacking with it does as well. Cover and concealment are determined by the attacker and defender's positions, not the weapon's. The attacker makes a normal Melee test, but with a -4 penalty for the difficulties of remote-controlling the weapon and using their Will rather than Quickness as the associated ability. The weapon deals normal damage. Attempts to "disarm" the mentalist by knocking the weapon out of their telekinetic grip are resolved by an opposed test of attacker's Body and the mentalist's Telekinesis.

Telepathic Eavesdropping

A mentalist with Psychic Sense and Mind Reading who senses a use of the Mental Contact power can attempt to "listen in" on the mental conversation, intercepting the psychic transmissions. This requires a successful Psychic Sense test to detect the power use, followed by a successful Mind Reading test to eavesdrop on the mental conversation. This eavesdropping isn't detectable unless one of the participants in mental contact also has the Psychic Sense power and detects the eavesdropper's Mind Reading. This means that many telepaths observe "mental radio silence" when they know that other telepaths are around and may be listening.

Part

Two



CREATING SETTLEMENTS, for the most part, is relatively easy.

Most Gamemasters simply jot a few details down, maybe come up with a brief history, sketch a rough map, and decide how the prices for goods are impacted per the rules found in both *Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic* and *Expert*. From these few details, a GM has enough to base decisions on if the players—and you know players tend to do the unexpected—decide to return to the settlement, or more likely, set up a base of operations out of it. In short, GMs typically create what they need as they go, filling in the details of this settlement over time.

There are some GMs, especially if they are new to this role, who might need a little nudge in thinking about the details for a settlement. They might get lost as to what is really important about a settlement. That is where these rules come in. Use them to help spur the creation of new settlements, or, as a handy tool in creating them. These rules will not help you fully create a history for a settlement, but they do aid in fleshing out the most important details.

Note that, even though I call these rules, nothing here is carved in stone. For most GMs, especially those who have been running games for awhile, they might argue that the only real rule for creating settlements is imagination.

This is true.

Sometimes, however, it does not hurt to have some guidance. Settlements, especially if your game centers around adventuring and living in a large city, play a key role in most campaigns. In many ways they are a major NPC impacting the character's lives. These rules will help you determine the important facets of a settlement and offer a means to create something that serves more than a backdrop.

Settlements: A Definition

So exactly what is a settlement?

For the sake of simplicity, the term applies to a place where more than one person lives and works. It is a broad term encompassing something small like a thorp to something as large as a metropolis. Using a catch-all term like “settlement” keeps things simple. Note, when creating your own settlement, you need to define what type of settlement it actually is. **Table 2.1** lists what settlement types exist, and the population ranges for them.

TABLE 2.1: SETTLEMENT SIZE

Type	Population
Thorp	<20
Hamlet	21-60
Village	61-200
Small town	201-2000
Large town	2,001-5,000
Small city	5,001-10,000
Large city	10,001-25,000
Metropolis	More than 25,000

Settlement Statistics

When creating your settlement, a few stats need to be generated to help you assess bonuses or penalties when players are attempting to have their characters perform tests. These penalties are in addition to any other bonuses or penalties a GM might assess to a test. Stats for a settlement range between a -6 to a +6. The stats for a settlement are: Law, Criminality, Corruption, Culture, Knowledge, Economy, Buying Power, and Government.

Law

This reflects how strict the laws are within the settlement. The modifier is applied to all social tests when it comes to law enforcement, intimidation checks, and the like. Heroes who are trying to bribe an official use this modifier to affect their tests. The lower the number, the more strict the law enforcement is; conversely, the higher the number the more lax the law is.



Criminality

Is the settlement one with a high criminal element or a low criminal element? A lower number indicates that the criminal element is relatively small, while a higher number indicates that more crime exists. This modifier is applied to any tests that involving performing or foiling any attempt to perform a crime.



Corruption

This stat is used to see how easy, or difficult, it is, to bribe, cheat or in other ways influence actions behind the scenes. This modifier is used when a hero attempts to perform a bribe, use fast talk and the like against officials, law enforcement, or anyone within a bureaucracy, whether it is trade, religious or academic in nature



Culture

Is the settlement's population a collection of uncivilized backwoods superstitious folk, or are they an open-minded and sophisticated people? The higher the number, the more culture the settlement has and the easier it is to perform social tests.



Knowledge

How educated are the residents of the settlement? This modifier is used for modifying knowledge and study tests.



Economy



This stat covers how cheap, or expensive, goods are. The number is always given in a percentage and this is the adjustment that should be applied to any item purchased. Refer to Table 2.3 for the percentage.

Buying Power

How much money the settlement's shops have to buy an item off a character. This is the most money a shop within the settlement can spend on an item. Refer to Table 2.3 for the buy limit.

Government

Unlike the previous stats, this one is left up to the GM to decide. Depending on the type of government you choose, this has an effect on the settlement's stats. Refer to Table 2.2 for a breakdown of the type of governments you can choose from. Note, that a settlement is only able to have one type of government.

TABLE 2.2: GOVERNMENT

<i>Government</i>	<i>Stat Adjustment</i>
Single Individual (Mayor, Lord, Duke)	—
Council (Group of Individuals)	Culture +1, Law -1, Knowledge -1
Cabal (Secret power who is the real person or person in charge)	Corruption +1, Criminality +1, Crime +1, Law -3
Magic	Knowledge +2, Corruption -3, Culture -3
Tyrant	Law +3, Corruption +2, Crime -3, Culture -3

How Statistics Work

Statistics are straightforward, and should be looked at as shorthand when deciding what the attitudes and life within the settlement are like. For example, say you have a settlement with a high Law stat, but a equally high Corruption. What does this mean? While this may seem a contradiction, think of it this way: though the settlement's adherence to law and order makes it hard to commit crimes, the settlement's high corruption means that the constable force is also just as likely to look the other way if a high enough bribe is offered.

Assigning Stats

The assignment of stats to the settlement is left up to your discretion. After all, as the GM, you know best what you envision for the settlement. If you are creating a city, and think it should be a “wretched hive of scum and villainy,” assign the stats best matching your vision. That being said, Table 2.3 provides you some guidance on bringing your settlement to life.

TABLE 2.3: SUGGESTED STATS FOR SETTLEMENTS

<i>Settlement</i>	<i>Base Modifier</i>	<i>Traits</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Buy Limit</i>
Thorp	-4	1	+20%	250
Hamlet	-3	2	+10%	500
Village	-2	3	+5%	2000
Small Town	—	4	0	5000
Large Town	+1	5	-5%	10,000
Small City	+2	6	-10%	25,000
Large City	+4	7	-15%	50,000
Metropolis	+6	8	-20%	100,000

Traits

Similar to creatures, settlements have traits. Traits define a settlement, and make them stand out among others. They give each settlement a uniqueness, and in a pinch, aid the GM in figuring out adventuring possibilities. All settlements will both have their good and bad points, and having a mixture of this good and bad, will give a particular settlement personality, as well as modify a settlement’s stats (as listed below).

Academic

The settlement is a center of learning, whether there is a college, library, or other institute located in it. Other possibilities might be a wise sage, a famous academic, or even a bookstore known for procuring tomes of great knowledge.

Knowledge +3

Anarchy Reigns

There is a lack of leadership in the settlement, any central government non-existent. As a result the settlement is a dangerous place for not only residents, but visitors as well.

Law -6, Corruption +3, Crime +3, Culture -4

Busybodies

The settlement is home to the most noisy rumor-mongering group of residents ever to tread upon the earth. There are no secrets and, no matter how much you try, someone knows what you are doing at all times.

Knowledge +2, Culture -1, Criminality -1, Corruption +1

Closed

The society of this settlement is one that is closed, and due to this, it is very leery of outsiders. Any who arrives here are looked at with great suspicion.

Law +2, Criminality -2, Culture -2

Cursed

A curse has been placed on the settlement. As such, there is a -4 TN to any one specific test. For example, a mage died in the town's center, and with her dying breath, cursed the town that no weapon would ever draw blood—as a result, all Melee tests suffer a -4. Curses should be something which hinder but not harm all citizens.

Distinguishing Feature

There is something located here, be it a set of ruins, a building, geographical feature, or a mysterious bit of history—something that attracts people to travel here and see it.

Economy -5%, Purchase +10%

Ether Focal Point

The settlement is a natural focal point for ether. Due to this, casting spells and working magic is much easier. While within the settlement's boundaries, there is a +2 TN to working all magic, alchemy, and other spellcraft.

Hive of Scum and Villainy

The settlement has a reputation as a haven for the criminal element. Maybe the settlement is suffering from rumors and innuendo, or maybe the reputation is well-earned. Regardless the settlement is not safe for residents and non-residents alike.

Criminality +3, Corruption +4, Law -4, Economy -30%, Purchase +50%

Holy

There is a holy shrine, relic, location, or even a holy person located in the settlement. Because of this people flock to the settlement to view and worship there.

Corruption -4, Knowledge +1

Ideal Location

The settlement is built on a prime location. This location is either at the intersection of major trade routes, along the banks of a deep navigable river, or even in a well-sheltered cove with a deep bay.

Purchase +25%, Economy -10%

Intolerant

The settlement is prejudiced, either against a certain culture, religion, practice, people, or even a rival settlement or kingdom. Those of the prejudiced group suffer a -4 TN to all social tests and gain a $+100\%$ price increase on all goods and services while within the settlement.

Pestilence

Sickness permeates the settlement, and each day a Toughness test needs to be made, with failure causing the character to contract the disease infecting the settlement. In addition, as long as a character(s) remains within the settlement they suffer a -2 TN to all tests.

Pious

The population is devoted to a religion, cause or ideal, and as a result the city is known for their devotion.

Criminality -4 , Corruption -2 and worshipers of the settlement's god gain a $+1$ TN to all social tests while in the settlement.

Poor

The settlement is poor. This is a result of a bad harvest, recent war, ongoing conflict, or a economic collapse.

Corruption $+2$, Crime $+2$, Law -1 , Economy $+50\%$, Purchase -50%

Prosperous

The settlement is wealthy. This wealth might come from trade, industry, or even the location of mines of a precious metal or gems.

Culture $+1$, Corruption $+2$, Economy -25% , Purchase $+50\%$

Superstitious

The settlement is fearful of something, and this fear is great and runs deep. The mood of the settlement has changed the residents. They now shun all outsiders, and at sundown, or other certain times during the day all seek the shelter of their homes.

Criminality $+5$, Culture $+1$, -2 TN to all Social Tests.

Example

So, how do you go about creating a new settlement? It's easy!

First, let's decide what the settlement size is. In this example, you have decided that you do not want something too large, but big enough to offer the players what could turn into a nice location to set up shop.



Looking at **Table 2.1**, you decide a village will be the perfect size. So using the Settlement Sheet found in the back of the book, you write in “Village” and note the population is 150. How did you get that number? It felt right and you filled it in.

With the size of the settlement known, it is time to assign stats. Looking at **Table 2.3**, you see that the Base Modifier is -2 . Thus, Law, Criminality, Corruption, Culture and Knowledge each get assigned a -2 , so you fill in those areas on the Settlement Sheet accordingly.

Next is Economy, and referring again to **Table 2.3**, you see that it is 5%. This means that any goods or services are going to be 5% more expensive than those found in **SS&S: Basic, Expert, and Player** (if the new equipment is being used). You also fill in the Buy Limit of 2,000, which means that the village has enough money to buy something off the characters that cost no more than 2,000 SC.

Assigning the Government is next, involving your next big decision. Do you plan on having the village be a benign location that simply serves as a place for the characters to rest and resupply, or do you plan on having the characters become enmeshed in the machinations of a secret cabal who use the village for their own evil purposes? Looking over **Table 2.2**, you see the government type that works for your plans. You know the village will serve a much larger role in your campaign plans, and you know there is a secret evil at work there. So you choose "Cabal," and note this on the *Settlement Sheet*.

Because of your choice, you have to adjust a few stats: Corruption, Criminality and Culture are all raised to 1, and Law is reduced to 4.


Finally you must choose three traits for your village (see Table 2.3). Looking over the traits, you start to think over what you want the village to be. You know you want the place to be located in the intersection of two major land routes. In addition, you have an idea of a set of ruins located near the village that serve as a location of adventure. Finally, you know the village lives in fear of these ruins, due to a series of strange events that have occurred over the years.

With the above in mind, you choose the following three traits: Distinguishing Feature, Ideal Location, and Superstitious. These three traits also require adjustments to the village's stats, as well as inspire a name. Your Settlement Sheet looks like this:

NAME: Blackrock


POPULATION: 150

LAW




-4

CRIMINALITY




-6

KNOWLEDGE




-2

CULTURE




+0

CORRUPTION



-1

ECONOMY



-10%

SETTLEMENT TYPE: Village

GOVERNMENT: Cabal

BUY

2700

TRAITS:

Distinguishing Feature

Ideal Location

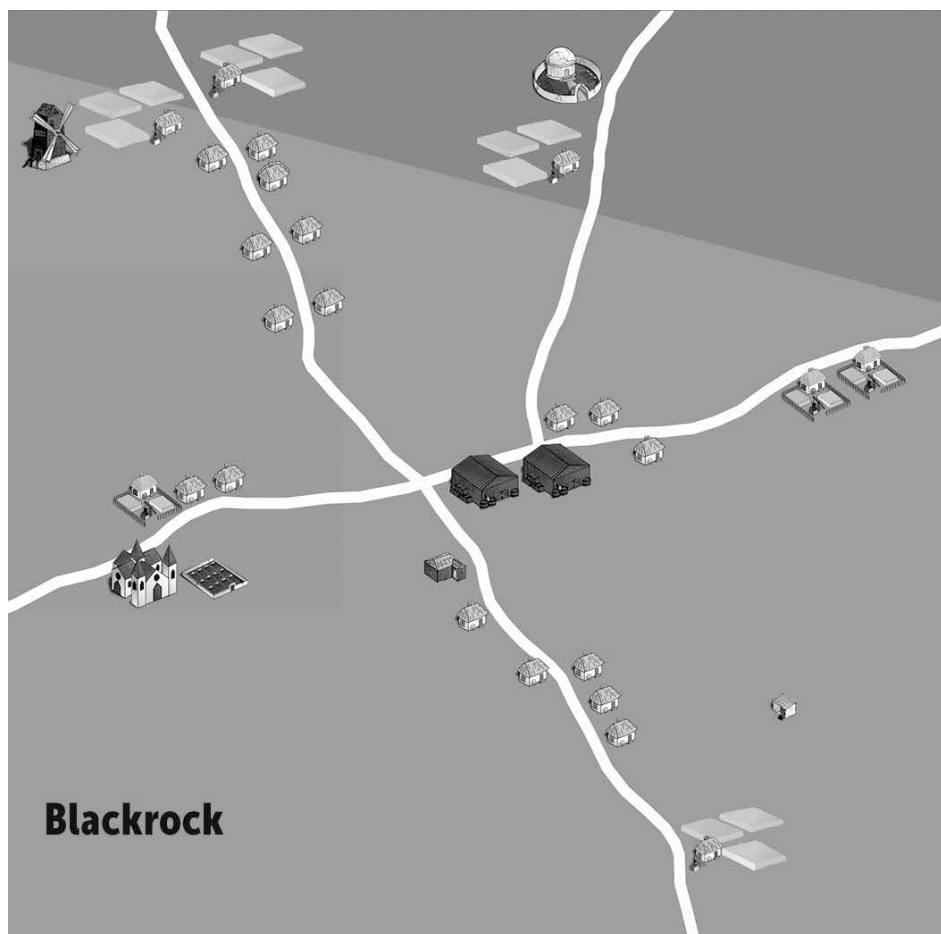
Superstitious

NOTES:

-2 TN to all Social Tests

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With the sheet filled out, all you have left to do is draw up a basic map of the village, flesh out its background and history, and note who the major players are. Finally, since the village is run by a cabal, you need to come up with who they are and what their purpose is. Since you know there is a mysterious set of ruins located near the village, perhaps the cabal is linked to that?





Bkm-2012

IN SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL: EXPERT, the concept of Domains is introduced. For most games, these are the perfect amount of rules for players and Gamemasters who want an easy way for heroes to create and run domains. However, some might not like the limits of the concepts laid out in those rules, designed as they were to be fast and streamlined. Still, the call to rule is strong in some, and there needs to be a more detailed system to simulate the running of a domain. These new rules are easy to add onto what is already found in **Shadow, Sword & Spell** and, together, the actions of ruling are now possible.

The Domain Game

These rules introduce a new dimension to **Shadow, Sword & Spell**, and that is the dimension of rule. It is possible now, for Gamemasters to create campaigns centered around the concept of rule, and the players, instead of creating characters, now create a domain, which becomes a character in and of itself. By doing this, the players think more large scale, and the actions they take affect not only their domain but the domains of their opponents.

Domain Actions

Domain actions are the actions that domains take. These actions affect not only other domains, but often, the player's domain as well.

Every month the ruler of a domain declares one action, which is then carried out. If a domain chooses to take more than one action, then it costs both money and Resolve to do so. The more actions taken, the more money is depleted from the domain, and the more Resolve is lowered.

In addition each action has listed a Base Target Number. This TN is used if the Action requires a skill test, or another type of test. The Base TN can be adjusted, based up any modifier the situation calls for.

TABLE 3.1: DOMAIN ACTIONS

<i>Action</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Resolve</i>
Adventure	–	50/50 each additional hero
Agitate	100 GC/Resolve Level	see below
Build	varies	–
Declare War	see below	500
Diplomacy	100 GC	50
Disband	–	150
Espionage	100 GC+	225
Finance	–	50
Fortify	75 GC + cost	125
Grant	varies	varies
Investiture	varies	45
Lieutenant	–	25
Troop Movement	see below	–
Muster	see below	125
Preform Spell	see below	150
Research	100 GC or more	50
Rule	varies	–
Trade Route	100 GC/50 mile	50/50 mile
Training	varies	100
Move Fleet to ships	see below	–
Transport Troops by Sea	see below	100
Establish Sea Lane	2050 GC/25 mile	100/50 mile

Action Descriptions

Adventure

Base Target Number: nil

Some heroes ruling their domains might still hear the seductive calls of adventure. The urge to partake in these adventures often are not so easily ignored. There should be no valid reason why a ruler should undertake an adventure; sometimes the need is too great and a ruler must inspire by tossing caution to the wind and undertake a dangerous task. An adventure, then, is anything from slaying monsters, solving a mystery, handling threats, or leading a small group of companions against a powerful foe.

Adventures typically take a month to complete, thus the domain is fine while their leader is traipsing through the wilderness reliving their younger days. Nothing adverse happens to the domain while the ruler is occupied. That changes, however, if the ruler decides to keep adventuring past the first month, unless the ruler has appointed a Lieutenant (see page 54), or has set up a second-in-command to oversee the domain while gone. If this is

not the case, the domain becomes inactive, with no actions or improvements possible place until the ruler returns. In addition, the domain loses a number of Resolve equal to the ruler's Will x 5. This Resolve loss reflects the lack of leadership the domain suffers, due to the absence of its ruler.

Agitate

Suggested Skill Test: Diplomacy (Leadership)

Base Target Number: 10

The hero uses their influence to upset a neighboring domain. Through the hiring of bards, spreading of rumors, and/or printing disparaging broadsheets, the ruler seeks to harm their neighbor's Resolve, by lowering their Resolve levels (see page 63 of *SS&S Expert* for the resolve chart). Whatever level the ruler decides to slide the Resolve will determine the cost both in money and Resolve. For example, the neighboring domain has Resolve 325 (Average) and you wish to lower its level to Rebellious. Your domain's current Resolve is 500 (Healthy), so to lower your opponent's will cost you 200 Resolve and 400 GC.

Build

Suggested Skill Test: Diplomacy (Leadership)

Base Target Number: Auto

This is a broad action, improving your domain through new construction. Building ranges from constructing docks, roads, bridges, and even churches. This category does not cover fortifications and the like, which is covered by Fortify (see page 53). The costs for buildings as well as the bonus to Resolve are listed in the **Table 3.2**.

Building Type Descriptions

Wood Building: These include council halls, warehouses, silos and the like. The size of building is

based on the height and or square footage. A small building would have one floor and 50 square feet in size, a medium building would be two stories and 100 square feet, and a large building would be three stories and 200 square feet.

TABLE 3.2: CONSTRUCTION

Building Type	Size	Cost	Resolve Bonus
Wood	Small	100	+25
Wood	Medium	400	+50
Wood	Large	800	+75
Stone	Small	300	+50
Stone	Medium	600	+75
Stone	Large	900	+100
Bridge, Wood	Small (10 feet)	300	+15
Bridge, Wood	Medium (20 feet)	600	+30
Bridge, Wood	Large (30 feet)	900	+45
Bridge, Wood	X-large (40 feet)	1,200	+60
Bridge, Wood	XX-Large (50 feet)	1,500	+75
Bridge, Stone	Small (10 feet)	500	+30
Bridge, Stone	Medium (20 feet)	1,000	+60
Bridge, Stone	Large (30 feet)	1,500	+90
Bridge, Stone	X-large (40 feet)	2,000	+120
Bridge, Stone	XX-Large (50 feet)	2,500	+150
Road	—	See Below	+1/mile

Stone Building: These include council halls, warehouses, silos and the like. The size of building is based on the height and or square footage. A small building would have one floor and 50 square feet in size, a medium building would be two stories and 100 square feet, and a large building would be three stories and 200 square feet.

Bridge: Regardless if it is constructed out of wood or stone, all bridges are the same – they span two points, allowing you to cross from one side to the other.

Road: This is a permanent construction allowing people and goods to move from one settlement to another. It is a land based, and though a road can be built over most land, the more challenging the terrain, the more costly it is to build it.

TABLE 3.3: ROAD COST

<i>Terrain</i>	<i>Cost/Mile</i>
Coastal	20
Barren Lands	10
Clear	5
Desert	20
Forest	30
Grasslands	15
Hills	25
Jungle	50
Mountains	100
Settled	1
Tundra	12

Declare War

Base Target Number: 10

This is what it implies, by mustering your troops or hiring mercenaries, you declare war on a domain in hopes of conquering it, or protecting yourself from impending attack. The cost of this depends on the forces employed.

Diplomacy

Suggested Skill Test: Diplomacy

Base Target Number: 12

Be it war, or the desiring good relations with your neighbors, Diplomacy is the art of negotiation between domains. Depending on the type of diplomacy you wish to engage in, the Base TN rises or falls due to the action.

TABLE 3.4: DIPLOMACY

Create alliance	+2
Break alliance	-2
Create trade agreement	+1
Negotiate peace treaty	+4

Disband

Base Target Number: Automatic

This is breaking up an army or any type of military unit.

Espionage

Suggested Skill Test: Subterfuge

Base Target Number: 12

Espionage is a task that is very important to the safety of a domain. Effective use of espionage might be the only warning a domain has of

TABLE 3.5: ESPIONAGE ACTION

Reveal diplomacy between two domains	+2
Track enemy troop movements	-1
Census number of troops in enemy domain	+3
Know troop strength in enemy domain	+4
Assassination	+1 to +5
Spread heresy	+1 to +3
Counter-espionage	+1 to +5
Falsify information	-1
Rescue prisoner(s)	+1 to +6
Deliver message to other domain	-1
Transport people	+3

impending doom.

Finances

Suggested Skill Test: Study (Mathematics)

Base Target Number: 15

This is the act of borrowing money, the base TN is for the actual borrowing of the money. This TN is affected based on the amount of money borrowed, or for more favorable terms of repayment. To borrow money requires a successful Study (Mathematics) tests. One to see if the amount sought is received, and another to see if the terms of repayment are accepted. These target numbers are set using both **Table 3.6** and **3.7**. The larger the sum of money desired and the longer the length of time to repay the loan, the harder it is to borrow the money—it is a balance between what you need, and how long you need to repay it. For example, you might want to borrow 1,500 GC, but the TN is too difficult to reach, thus, you decide to change your plans and borrow less, to make the initial test easier.

TABLE 3.6: AMOUNT NEEDED (IN GOLD CROWNS)

<i>Amount Borrowed</i>	<i>TN</i>
Up to 200 GC	+0
201 GC to 250 GC	-1
251 GC to 500 GC	-2
501 GC to 1,000 GC	-3
1,001 GC to 2,000 GC	-4
2,001 GC to 3,000 GC	-5
3,001 GC to 4,000 GC	-6
4,001 GC and up	-7

TABLE 3.7: REPAYMENT TERMS

<i>Length of Loan Payment</i>	<i>TN</i>
5 years	-6
4 years	-5
3 years	-4
2 years	-3
1 year	-2
6 months	-1
1 month	+0

Fortify

Suggested Skill Test: Tactics (Defense)

Base Target Number: Automatic

This is the building of defenses, be it a wall, moat, or other type of construction designed to protect buildings or strategic areas. The cost of this fortifying is based on the cost of materials and what is being built.

Grant

Base Target Number: Automatic

This is the granting of a gift, title, award, or other type of honor to an individual or a group.

Investiture

Base Target Number: Automatic

This is the act of giving the domain to another person: by doing this, the new person assumes control of the domain as the new ruler.

Lieutenant

Base Target Number: Automatic

This is the appointment of someone to stand in for the leader of the domain. In addition, this action is usable if you want to appoint someone to negotiate a treaty in your stead or lead troops against an enemy. Though you still run the domain, the lieutenant takes on the role of leader for a specific task.



Move Troops

Suggested Skill Test: Tactics

Base Target Number: 8

This is moving troops from one part of the domain to another.

Muster

Suggested Skill Test: Tactics

Base Target Number: 10

This is raising an army or military force from among the populace of the domain. Think of this as a militia instead of the recruitment of trained soldiers or the hiring of professional mercenaries.

Research

Suggested Skill Test: Study (Research)

Base Target Number: 8

This is action usually performed in domains ruled by a mage or other spellcaster. By mustering the resources of the domain, the spellcaster is able to discover information that leads to the creation of a new spell, art, or discovery of some esoteric piece of information.

Rule

Base Target Number: automatic

The general rule and administration of your domain.

Trade Route

Suggested Skill Test: Diplomacy (Negotiation)

Base Target Number: 12

This is the creation of a trade route between the domain and another domain or region. By establishing this trade route, new goods and services are made available in your domain. In addition, with an established trade route the domain is able to generate additional income (see **Table 3.8**).

TABLE 3.8: INCOME FROM TRADE ROUTE

Civilized	50/month
Borderland	25/month
Wilderness	12/month
Sea	100/month

Training

Suggested Skill Test: Tactics (Small Unit)

Base Target Number: 10

Troops improve the more they train and drill. Training offers a slight increase in a Unit Rating. For every month that a unit or units train, they gain a permanent +5 bonus to their Unit Rating.



IN SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL: EXPERT the domain rules end with a brief discussion of events. As you recall, each year sees the happening of 1 to 4 random events in the domain. Due to the huge variety of events that can potentially occur, it was not possible to list them all there, but instead roughly classified into types: Major Positive, Minor Positive, Event, Minor Negative, Major Negative and Disaster. Due to a lack of space, very few examples were included as to the type of events. To rectify that, this section presents a number of examples that you can use.

Archaeological Discovery

From ruins dating to the Lost Empire or the Old Kingdoms, an archaeological find of some relevance is found. This can be something as a minor as a farm, to as significant as a battle site or ruined temple.

Assassination

Either a failed assassination attempt, or a successful assassination of one of the domain's leaders takes place. This would be considered a Negative event and, depending on who is slain, this event could be minor, major, or even a disaster. A minor version of this event would be the killing of a popular priest or government official. A major version would be the killing of a general, the head of the bureaucracy, a popular hero and the like. A disaster would be the killing of the actual ruler of the domain.

Bad Weather

The domain is hit by a weather event. This can be something like a blizzard, torrential rain, heat wave, or even a tornado. Because of the bad weather, the domain's revenue is reduced by 5% for a Minor Negative, 10% for a Major Negative, or 20% for a Disaster.

Bandits

Highwaymen, pirates, outlaws, or some other kind of bandit are plaguing the domain in some fashion. They are robbing travelers, as well as taking goods. As a result of this activity, domain's revenue is reduced by 5% for a Minor Negative, 10% for a Major Negative, or 20% for a Disaster, each month until the bandits are caught.

Boomtown

One of the domain's settlements is experiencing a booming economy. This boom can be caused by the discovery of a new resource, increased traffic on the convergence of two new roads, or any other event which is bringing new settlers as well as new wealth to the area.

Crime

A crime wave has hit one or more settlements of the domain. This crime wave can be increased murders or burglaries, or even abductions by slavers.

Crop Failure

Due to a climatic weather event, or even nefarious means, crops in the domain have failed. The failure means that the available food in the domain is not what it would normally be, and the economy takes a hit due to prices rising beyond what many are able to afford to buy. As a result, the Domain's resolve drops one whole level.

Cult Activity

A cult of some nature has arisen within the domain. This cult could be peaceful or profane. Increased cult activity could lead to a population either too devoted to a cause to be productive, or too scared to leave their homes at night.

Economic Upturn

The income of the domain has had an unprecedented increase. This increase can come from a good growing season, increased trade, or new goods being made available for sale. As a result the income in the domain rises by 1% for a Minor Event or 20% for a Major Event.

Economic Downturn

The income of the domain has had an unprecedented decrease. This decrease can be a result of massive crop failure, an invasion of some type, or an environmental event such as a hurricane, wildfires, or even a blizzard. As a result, the income in the domain drops by 10% for a Minor Negative or 20% for a Major Negative or 30% for a Disaster.

Good Weather

The domain experiences good weather, like perfect growing temperatures, good rainfall, or anything else that has a beneficial environmental effect. Because of the good weather the domain's revenue is increased by 5% for a Minor Positive or 10% for a Major Positive.

Immigration

Immigration is a double edged sword. On one hand it could be good for a new domain who has an abundance of work that needs to be done, but not enough people to fill this need. On the other, it could be a negative in that refugees from a neighboring domain are flooding in, disrupting everything. Refer to Table 4.1 for the effects Immigration has on the domain.

TABLE 4.1: IMMIGRATION EFFECT

Event Type	Population Adjustment	Revenue Adjustment	Resolve Adjustment
Major Positive	+15%	+10%	+75
Minor Positive	+10%	+5%	+25
Event	+5%	-	+5
Minor Negative	-10%	-5%	-25
Major Negative	-15%	-10%	-50
Disaster	-20%	-20%	-100

Plague

A disease affects the domain; choose one from *Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic*. If this is a Minor Negative, 10% of the population is affected. A Major Negative has 20% of the population effect. If it is a Disaster, half the population is affected by it.

Smugglers

Someone or some group are diverting goods and selling them illegally. As a result, the income of the domain drops, while prices for good rise.

Squatters

Beggars, wandering travelers, or a group of people arrive in the domain and begin living there, impacting the daily life of the current inhabitants. These squatters do not pay taxes, nor do they contribute to the prosperity of the domain. Until the squatters are dealt with, the domain's resolve is dropped by one level.



Part

Three



BEFORE BEGINNING, WE NEED TO ANSWER A QUESTION: what is an extra planar creature? For our purposes, it is any creature that is either Infernal or has the new creature trait Extra Planar (see textbox).

Coming into contact with extra planar creatures causes a person, place or thing to become corrupted. The more powerful the creature, the more powerful the corruption any and all extra planar creatures cause corruption to happen. The length of time corruption lasts is a number of days equal to the creature's Will, with adjustments made depending on what the creature comes into contact with.

Thus a demon who walks upon a ground with Will 12 causes corruption that lasts for 48 years. If they touched an item, the corruption lasts for 24 days, and if they touched a person, the corruption would last for 12 days. Any contact with extra planar creatures always brings the chance of becoming tainted by this interaction.

Creature Trait

Extra-Planar

This trait is assigned to any creature native to another dimension, plane, or alternate reality.

TABLE 5.1: DURATION OF CORRUPTION

People	Days = Will
Places	Will × 4 = Year
Things	Will × 2 = Month

Taint

Contact with extra-planar creatures always brings with it the chance of becoming tainted. Taint effects a person, place, or thing as well.

Contact takes many forms: it can be something as simple as being touched, kissed, or even bled upon. All people are able to resist being tainted, which requires a successful Will test. Failure causes them to become tainted, with dramatic failure doubling the amount of time.

Gamemasters have a lot of flexibility with this — it could be the eating of food cooked by a demon, or being taken as a lover by a succubus.

Those tainted have an aura around them that makes them feel not quite right. This is reflected in the fact that all their social tests have a -6 TN, as well as the character having a aura of fear about them. Anyone coming into contact with the character must make a Fear -2 test.

Personal taints stack, meaning that it is possible for a character to suffer from multiple personal taints. For example, your character, who takes great in being a demon hunter, fights a demon and succeeds in vanquishing it. During the battle, the demon touched the character and he now suffers from seeing flaming skeletons wherever he looks. While fighting another demon, this same character barely manages to flee with his life, and again, he gained another personal taint: this time, he constantly smells rancid meat in addition to his neverending visions of flaming skulls. Perhaps the character should rethink their chosen field of work, and take up something less dangerous, like basket-weaving...

Personal Taint

A character who suffers from a personal taint must choose from one of the following.

Types of Personal Taint

Altered Senses

The character's senses have changed. This is a specific change, such as all wine tastes like vinegar, rattling chains are always heard, or the person constantly smells burnt flesh or see shadowy figures from the corner of their eye. Result of this has the character suffer a -1 TN to all tests.

Awareness

The person becomes aware of a specific emotion. They become so aware that they mistake everything as that emotion. For example the character thinks everyone is angry, even if they are happy. The result of this is the character suffers a -1 TN for all social tests.

Cold Touch

The person radiates cold, and all within 10 feet of the character notice that the temperature is 20 degrees colder. Characters suffering from this has a -2 to Diplomacy tests.

Echoing Words

A phrase or word constantly reverberates through the character's consciousness. The character may not realize this or think someone is always talking with them. These echoing words are distracting, so distracting that the character suffers -1 TN to all tests.

Hallucinations

The character suffers from one or more hallucinations when they are awake. These hallucinations range from something as simple as seeing blood running down walls, or seeing creatures stalking in the shadows. These hallucinations are so convincing, that often, the character thinks they are real causing them to suffer a -1 to all melee tests.

Haunted

The character feels they are being watched, followed, or otherwise stalked by creatures associated with the extra-planar creature. In many ways some would call this paranoia. As a result of this, the character is unable to concentrate and their Will is reduced by 2. This lack of concentration makes both magic and psionics (if those rules are being used) difficult to preform. Characters suffering from this have a -3 TN to all test involving magic and psionics.

Illness

The character has contracted some type of disease. This can be something as minor as migraines or something as serious as consumption. The illness lasts for a number of days equal to the Taint of the creature.

Repel Animals

The contact with extra-planar creatures causes animals to recoil in fear. Any creature coming into contact must make a -2 Fear test, with failure having this effect last for a number of days equal to the creatures Will (on a dramatic success, this duration is doubled).

Scar

Extra-planar creatures might leave physical marks, ranging from burn marks, ulcers, rotting skin, stains on the flesh, and the like. These scars last a number of months equal to the creature's Will. Markings are always in a visible location, and while marked, characters have a -2 to all social tests.

Vision Portal

The extra-planar entity is able to see through a person's eyes and hear through their ears. The character with this taint may or many not know what is going on. They do suffer from *Falling Sickness* (see **SS&S Basic**, page 85).

Types of Item Taint

Item taint is a general category for inanimate objects. Creatures touching anything from a fork to a jewel leave a lasting effect on the object. Any time an extra-planar creature touches a object they must make a Will Test, with success indicating that the object they touched is tainted for a number of years equal to the creature's Will (permanent for dramatic success).

Altered Temperature

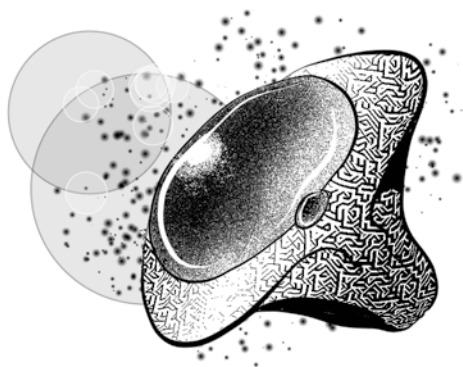
The object is either hot or cold to the touch. Though the object is still usable anyone within 10 feet of it will feel the temperature difference radiating off the item. In addition grabbing or holding the object causes a person 12 damage due to the extreme heat or cold.

Attracted to Others

The object attracts creatures to it, be it something small as rats or as large as a demon. What the object is able to attract is dependent on the Taint of the creature who held it.

TABLE 5.2: CREATURE ATTRACTION

Taint	Creature Summons
0-10	Swarm (50)
11-20	Swarm (75)
21-30	Swarm (100)
31-40	Specific Creature
41-59	Undead
60+	Infernal Creatures



Blood

The object is stained with blood, and no matter how often the object is cleaned, the blood stains reappear. Because of this every time the object is touched or viewed, the character loses 5 Sanity.

Decay

Anything coming into contact with the object rots, decays, or rusts in a number of days equal to the creature's Will. This decay depends on what the object is that is touched. For example, a sword would rot the scabbard while a tabard would rust any armor it is worn over. A bowl would rot the food in the kitchen, and a tankard would spoil any liquids in or within the vicinity of it. As for living things, after a number of days equal to the creature's Vitality, all vegetation begins to wither and die. Anyone within this range must make a Toughness test; failure causes them to lose 1 point of Wits and Toughness in addition to 5 Sanity (double for a Dramatic Failure). Anything within the radius must make a Toughness test each day. The radius of this decay is a number of feet equal to the creatures Will \times 2.

Malicious

The object causes unfortunate accidents when used, almost as if by malice. This maliciousness can be something as innocent as a candlestick never holding a candle, to something as dangerous as a hammer always slipping out of a user's hand and falling on their foot. The range of this maliciousness is a number of feet equal to the creature who touched the item's Will.

Moving

The object pulls or nudges the person in a direction. A sword tugs the wielder to always go left, a wine goblet tips over, horseshoes always cause the horse pull to the right. This movement is reflected in a penalty while using the object, and depending on the Will of the creature, this penalty is either slight or severe.

TABLE 5.3: MOVEMENT PENALTY

<i>Will</i>	<i>Penalty</i>
1-3	-1
4-5	-2
6-7	-3
8-9	-4
10-11	-5
12	-6

Reflective

The creature who touched the object has their reflection show in the object. This reflection can be faint like a shadow, a ghostly outline, or even a full reflection. This reflection causes any within 10 feet of the object to make a Fear Test equal to the creature's Fear. Failure causes the character to lose 5 sanity (10 Sanity on a dramatic failure).

Repulsive to Animals

The object has a taint that all animals find repulsive. Depending on the Will of the creature that touched the object, the effect the object has on animals vary.

TABLE 5.4: ANIMAL REPULSION

<i>Will</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Effect</i>
1-3	10-foot radius	Animals growl Animal suffers -1 TN to all tests
4-6	20-foot radius	Animals must make a Fear Test -2 TN test
7-9	30-foot radius	Animal must make a Fear Test -3 TN tests
10-12	40-foot radius	Animals attack automatically

The penalty to tests are used when a character tries to ride or control the animal.

Scent

The item has absorbed the scent of the creature who touched it, and all within 10 feet of the item need to make a Will test, with failure having them suffer from Fear.

Unsettled Sleep

The touch of the creature resonates from deep within the subconscious, so great that it haunts one in their sleep. Whenever the character sleeps, they suffer from terrifying nightmares (see **SS&S Basic**, page 82). These nightmares could be the same over and over again, or different ones each night.

Wither Plants

Anything within 20 feet of the object must make a Toughness test each day exposed for more than an hour; a Failure causes them to lose one point of Will. A dramatic success causes the character to lose 5 Vitality in addition to the Will loss. As long as the person remains within range of the object, the withering effect continues. As soon as they move out of range, the withering effect goes away, and the lost Will returns at the rate of 1 point per day. The object's withering effect also harms all vegetation, and for every hour the object remains in place, all vegetation begins to wilt.

Taint of Places

When an extra-planar creature manifests or is summoned, the ground it touches has a chance to become tainted. This taint only happens if the monster has a Taint greater than 30.

Altered Temperature

The ground is either 20 degrees hotter or colder for a number of feet equaling the creatures Will \times 10. The ground is unable to support life, and no matter the surrounding weather, the ground's temperature is always different.

Attract

The ground attracts creatures too it, be it something small as rats, or as large as a demon. What the object is able to attract is dependent on the Taint of the creature who held it. Everyday, there is a 50% chance (roll a d12, even success) that the tainted earth attracts a creature. The radius the ground is tainted is equal to a number of feet of the creature's Will \times 5.

TABLE 5.5: CREATURE ATTRACTION

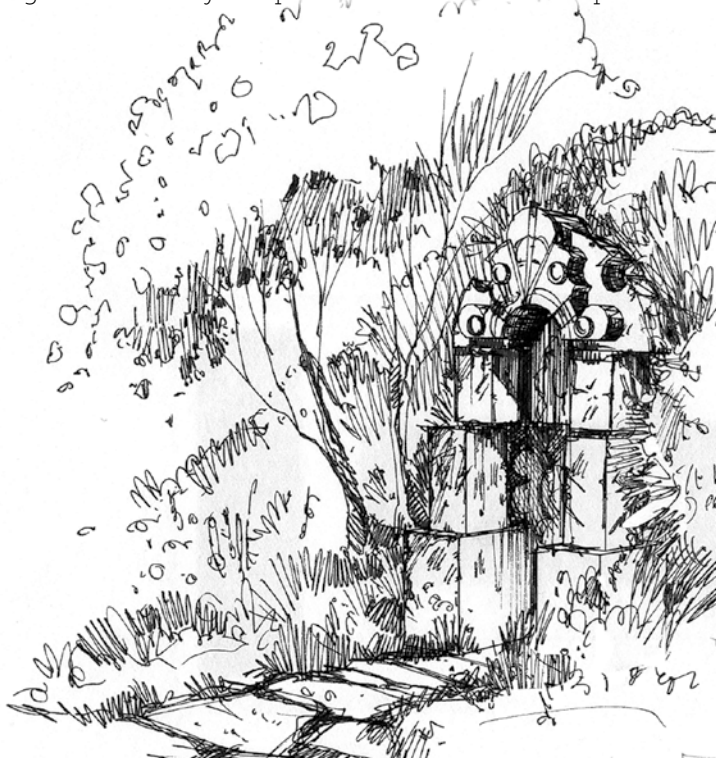
Taint	Creature Summons
30-35	Swarm (75)
36-40	Swarm (100)
41-59	Specific Creature
50-59	Undead
60+	Infernal Creatures

Cursed

The creature who touched the land has desecrated it with their foulness, and its cursed nature is obvious to the eye. Anyone walking upon the ground suffer a -2 to all tests, and they lose 2d12 Vitality. The range of this cursed ground is equal to the creatures Will \times 10 feet.

Decay

The land touched by the creature is dying. Anything coming in contact with the land rots, decays, or rust in a number of days equal to the creature's Will touched it.. The range of this decay is equal to a number of feet equal to the creatures Will \times 2.



Infested

By entering into the physical world the creature leaves such a lasting profound effect on the world that all animal life within a area flees. In place of this wildlife the area becomes infested with rats, snakes, lizards, or frogs. The area that is affected is a number of miles equal to the creatures Will.

Malicious

Mishaps happen within the area that the creature touched the ground. These mishaps manifest either by a horse losing a shoe, a person falling and twisting an ankle, objects go missing, and so on. The radius of this is equal to a number of miles equal to twice the creatures Will. In game terms, those making skill tests suffer a penalty to all tests while they are within the area.

TABLE 5.6: MALICIOUS GROUND

<i>Will</i>	<i>Penalty</i>
1-2	-1
3-4	-2
5-6	-3
7-8	-4
9-10	-5
11-12	-6

Unsettled Dreams

The touch of the creature resonates within the land, and this resonance affects whoever lives or works the land, haunting them in their sleep. These nightmares could be the same over and over again, or different ones each night. Because these nightmares interrupt a good night's sleep, anyone sleeping here needs an extra two hours of sleep per night. If they are unable to rest, they lose one Vitality Point that day. For more on nightmares refer to page 82 of **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic**.





EXTRA-PLANAR CREATURES such as demons, devils, or otherworldly beings enter into the physical world via gates. Gates are a useful tool for Gamemasters in that they allow for a way to bring these creatures into the game. In addition, they offer a means to set adventures in other dimensions, or other planes of existence.

There are six types of gates in **Shadow, Sword & Spell**.

Portal/Physical Gate

These are the most often encountered gates and their permanency allows creatures to pass through. These gates take many shapes and sizes, and can be something as simple as a hole in the wall, a cave mouth, or even a empty mug.

These gates are often open due to being located in isolated spots. Known gates tend to be guarded, and often warded with powerful magics.

Portals are typically one-way: they allow you to enter a new dimension, or cross over to the physical world. In order to get back to your home plane, you must find another portal in that dimension. This gate design accounts for why neither of the connected regions are overrun by non-native beings.

Influence Gates

Unlike portals, these gates are not ones traveled through. Instead they allow extra-planar beings to see, hear, and even communicate via the gate to the physical world. These gates are how orders are given and influence is worked. Think of the statue in Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu*: through a simple statue, the elder god was able to enter into the dreams of people and influence them.

Influence gates are created in other planes, and then brought into the physical world. Gates of this type are able to take many shapes and sizes, like a ring forged in an elemental plane, an idol of one of the gods, or even some mundane, everyday object. Through this object, the creature who created the gate is able to work their influence.

Sacrifice Gate

This type of gate is temporarily created by a sacrifice, be it a goat, burning a virgin at the stake, or some other means that meets the sacrificial requirement. While open, it allows other creatures to enter into the physical world or return to their native plane, allowing only a one-way passage; to return to the other, another sacrifice must be made.

Summoning

This is the classic way for extra-planar creatures to enter into the physical world, via the Summoning spell (see **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Expert**, page 92).

Rifts

Rifts are tears in reality that exist briefly, temporary gates that allow demons and other extra-planar creatures to enter the physical world, or even humans from other dimensions and times. These rifts allow for two-way passage. When and where they happen is generally not known nor can be predicted – they simply happen.

Warp

These gates are how extra-planar creatures communicate and pass inanimate objects. Unlike influence gates, warps allow two-way communication, as well as the transfer of physical objects. This is how demons work their influence if they have designs of dominating. These gates typically take shape in mirrors or small pools of water. Extra-planar creatures cannot travel through them, cast spells, or perform any physical activity through one, nor can humans – they are simply communication devices or ways to pass small objects.



AS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY, when extra planar creatures enter into the physical world, their presence resonates throughout, tainting the land, any objects or even persons it touches. Besides this taint, they also have a strange effect on the world around them. Why?

Extra planar creatures are not native to the physical world. As a result, every time they tread upon the earth, they affect the natural environment in profound ways. Sometimes this effect is slight, and is a result of the creature only coming into touch briefly with the world. Other times, the effect is profound and the environment is forever changed.

The following effects are the 13 most common ways a extra planar creature effect the physical world. They should be kept in mind when using extra planar creatures.

Air

Strange smells fill the air, or there are pockets of extreme heat or cold.

Animals

Animals sense creatures differently they might become spooked, angry.

Children

Children cry uncontrollably, void their bowels, or are inexplicably quiet or depressed.

Earth

Stones crumble, sinkholes appear, the ground turns to stone, sands turns to glass.

Fertility

People or animals might become incapable of reproducing, or there might be a sudden population boom.



Flames

The presence of creatures causes flames to flare or extinguish.

Food

Rats might appear in a granary, milk might curdle, meat rot, wine sour.

Glass

Windows might suddenly break, mirrors shatter.

Light

Dawn comes early, dusk comes later, torches dim, candles burst into flames and melt.

Plants

Plants wither and die, or grow in strange shapes or colors, their scent changes, faces appear on the stalks, trees, or flowers.

Religious Relics

Holy shrines burst into flames, statues of gods crumble, altars crack.

Water

Fresh water turns to blood, rivers dry up, wells go dry.

Weather

High winds, heavy rains, tornadoes. It snows in the middle of summer, or a heat wave occurs in the middle of winter.





DEVILS, DEMONS, AND SPECIFIC EXTRA-PLANAR creatures often have the ability to possess others. It is through possession that these creatures are able to stay in the physical world, and personally work their malicious plans. Possession is the ability to dominate the soul, will, or personality of an individual, often making them act in ways they would typically not.

Extra planar creatures are able to possess any living creature native to a physical plan or dimension. As long as the creature has a soul, it is able to be possessed. What does this mean? Extra planar creatures are able to possess humans, animals, creatures, and other fantastical races (if those rules are being used). Extra planar creatures are unable to possess creatures who are undead, or not native to the prime plane.

Contest of Will

To possess a creature calls for a Contest of Will. Both the extra-planar creature and target of the possession must make a Will Test, and compare Degrees of Success. A success for the creature, the character loses Will equal to the Degrees of Success the creature had (a dramatic success doubles this number). If the creature loses the contest of Will, they are repulsed and unable to attempt another possession for a number of days equal to their Will (a dramatic failure doubles the duration). The contest of Will continues until the target's Will is reduced to 0 or whenever the creature fails the test.

Effect of Possession

Once the target is reduced to 0 Will, the creature has possessed the target. The creature completely dominates the target and, by destroying their Will, they inhabit the target and are able to interact with the physical world, as long as they remain in possession.

Every day, the possessed is allowed a chance to break the possession through another Contest of Will. If the possessed wins the test, they regain a number of Will equal to the degrees of success. If the possessed regains all their Will, they manage to push the creature out of their body and are free of possession. If they lose the contest, the creature continues to possess them, and the possessed is unable to attempt another Contest of Will for a number of days equal to the creature's Will (a dramatic failure doubles the duration).

Benefits of Possession

The benefits of possession are simple: it enables an extra-planar creature to stay in the physical plane. They are able to act through their host and control their body. They can talk through the host, hear, see, smell, and taste through them as well. While they possess their host, they are unable to call upon any of their physical traits (such as claws, wings, and the like). They are, however, able to use any skills they have as well as work magic if they have the ability.

While in the host, the creature uses the physical traits of the host (Brawn, Quick, Toughness, as well as Vitality), but the creature uses their own Wits and Will, and also have access to whatever skills and spells the possessed might have.

If the host dies, the possession is broken, and the creature is immediately cast out of the physical plane back to their native dimension.

Exorcism

One of the most effective ways of breaking an extra-planar creature's possession of a person is through the spell **Exorcise** (see **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Expert**, page 90), known by clergy or an exorcist, an individual skilled in the ability to drive possessing creatures out of the host. As a result, they are able to use their Exorcism Skill in place of their Will while driving demons out.

Exorcism (Will)

Exorcism, simply put, is the laying of one's hands on a victim while chanting fervently to drive out a spirit. By calling upon their faith in their patron deity, as well as chanting a series of specific prayers, a character is able to drive an extra-planar creature from a person. A successful Exorcise test drives one extra-planar creature out of a specific person or place; a dramatic success not only drives the creature from their victim, but the creature cannot repossess them ever again. Failing an Exorcism test indicates the creature continues to possess the person, and the exorcist suffers a -1 TN for each further attempt they make. The penalty increases to a maximum of -6 TN if the character continues failing their Exorcism test; a dramatic failure has dire consequences for the character attempting to exorcise: instead of repelling the creature, they open themselves up to the creature, which can now automatically possess them if they choose.



ACCORDING TO THE CURRENT UNDERSTANDING of String Theory, the universe we live in is similar to a single page in a book. The other pages of this book are other dimensions. If one was able to, one could travel to other dimensions. In addition to String Theory¹, current science thanks in large part to the Hubble Space Telescope, Chile's Paranal Mountain telescope, and the Large Hadron Collider has led to even more groundbreaking discoveries. From new planets orbiting distant suns to the discovery of the Higgs Boson (a particle which gives mass to all other particles), science is leading us to a whole new way of thinking about the universe. For some this has led them to look at a topic that was once the sole providence of fantasy and science fiction: the multiverse.

Ok, I hear you. "What does this have to do with **Shadow, Sword & Spell**?"

The answer to this is simple.

Everything.

The literature that **Shadow, Sword & Spell** pulls much of its inspiration from is littered with examples of modern heroes entering into a realm of magic (or primitive science) and interacting with it. Planes and the multiverse, if used, bring into play other styles of play, and other opportunities for adventures.

For most games the multiverse, or other planes, are not really needed. If your game is one based firmly in a low fantasy world the focus of your game is a world in which your heroes are warriors facing incessant battles and a constant struggle to simply survive and eke out a hard life the planes are not needed. However as soon as you allow for the summoning of creatures such as demons, devils and the like, you are allowing the possibility of the existence of other dimensions. At that point, it may be time to think about the shape of the cosmology of your game.

Why Planes?

Though every game does not need to worry about planes and alternate dimensions, they do offer a great opportunity for fun and exciting adventures. Entire campaigns can be based on finding a door to the Underworld and descending into the depths to rescue a lost loved one. Or, characters might walk through a rift and find themselves in a setting inspired by Dante's *Inferno* as described his *Divine Comedy*.

Planes and dimensions also allow you to experiment with different game styles. Do you have a desire to have your players encounter aliens from a different dimensions? Why not have the aliens crash to the planet after being stuck in a cosmic storm? The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

Where do the players live?

This is probably the most easy question to answer. The players, or in this case, the Gamemaster's campaign is considered the Prime Plane. This, for purposes of making things easier, means that everything else—be they alternate dimensions, different planes, anything in the cosmology of the campaign—is anchored and centered around the GM's world.

Types of Cosmology

There are many shapes to what the cosmology of the planes and dimensions are able to take. Some of this is based on current scientific theory, while others are based more closely to classic myth or theological outlook. By no means are the types discussed below exhaustive. Gamemasters are free to create their cosmology in any way they choose, and use what is found below as inspiration.

Quilted Multiverse

Of all the multiverses currently theorized, this is probably the easiest one to wrap your mind around. Through observations it has been discovered that the universe we live in is dense. So dense, in fact, that it presses the universe flat. This flat universe does not loop, as was once theorized, but instead extends infinitely into all directions. Since this universe is flat and infinitely expansive, it stands to reason that there are regions of space-time identical to ours, like patchwork in a quilt, except with an infinite number of different patches.

Boiling down the current math and theoretical physics: if you are sitting in a quilted universe and eating a donut and drinking a steaming cup of coffee, an identical you is also eating a donut and drinking a cup of coffee in a patch $10^{10} \times 120$ light years away from you.

OK, so for a fantasy game, what would this mean? The way you would view different dimensions, or alternate realities and the like, is as a flat universe with "patches" or pockets containing whatever dimensions you want. To put it another way, think of the universe as one giant piece of graph paper, and each box is one dimension. Each of these dimensions was created by a Big Bang, the gods, or any other method you choose. Thus, if you want dimensions such as Hell, or one inspired by Lovecraft's Elder Gods, all you have to do is create it.

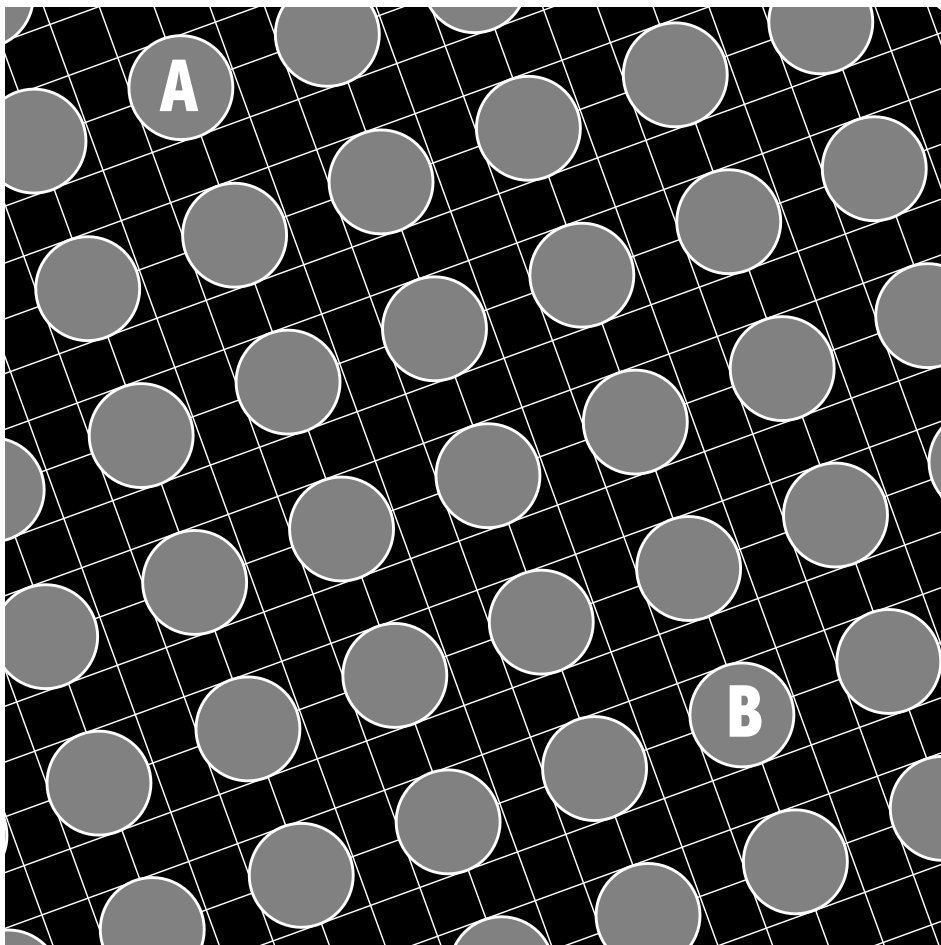


Figure 9.1: This is an example of what a Quilted Multiverse would look like, if you were able to view it from above. Each circle is an actual deminsion. Point A is you, sitting in a coffee shop reading the newspaper, and enjoying a cup of coffee. Point B is an identical you, who is also drinking a cup of hot coffee while reading a newspaper in a coffee shop. The distance between Point A and Point B is $10^{10} \times 120$.

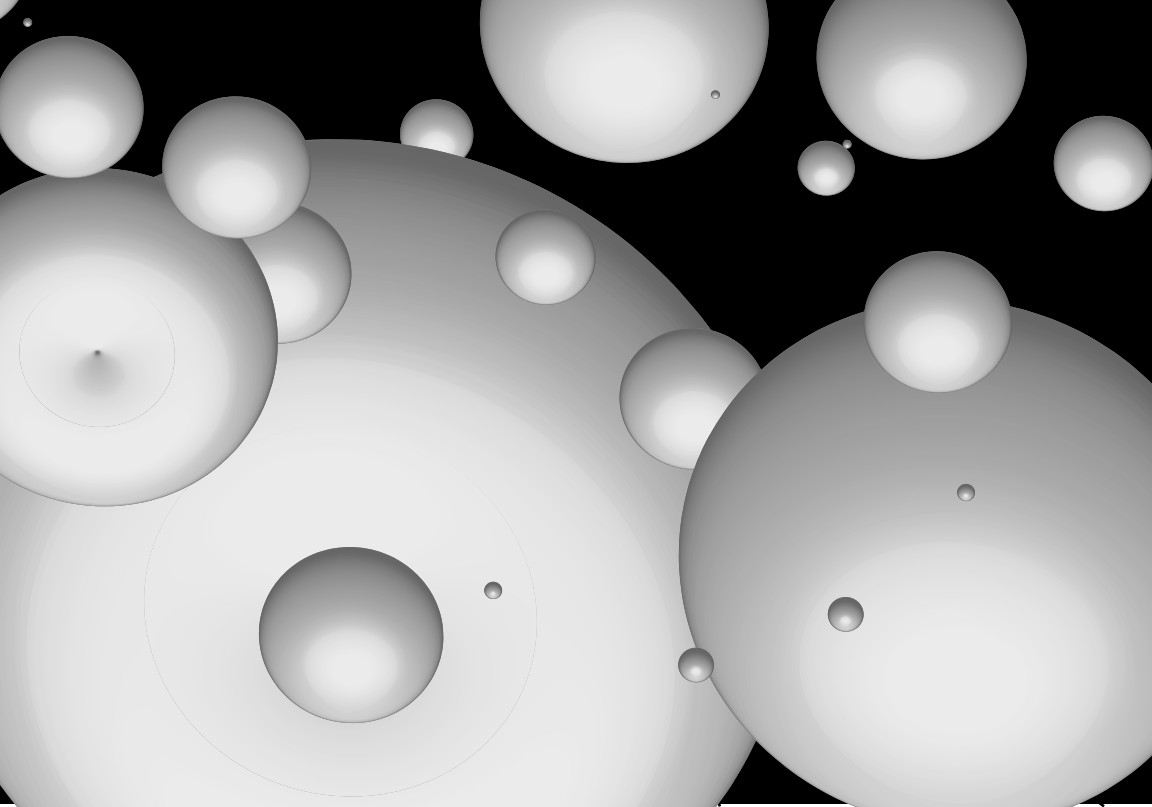


Figure 9.2: This is an example of what an Inflationary Multiverse would look like if you were able to view it. Each bubble is an actual dimension.

Inflationary

A theory developed by the Russian physicist Andrei Linde, the inflationary multiverse posits that there was not just one Big Bang event, but that there is a constant one, which leads to an ever-expanding universe. This expansion leads to the creation of little bubbles, and within each of these bubbles can be found a self-contained universe. As is the case with the patches of the quilted multiverse, each bubble contains its own reality; unlike the quilted multiverse, the expanse separating each dimension is vast. Think of the inflationary multiverse as bread dough: as the dough rises, the yeast expels carbon dioxide, leaving a bubble in the dough—and each bubble is its own new reality or universe, in a dough that never ceases to rise.

Mathematical

This type of multiverse does not fit within the confines of **Shadow, Sword & Spell**, but it is worth pointing out in the matter of completeness. Max Tegmark theorized, to put it in the most simple of terms, that “all structure that exists mathematically also exists physically.” In essence, he takes Descartes’ philosophy that anything that can be resembled by math is real, and gives it further strictures. Or as he puts it:

“...abstract mathematics is so general that any Theory of Everything (TOE) that is definable in purely formal terms (independent of vague human terminology) is also a mathematical structure.”

How would you use this in a roleplaying game? That’s a good question. I have not figured out a way to do this yet.

Quantum

So far, it should have been fairly easy for you to grasp the various concepts of a multiverse. But when it comes to quantum theory, here's where things get a little tricky. In order to fully understand quantum theory, you'll need to know more about what string theory is.

No, no, come back, there won't be any complicated math here. Trust me.

To boil string theory down to its essence, it is a theory attempting to merge quantum physics² with gravity⁵. The theory views the entire universe as nothing more than a flat plane, or sheet, much like the quilted universe. This sheet is known as a *brane*⁴, and there are an infinite number of branes stacked up, one after another, side by side. Unlike other multiverse theories, the branes are not light years apart, but literally only inches apart. If this is not cool enough to grab your fancy, these sheets take the concept of *Schrödinger's Cat*⁵ and allows for the simultaneous possibility of the cat being dead, alive, or not even there all at the same time!

Here's another example. Have you ever held a mirror angled with another mirror, and seen infinite number of reflections of yourself? That is another good metaphor for the quantum multiverse.

For **Shadow, Sword & Spell**, this is a perfect tool when coming up with a multiverse. You do not have to worry about anything, other than coming up with new realities and dimensions to spring on your players.

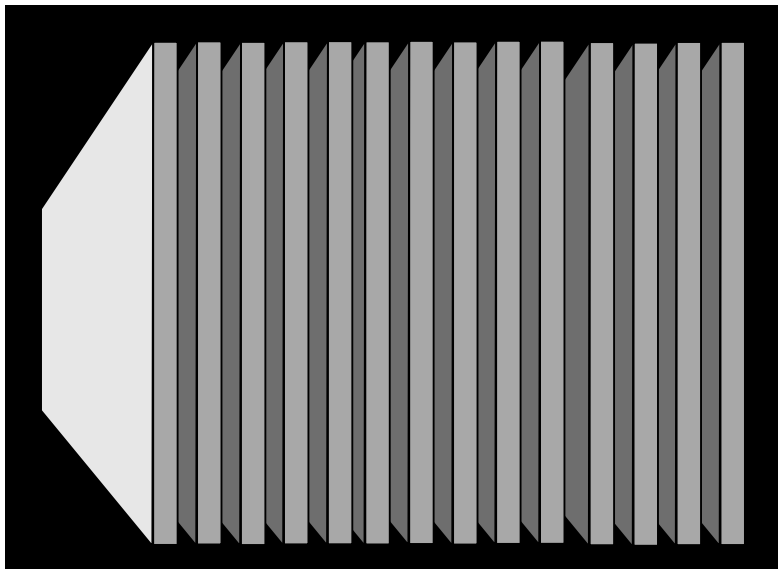


Figure 9.3: This is an example of what a Quantum Multiverse. Each rectangle represents one *brane*. Each *brane* is one dimension, and they are stacked up, one after another.

Everett's "Many Worlds"

Of all the types of multiverse, this one is the easiest to imagine and use. This theory was introduced by Hugh Everett III in 1957, positing the idea that all possibilities are real. Say you have 12⁶ possible choices to make. You roll a d12 to choose the outcome, and once you have it, you go on your way. Instead, in this multiverse, all 12 possibilities exist simultaneously, thus creating 12 different realities. By having all possibilities existing at the same time, you create dimensions with such subtle differences, that the goal of the character's adventure is finding not just the common link, but the one dimension that is their home.

Holographic Multiverse

So far, the different types of multiverses are easy to visualize as well as understand. The holographic multiverse, however, requires you to really open your mind⁷. This idea allows for the most unique opportunities for adventuring. A holographic multiverse, in simple terms, is one in which the world, and all of its contents and actions (not just moons, planets, or stars but what you had for dinner last night, and what color shirt you choose to wear), are simply reflections, or flickering images being displayed on a plane of inaccessible reality. Similar in many ways to Plato's cave allegory⁸, this is a type of multiverse that the famous cosmologist Stephen Hawking has suggested to solve the problem of black holes and what happens when information is destroyed as it crosses the event horizon⁹.

Simulation

OK, if everything you've read up this point has not been enough to blow your mind, here is an idea that might just do it.

If you subscribe to the belief of string theory that holds the multiverse is nothing more than layer upon layer of branes, what if the multiverse does not exist at all, but is, instead, merely a vast computer simulation?

Whoa.

Yeah. I told you.

First written about in 2001 by Oxford professor of philosophy Nick Bostrom, he boils down all possibilities of the multiverse—hell, all possible dimensions!—into nothing more than one elaborate computer simulation. This should sound familiar, because this is one of the main plot points for *The Matrix*, *The Truman Show*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and even the holodeck in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Now what makes Bostrom's theory so interesting is the simplicity of his argument for it. If it is possible to use a computer to create a whole or partial universe with self-aware entities in it, than the chance exists that somewhere, as well as someone, that this has been done. Now, if this is done once—the

And Now For Some Math

Bostrom presents this possibility with a mathematical formula. First a few things need to be set up:

$$f_{\text{sim}} = \frac{f_p NH}{(f_p NH) + H}$$

f_p : Fraction of all technological civilizations surviving to reach a post-human stage.

N : Average number of simulations run by a post-human civilization.

H : Average number of individuals that lived in a civilization before reaching a post-human stage.

f_{sim} : Is the fraction of humans living in virtual realities.

N is derived by multiplying the number of civilizations wanting to perform such simulations (f_1) by the number of simulations run by such a civilization (N_1). This gives us the following formula:

$$N = f_1 N_1$$

OK, with that now understood, we need to set the fraction of all observers possessing human-like experiences living in the simulation. To put it another way, the number of "sims" that exist:

$$f_{\text{sim}} = \frac{f_p f_1 N_1}{(f_p f_1 N_1) + 1}$$

Because this advanced civilization computer power (N_1) is such a large value, at least one of the following is going to be true:

$$f_p \approx 0$$

$$f_1 \approx 0$$

$$f_{\text{sim}} \approx 1$$

So what does this tell us? That you'll need one seriously powerful computer to do this.

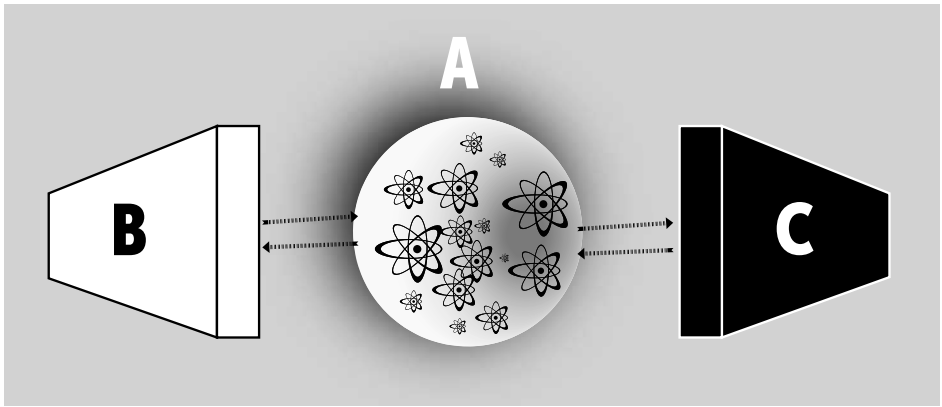


Figure 9.4: This is an example of what a Duality type multiverse. Everything in the "known" universe exists in the middle (point A). On either side are two other dimensions (points B and C) which can be called "Heaven" and "Hell."

creation of a self-aware simulation—then the chances of this being done once, and only once, is slim. Thus, given the above, it is possible that an advanced civilization has created not only one, but billions of self-aware universes.

Of all the multiverses discussed so far, Bostrom's is ripe for story and game usage. Every adventure has the possibility of being a simulation. Each adventure is nothing more than a simulation being run by some advanced society who views the characters as nothing more than sims. Take this further, what if the characters that players create are simply simulations, and then their characters become aware of the fact? All types of situations present themselves with a multiverse like this.

Duality

Call it duality or dualism, this type of model is a simple one and most commonly known as "Good vs. Evil," or the relationship between a god and its creation, or a god and the universe. Gnostics approach to dualism sees both a God and a Devil as two opposing forces who are two separate entities. You can take this one step further and take the Paulician (a Christian sect found in the Byzantine Empire) and have the universe created through evil, kept separated from a God who is good.

If the Christian view of duality does not interest you, you can take one from Hinduism. Dvaita Vedanta has a view of two separate realities. One reality, which is the most important, is that of Vishnu. Vishnu is the absolute, the one, the supreme God and forms a complete independent reality. The second reality is a real universe with its own essence. Everything that makes up this reality is its own reality. Sound familiar? It should because it is close to the holographic multiverse. However this differs in that God takes a more active role and not only governs, but controls the universe.

Gygaxian/Arneson

This is a model based upon the cosmic makeup from classic *Dungeons & Dragons*. The first appearance of this view of the planes is found in the magazine *The Dragon*, vol. 1, no. 8, published in July 1977. A year later, the concept was refined and printed in the appendix of the *AD&D Players Handbook* in June 1978. This model became the standard view of the planes for all the settings **TSR** would publish. When the *Manual of the Planes* was published in 1987, this theory was modified and expanded upon. Even with the release of *AD&D 2.0*, *3.0* and *3.5*, this model would remain the agreed upon cosmology of the planes.

This is not to say that these planes never changed. The core concept stayed the same, but their names changed. For example, with the release of *Planescape* in 1994 for *AD&D Second Edition*, the majority of the Outer Planes saw a renaming. In 2001, with a new version of the *Manual of the Planes* published for *D&D 3.0*, the original names were merged with newer ones. Some examples of this is the Demiplane of Shadow being renamed the Plane of Shadow and the Prime Material Plane shortened to just the Material Plane. More interesting is the addition of the idea that each Material Plane is connected to its own unique Ethereal Plane.

What makes the Gygaxian/Arneson model of the multiverse so original is how it is viewed. It is usually presented as a series of concentric circles that has alternating spatial and transitive planes. These planes are always placed in the following order: Inner, Ethereal, Material, Astral, Outer Planes, and the Far Realm. If you include The Shadow Plane and the Dimension of Time, they are separate from the others typically being shown connected to the Material Plane. Demiplanes, are typically connected to the Ethereal Plane, and found attached to any plane. All planes, except for demiplanes, are infinite in extent.

For Gamemasters wanting to use the multiverse in their games, the Gygaxian/Arneson model is perhaps the easiest one to use and visualize. For GMs and players familiar with how *D&D* presents the planes, this model allows for a quick understanding of how things work.

Organic Structure

This one views the multiverse in a more organic way with the most famous being the Yggdrasil from Norse mythology. The Yggdrasil is the world tree whose boughs supports the heavens, the branches links the middle worlds, and the roots are connected to the underworld. It is along these branches of the tree that the different worlds are found.

This is also found in the myth and legends of Siberia and Northern Asia. These culture have a tree that links three realities (the underworld, the physical world, and the upper world). The world tree is also found in Mesoamerican myths, and the Mayans had one dedicated as an axis mundi (the four

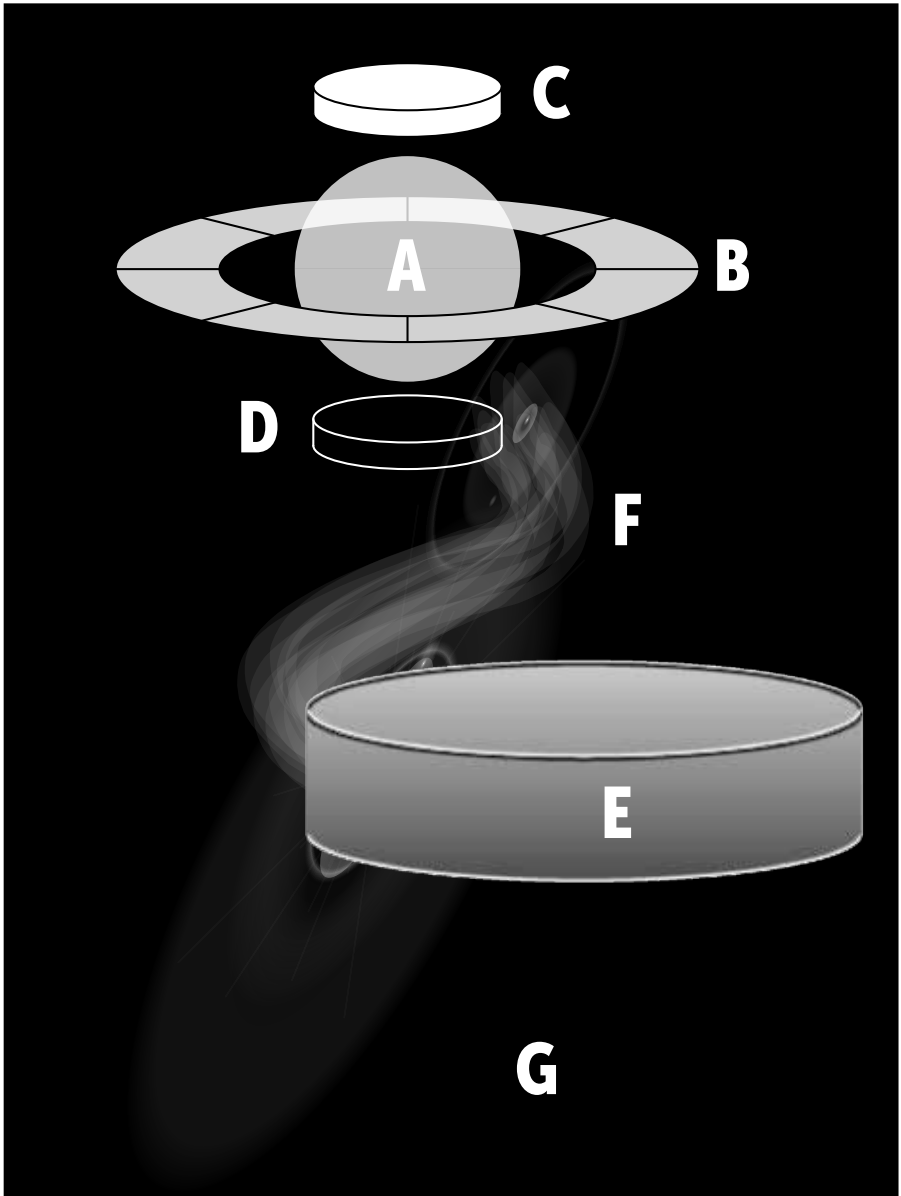


Figure 9.5: This is the classical representation of the Gygaxian/Arneson model of the multiverse. Point A is known as the Prime Material Plane, and it is the plane best thought of as a "known universe." Ringing around this Prime Material Plane are the eight elemental planes (Point B). Point C is the Positive Energy Plane, and its polar opposite, Point D, is the Negative Energy Plane. Taken together, Point A through D are collectively known as the Inner Planes. Point E is known as the Outer Planes, and this is the location of where all the various deities reside. Here you will find Olympus, Asgard, and any other celestial location. Connecting the Inner and Outer Planes is the Astral Plane (point F), which can be considered a plane of psychic energy. All of this resides in the Ethereal Plane (Point G), which is like a giant ocean in which other dimensions are found.

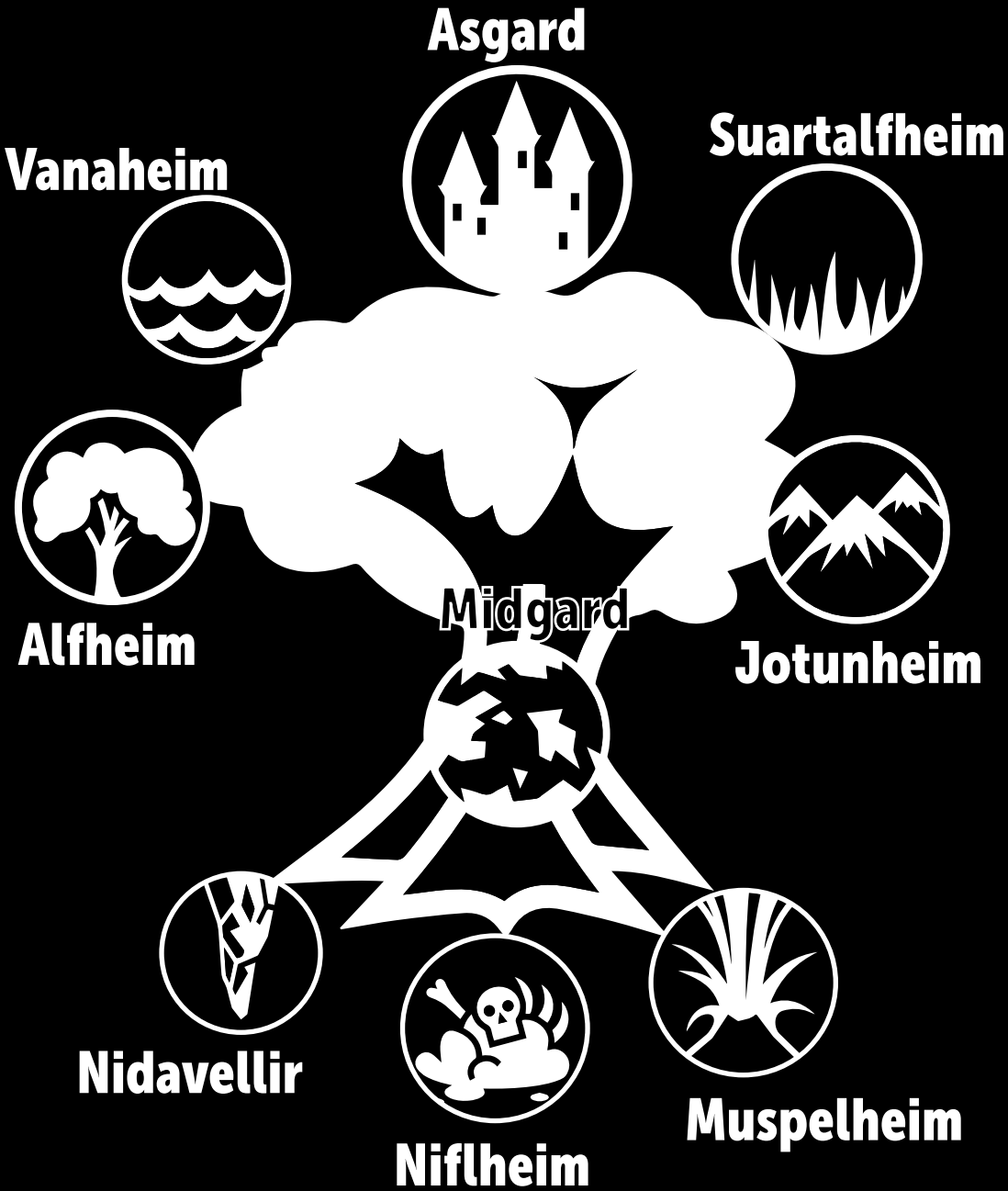


Figure 9.6: This is an example of an organic multiverse, and in this case this is an interpretation of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, on which the various realms of the Norse are located.

parts of the world tree's nature aligned along cardinal points) that links the planes of the underworld and the sky to the earth.

Other organic structures of existence include the famous Iroquois belief that saw the whole world resting on the back of a giant turtle which swam in a great ocean. Taking this idea, you could have other giant turtles swimming within this ocean, with each one having a different dimension or land upon its back.

The Stranger and Parallel Worlds

When dealing with the planes and the concept of the multiverse, one of the most natural topics to deal with is the concept of parallel worlds.

The concept of parallel worlds was once regulated to science fiction. Today, however, with the concept of string theory the possibility of identical but separate dimensions exist. Admittedly most games do not need, let alone allow, for this. Yet, some GMs might want to explore these ideas. After all, if you allow for the character concept of the Stranger (see *SS&S: Player*), then you need to think about what dimensions, or world, the Stranger comes from.

A parallel world is a world similar in scope to the prime plane, but there is some quirk or change that took place that make the world "different." Think of the mirror universe from *Star Trek*, or John Carter of Mars—these are examples of a parallel world. You do not need to go into great detail about them, but you should know the basics. They can be as simple as evil versions of the characters, to complex as a 19th-century man, traveling to the past and arriving on a planet that will one day become lifeless (*Barsoom to Mars*). It is the little details that will make your game come alive.

Other Models

There is no limit to the shape a multiverse can take. If the above examples are not enough for you, here are a few more concepts which you can take and spin into your own versions.

The Great Scale

The multiverse is a balance between Law, Chaos and Balance. Each world, or dimension, orbits the center, and are connected to each other by a "road" of some type. This road can be rays of light, rainbows, or a ethereal cord which you must hold as you travel from world to world. The most famous example of this type of multiverse, is found in the writings of Michael Moorcock.

Nothing

This is the ultimate nihilistic view: there are no planes, no other dimensions, just the plane that the game takes place on. Everything else just exists. If you really want to make it more nihilistic, combine this with the holographic universe model.

Underworld

There is a plane of life, and a plane for the dead. Infernal creatures originate from the underworld and everything living lives in the plane of life.

Lovecraftian

Different dimensions are accessed through complicated means, e.g., deep and complex mathematics that posit impossible solutions to their equations. The creatures found here are unable to be defined by conventional mathematics. hell, the physical geography of these dimensions cannot be explained through Euclidian geometry. The creatures and threats found here are powerful, so powerful that simply looking upon them is enough to cause your mind to snap. Basically, you are screwed if you try to travel to or summon a creature from one of these dimensions. And why would you want to?

Radiating

From the prime dimension, everything radiates out from this in parallel lines. The structure is held together by these parallel lines which are made up of the elements.

The Physics of the Multiverse

When using planes and dimensions, there are a few traits that need to be kept in mind. All dimensions have five traits in common. These traits are: gravity, time, shape & size, element, and energy.

Gravity

Normal: Normal gravity is that we experience every day. Creatures and travelers native to a dimension with lighter gravity have a harder time with physical activity (-2 TN for all tests physical in nature, the amount of weight they can lift is reduced by half and movement is halved), while travelers from a dimension of heavy gravity find themselves stronger (+2 TN for all tests physical in nature, the amount of weight they can lift is doubled, and their movement is doubled).

TABLE 9.1: GRAVITY STRENGTH

Normal
Light
Heavy
Null

Light: All physical tests receive a +2 TN, able to lift double the amount of weight, and their movement is doubled. In addition, characters are able to lift double their usual weight. If the character is native to a heavy gravity plane, they gain a +3 TN to all physical tests, are able to lift triple the amount of weight, and their movement is tripled.

Heavy: The gravity is heavier and all tests suffer a -2 TN, in addition movement is reduced by half, and lifting is halved. If the character is from a plane with light gravity, all physical tests have a -3 TN, the amount of weight they can lift is reduced by a third, and their movement is reduced by a third.

Null: There is no gravity. Enjoy!

Time

One of the first things a character notices when traveling among the planes and visiting other dimensions, is that time behaves differently when compared to their home plane. Time has two states, normal and erratic.

Normal time means that time passes the same way as it does in the prime plane. Thus if one day passes in the dimensions that characters are exploring, the same amount of time passes in the prime plane. Thus if the character adventures in a plane for a month, when they return to the prime plane, the same amount of time has passed there.

Erratic time mean that time passes differently than it does on the prime plane, be it faster or slower. This time differential is not known by the character until they return to their native plane.

Table 9.2 shows just some of the possible combinations available for use. Each time the character travel and explore a new dimension, the table should be consulted above to determine how time passes. If you plan on using the dimension as a recurring adventure destination, then make a note of the time differential so that you stay consistent or make things really crazy by having the time differential change each time the characters visit. That's a formula for madness, to be sure.

Shape

Each plane or dimension has a shape and size. This shape comes into play when the characters travel.

Infinite Shape: A infinite shape, means that there is no beginning or end to the plane. No matter which way you travel, you continue to travel, and never come to the end. This type of shape is perfect for elemental planes, but could also be used for different dimensions as well.

Finite Shape: There is a beginning and end to the dimensions. The dimension might be a island floating in a sea of nothingness, or it could be a cave complex.

Self-Contained Shape: Similar to the Finite Shape in that there is a beginning and end, this type of dimension rests within itself.

TABLE 9.2: TIME DIFFERENTIAL

<i>Prime Plane</i>	<i>Other Plan</i>
1 Round	1 Hour
1 Hour	1 Round
1 Hour	1 Day
1 Hour	1 Week
1 Hour	1 Month
1 Hour	1 Year
12 Hours	1 Round
12 Hours	1 Day
12 Hours	1 Week
12 Hours	1 Month
12 Hours	1 Year
1 Day	1 Round
1 Day	1 Day
1 Day	1 Week
1 Day	1 Month
1 Day	1 Year
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1 Week	1 Week
1 Week	1 Month
1 Week	1 Year
1 Month	1 Round
1 Month	1 Day
1 Month	1 Week
1 Month	1 Month
1 Month	1 Year
1 Year	1 Round
1 Year	1 Day
1 Year	1 Week
1 Year	1 Month
1 Year	1 Year

Energy

Planes and dimensions have a tendency to be charged with an abundance of energy that affects magic. This makes magic, relics, and items of magic either more potent or less potent.

Levels of Energy

Normal

Everything within this plane/dimension behaves the same as it does on the prime plane. There is no effect on how magic and the like behaves.

Dead

Due to some physical make-up, a quirk of fate, or cataclysmic event, the plane is dead when it comes to magic. No spells, or anything made of magic, works while in the dimension.



Charged

Magic is more powerful in the plane, and as a result magic has a +2 TN to be cast, all results are doubled, and any item of magic (including relics) are twice as effective.

Weak

The energy in this plane is extremely weak. As a result, magic is weak, with a -2 TN to all casting attempts, all results are reduced by half, and any item of magic (including relics) is always at half power.

Chaotic

The energy in this plane is unpredictable, and every time it is used, the results are not what is expected. This chaotic nature also effects the usage of relics and items of magic as well. Every time magic is used, the table below must always be consulted.

TABLE 9.2: CHAOTIC ENERGY EFFECT ON MAGIC

<i>D12 Roll</i>	<i>Effect</i>
1	Spell hits the caster and they suffer the effects of it.
2	The spell hits a random target or area. Center on the caster and roll a d12 to indicate which area.
3	Spell functions normally, but caster loses all but 1 Sanity
4	Spell functions normally
5	Spell does not function
6	Spell functions normally but caster loses no Vitality
7	Spell functions, but drains Sanity of everyone within 10 feet of the caster. The Sanity drain is equal to the Sanity cost of the spell
8	Spell does not function, but drains Sanity of everyone within 10 feet of caster. Sanity is equal to cost of spell
9	Spell functions normally
10	Spell functions normally but is weak, the effect is the minimum.
11	Spell function so powerfully that the effect is double
12	Spell does not function and the caster is paralyzed for a number of hours equal to their Will

Creating Your Own Cosmology

When designing your own cosmology for your games, there are a few guidelines that should be followed. "Should" is the operative word, in that this is your game after all. You are free to create what you want, and the only limit, is your imagination. That being said, some guidelines are useful, and you should at least consider the following.



The Guidelines

There are four questions you need to ask yourself before you set off to create your own cosmology.

How do things connect? This is the first question that helps guide your creation. Are the different dimensions linked by moonbeam roads inspired by Moorcock's version of the multiverse? Or, is each dimension floating in a sea of nothingness, accessible only via rifts? Whatever you decide, let your imagination guide you.

What is the shape of the cosmology? Is each dimension sitting upon the backs of giant sea turtles who swim in an endless ocean? Or, is each dimension a bubble resting upon the great world tree?

How many planes exist? By this, is there a heaven or hell? Where do the gods live? Will your game have devils and demons, and if so, where do they reside? What about the elements? Are they each separated in their own plane?

How do you travel? This is always the last question to be answered, because it depends on how you answered the previous questions. Do you travel from dimension to dimension via naturally occurring rifts? Or, is there an ability to create gates that open onto and between these other dimensions?

By answering these four questions, you can quickly assemble a dimension, alternate reality, or even an entire cosmology in a few minutes.

End Notes

1. Whole books either very technical or geared to a general audience have been published. Basically String Theory is a theoretical framework in which all particles of the Standard Model are different manifestations of one basic object: a string. The basic fundamental building block of the universe is an electron, and if we were able to view it, we would see that it is a point with no internal structure. This point can do nothing but move. If string theory is correct, if we would look at this same electron we would see it is not a point, but is a tiny loop of string. Not only is this string able to move, but it can oscillate in different ways. If it oscillates one way, then we could not tell it is a string, but it is an electron. If it oscillates another way, it is a photon, or yet another oscillation, it is a quark. So, if string theory is correct, our entire reality is made up of these strings. String Theory offers a complete, unified, and consistent description of the universe's fundamental structure. In short, this is a **Theory of Everything**. To learn more, visit http://www.ted.com/talks/brian_greenes_on_string_theory to watch "Brian Greene: Making sense of string theory," a February 2005 **TED Talk** in which Greene, one of String Theory's major proponents, explains it in a simple, easy to understand way.
2. Also referred to as quantum mechanics or quantum physics, quantum theory explains both the nature and the behavior of matter and energy on atomic and subatomic levels. The theory stems from Max Planck's observations of radiation. Planck discovered that radiation from a glowing body changes color (from red to blue) when the temperature of the object rises. Planck theorized that energy, just like matter, exists in individual units instead of a constant electromagnetic wave as the then-current assumptions held. Because energy was a unit, it could then be quantified, i.e., expressed through mathematics. Planck published his theory in 1900. This theory states:

$$h = 6.626 \times 10^{-34} \text{ J} \cdot \text{s}$$

Planck's Constant, as it is now known as, is expressed in the mathematical formula above. Quantum physics, then, searches for the means to understand the underlying properties making up not only solids, but atoms, nuclei, sub-nuclear particles, and light. There was no way to understand this, before the creation of Quantum Physics, and for many, the ramifications to the understanding of life left many unsettled.

Quantum then is the way to express the existence of individual pieces of energy. In Newtonian physics, all quantities are continuous. For example a particle has momentum and light possess a frequency. A quantum, however, is a specific "packet" of energy, charge, or other quantity.

All exchanges of energy come in discrete amounts. When light is absorbed by a material, the energy of the material does not rise continuously, but does so in discrete jumps. Each of these jumps occurs when the material absorbs a single quantum of light. To express this mathematically, the following mathematical expressions are used:

$$E = hf \quad p = \frac{h}{\lambda}$$

This constant relates wave-like quantities to particle-like ones. A particle's energy (E) is related to **Planck's Constant** (h) and the frequency (f) of its wave function. The momentum (p) is related to **Planck's Constant** (h) and the wavelength of its wave function (λ).

3. Probably the most famous of all theories of physics, this is Einstein's general theory of relativity. Published in 1916 by Albert Einstein, this theory generalizes special relativity and Newton's law of universal gravitation, and turns gravity into a geometric property of space and time, or space-time. Space is a membrane, upon which all objects rest – the larger the object, the more gravity it has, and more of the membrane is affected, or warped, by this gravity. This theory forms the basis of all current understandings of how the universe works.
4. This is used in theoretical physics, and a brane is a physical object located in another, or higher, dimension. Branes are objects that, per the rules of quantum mechanics, exist in space time. Branes have mass as well as other attributes. Without branes, you cannot have String Theory or even a multiverse, according to the theory.
5. The classic thought experiment goes like this:

You have a cat, a flask of poison, and something radioactive. You place all three in a box and seal it. If you have an internal monitor, this monitor can detect radioactivity. The monitor detects radioactivity and the flask is shattered, releasing the poison, and killing the cat. Until you open the box, you do not know if the cat is alive or dead. According to some (Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics) the cat is both alive and dead at the same time. It is only when you open the box, do you find out if the cat is dead or alive.

6. For probably the best example of this theory in work, watch "Remedial Chaos Theory," Season 3, Episode 3 of Community. Without a doubt, this is probably one of the best episodes of any sitcom, and it does a fantastic job of showing how Everett's Many Worlds should be viewed.
7. Or to put it another way: "You have to let it all go, Neo. Fear, doubt, and disbelief. Free your mind." (Morpheus from *The Matrix*, 1999)
8. In his work the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates explain the allegory of the cave: imagine a cave inhabited by prisoners who have been imprisoned since childhood. Their legs and necks are fixed and they are only able to look at the wall in front of them. Near the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire, and between the two is a raised walkway. Along this walkway is a low wall. Behind this are people walking and carrying objects depicting men, animals, or puppets. The puppeteers are behind the wall, and they cast no shadows upon the wall that the prisoners face. However the puppets cast the shadows. Furthermore the sounds the puppeteers make as they walk seem to come from the shadow wall. As such the prisoners think the shadows are creating the sounds, not the puppeteers. Because the prisoners are unable to see behind themselves, they only see and "hear" the shadows in front of them.

Socrates suggests that, for the prisoners, the shadows constitute reality. The prisoners have no idea what is behind them, and for all intents and purposes, the shadows are real.

Sounds a little like a roleplaying game, doesn't it?

9. The crux of the problem, is that according to Hawking, once something enters into a black hole it is gone, including the information. This runs counter to the theory that information about an object is encoded within its energy. Think of a book tossed into a fire: it burns,

destroying it. However, the words and information in the book still exist and are represented by the smoke the burning book gives off. Thus, the information still exists, even if the book is gone. For Hawking, once you are in the black hole, you are gone. Period. To prove that, how ever, is the problem. He tries to prove it by waving his hands. For a good primer on this visit *Hawking and Unitarity*, <http://motls.blogspot.com/2005/07/hawking-and-unitarity.html>.

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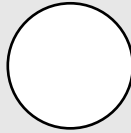
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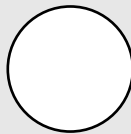
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