



MAGETM
THE AWAKENING

The logo for the game 'MAGE: The Awakening' is centered in the image. The word 'MAGE' is written in a large, stylized, gold-colored serif font with a slight 3D effect and a trademark symbol. Below it, 'THE AWAKENING' is written in a smaller, simpler, gold-colored sans-serif font. The background is a monochromatic blue-toned landscape with a large, dark tree on the right and a massive, ethereal tree-like structure in the sky above.



Influences

- Gnosticism
- Kabbalah and Hermetic Qabalah
- Ancient Greek philosophy and mysticism



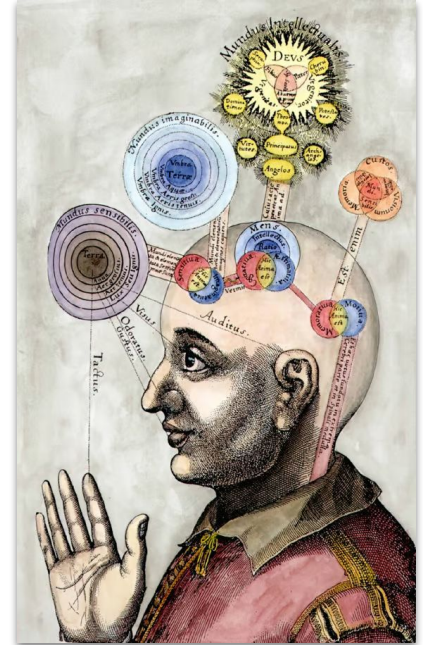
- Modern occult magical traditions
- Fictional wizards
- Academic culture

Gnosticism



Early Christianity, prior to conglomeration into present-day organized religion, is very diverse and interesting.

- Practices personal cultivation of spiritual knowledge and experience (gnosis) instead of the orthodox teachings of religious institutions
- The material world is created by a demiurge, a flawed non-omniscient being, separate from a perfect Supreme Being
- This material world is Evil, and therefore Salvation is required to liberate human beings
- Instead of Salvation coming from repentance of sin as is the doctrine in modern Christianity, this Salvation comes from Enlightenment – direct experience of the supreme Divinity, via mystical and esoteric insight

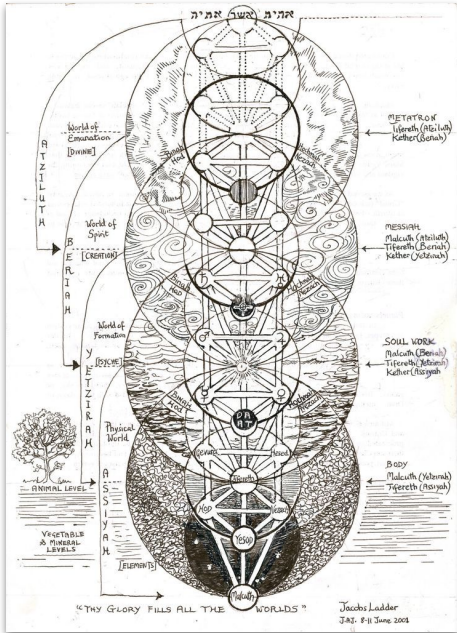


Kabbalah



Kabbalah is the foundational esoteric mystic school of thought in Judaism.

- There are “hidden” (occulted) aspects to existence, which are emanations of the divine. By studying and practicing the Kabbalah, you can understand the relationship between the eternal Divine and the mortal, finite universe
- Angelology, divination, divine visions and encounters, and apocalyptic themes are common
- Layers of initiation:
 - Simple meaning -> Allegorical interpretation -> Deep philosophical interpretation -> Metaphysical insight
- Describe the divine using the symbols of the human imagination and psychology
- “White” magickal spells usable by those with pure intent, conjuring daemons and angels, and secret names

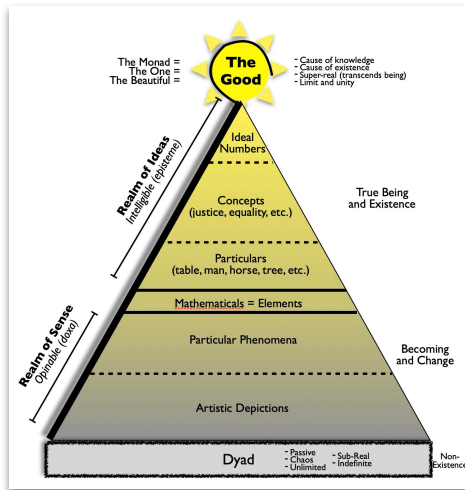
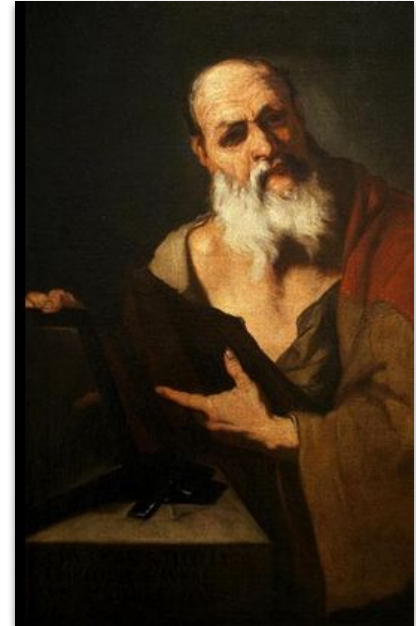


Platonism

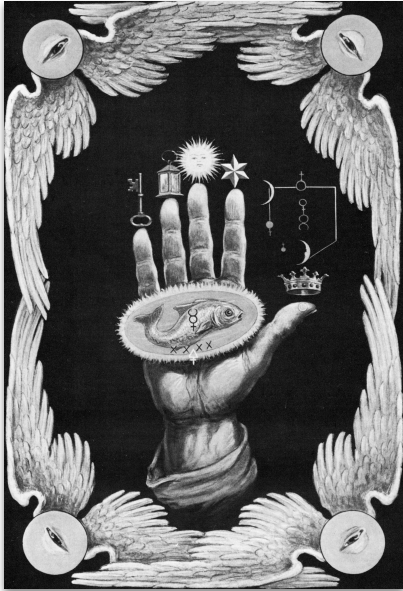
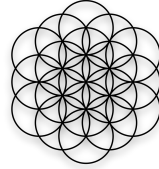


The ancient Greeks had a rich set of mystical and religious traditions beyond the famous Pantheon, which profoundly impacts our way of thinking even today.

- In Platonism, abstract objects exist in a realm separate from the material and conceptual realms
- An “abstract entity” or Platonic Form is described as an Archetypal symbol, a prototype, an Idea, or an Essence, which is perfect and unchanging
- Objects in the material or conceptual worlds are manifestations or Images of these Forms, and they merely imperfectly imitate or resemble an Archetype, and are thereby deprived of True genuine existence, as if existing only in a dream
- Virtue is Knowledge of the Truth, which can be generated by exercise of Reason, which is separate from our imperfect senses, and in attaining Knowledge humans incrementally become Awake rather than Asleep.



Esotericism

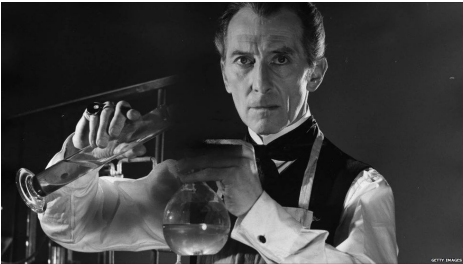


Western esotericism is a loose set of mystery traditions unified only by their distinctness from Abrahamic religion and Enlightenment Rationalism.

- In Antiquity/Renaissance, branching from the Kabbalah and Christianity, we get alchemy, necromancy, and astrology
- This eventually turns into modern new-age spiritualism, chaos magick, tarot, pagan revivalism like Wicca and Theosophy, the Counterculture, Western drug use for spiritual insight, Mindfulness, etc
- Because doctrine and practices vary wildly, small informal groups (covens, cabals, etc) or individuals are much more common than larger organizations
- Sometimes academics or spiritual teachers attempt pseudo-systematization as a “universal secret inner tradition”
- “Enchanted” or non-rational worldview full of living spirit, concordance/correspondence (“as above, so below”), esoteric initiation, and spiritual transmutation and self-development



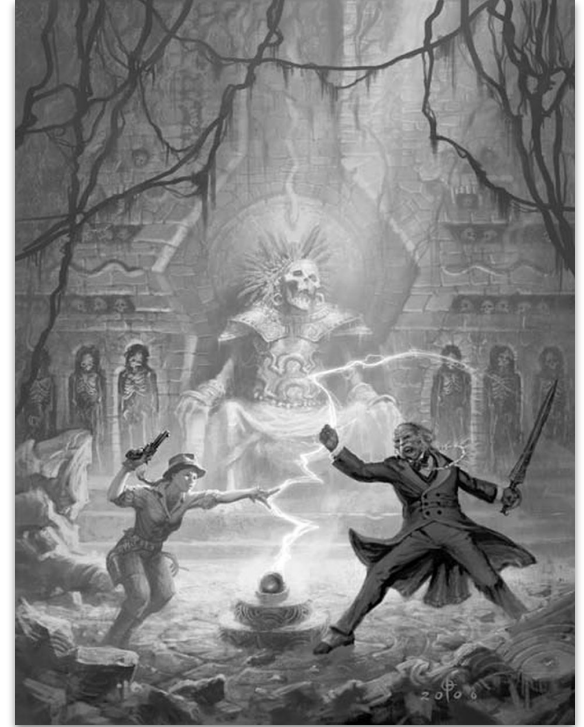
Pop Culture



The World



of Mage...



...the Awakening.



People the world over live out their day-to-day lives full of hopes, expectations, and dreams. It isn't always easy, but their lives are their own. At least, that's what they think. It turns out that all of it...



...the good times...



...the good times...



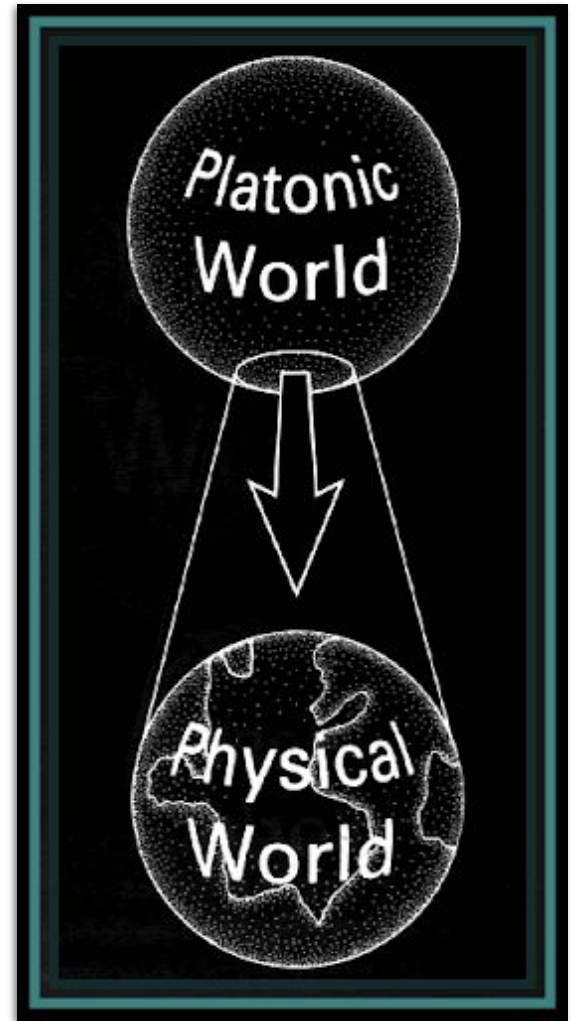
...and the bad...



...all of it is a **Lie**.

In Mage: The Awakening, what truly exists is the **Supernal World**, a world comprised of perfect archetypal **Symbols**. Our physical reality, which ordinary people called **Sleepers** take to be real, is a mere tainted shadow – a flawed emanation of the Supernal **Truth**. Human beings are trapped by unseen and ancient enemies who live in the Supernal World into believing the **Lie**, dooming them to an ordinary life among the **Fallen World**, divorced from the truth of reality.

But not you.



Each **Awakening** is unique. Maybe you had a **Waking World Dream**, a mental breakdown precipitated by strange obsessions and visions. You might be one of the rare few who had a **Supernal Journey**, projecting beyond your body to visit one of the **Supernal Realms** in person. Whatever the case, the world for you has changed forever, and you can never go back.

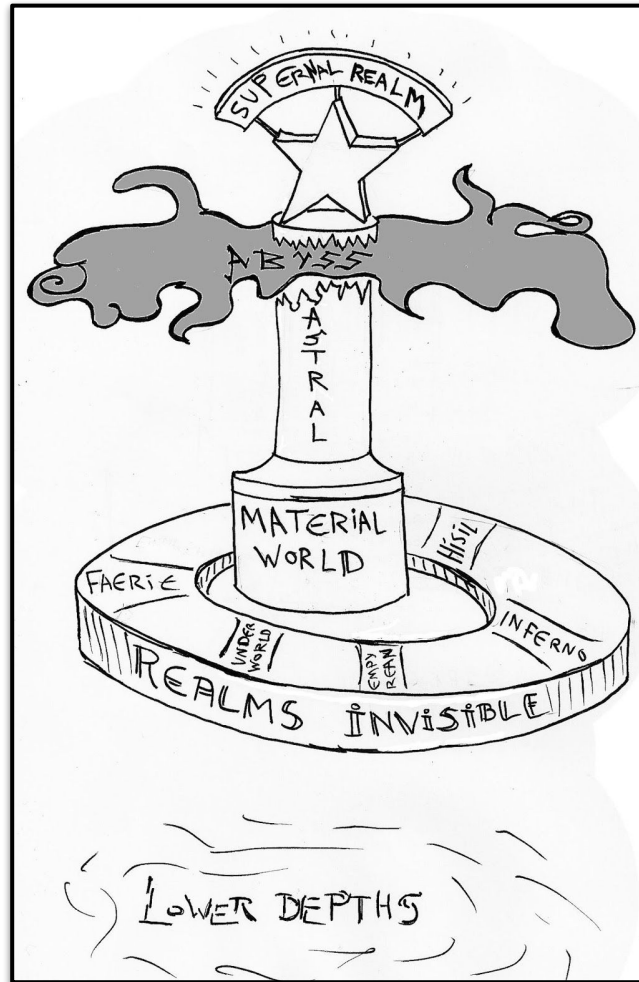


You are a **Mage**, an Awakened being.

Long ago, the material world was not that distant from the Supernal world.

Ancient human beings in the mythic past ascended to the Supernal using awesome magic, tearing it away and forming the Abyss, an infinite world of toxic anti-symbols and impossible nothingness.

Each Sleeper has a shard of the Abyss in their soul.



The Supernal World, the Abyss, the **Astral** bridge-world, and the Fallen World all have their own sub-realms and ecologies of beings.

The Abyss in their soul reacts violently to magic, entering the Fallen World whenever spells are miscast, creating deadly **Paradox** phenomena.

Sleepers react strangely to Awakened phenomena, quickly forgetting it ever happened in a process called Quiescence.



The entire world just revealed itself to you as a Lie that everyone you love believes in. What do you do?

You learn. You experience. You grow.

Mages are obsessive and extremely driven people, desiring above all else to expand their Knowledge (Gnosis) of the unseen world by exploring its myriad Mysteries.

Each Mage starts with an Obsession and grow more hungry for direct experience of the Supernal and the Arcane as they become more powerful.

Not all Mysteries are Supernal, but all mages are obsessed with Mysteries.

Existential horror Wisdom
Mystery Intrigue
Exploration Knowledge
Drive

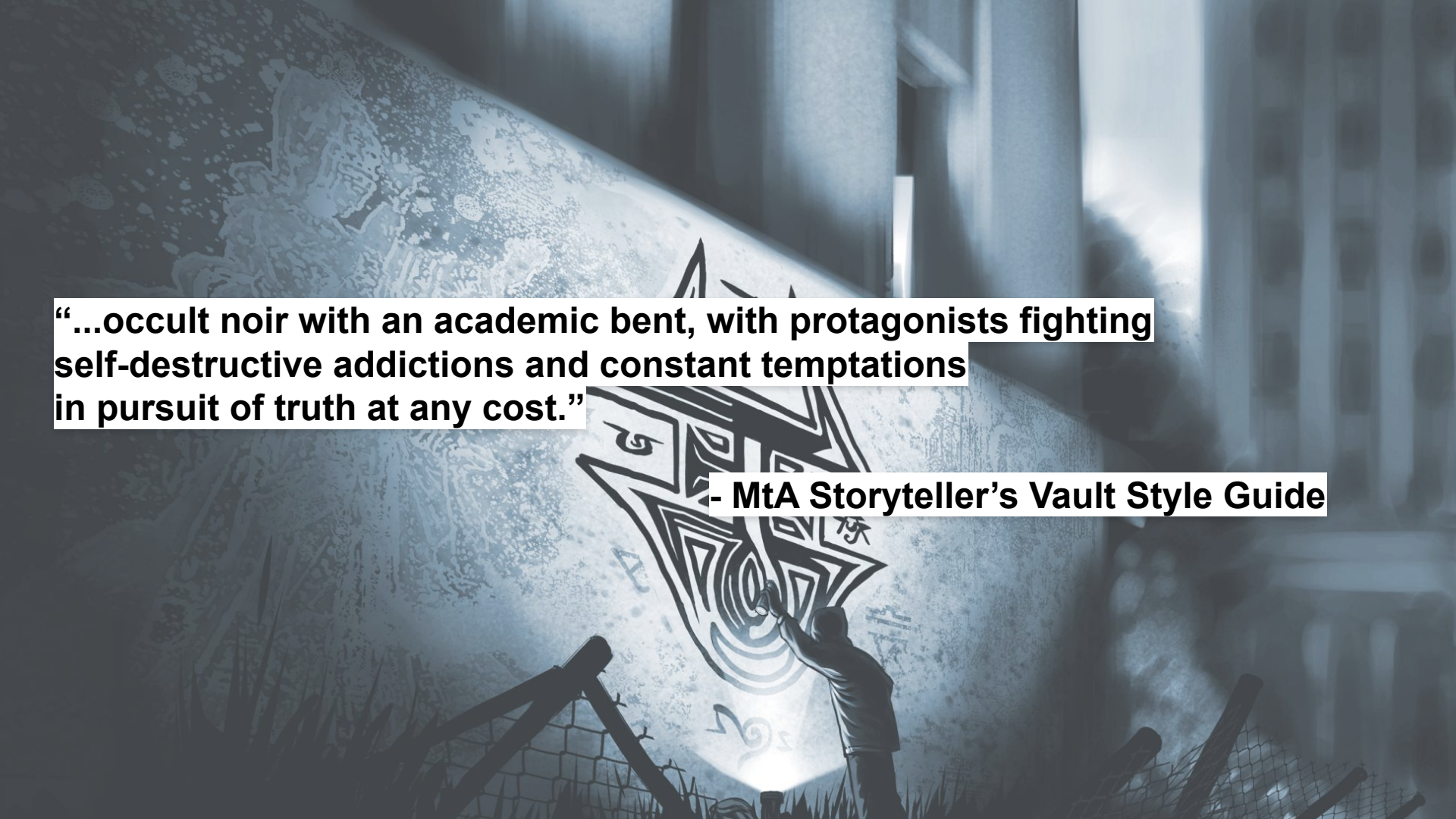
Freedom
Volition Responsibility
Selfhood

Themes

Legacy Mythos
Ascension History

Community
Conspiracy Factionalism
Contingencies

Obsession
Falling Power
Hubris Pride

A person is seen from behind, painting a large, intricate graffiti piece on a wall. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong light source from the right creating a dramatic silhouette and highlighting the texture of the wall and the person's clothing. The graffiti features bold, geometric shapes and a central eye-like motif. The background shows industrial structures and a window with light streaming in.

“...occult noir with an academic bent, with protagonists fighting self-destructive addictions and constant temptations in pursuit of truth at any cost.”

- MtA Storyteller's Vault Style Guide

In many ways, a Mage is just a fragile human being – the vast majority of Mages have not been able to **Ascend** like their mythic forerunners.



However, given preparation time and the clever use of their abilities, a Mage is a tremendous force to be reckoned with, equal to most beings in the Chronicles of Darkness.

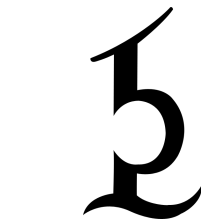
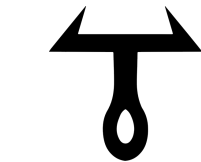


The great **Tapestry** of the world can be divided into ten **Arcana** – five **Gross Arcana**, associated with the fallen world:

- **Forces**
- **Time**
- **Space**
- **Life**
- **Matter**

...and five Subtle Arcana, associated with the Supernal World:

- **Prime**
- **Fate**
- **Mind**
- **Spirit**
- **Death**





The Supernal World contains five **Supernal Realms**, each associated with three arcana – two **Ruling Arcana** (one Gross and one Subtle) and an **Inferior Arcana**.

When a Sleeper Awakens, they become inextricably associated with one of these Realms and their unique symbology. Oftentimes they must reach, scale, and make their mark on one of the great **Watchtowers** during their Awakening. Afterward, they feel an affinity for the Ruling Arcana of the corresponding Realm and an aversion (or at least antipathy) to the Inferior Arcana.

The Realms, their symbols, and their Arcana divide most mages into five **Paths**, although there are recent rumours of additional, previously unknown Watchtowers appearing...

THE PATHS



ACANTHUS

Enchanters on the Path of Thistle, Scions of the Watchtower of the Lunargent Thorn in the Realm of Arcadia, Kingdom of Enchantment and Abode of the Fae



Ruling Arcana: Fate and Time

Inferior Arcana: Forces

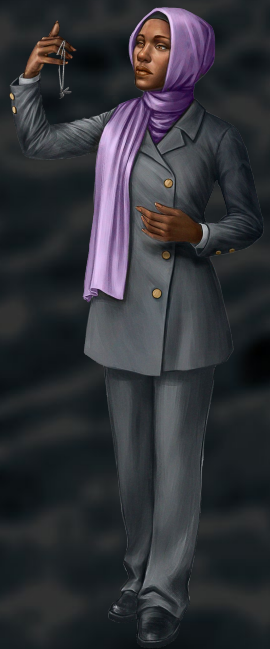


ORACLE

WITCH

TRICKSTER

THE PATHS



MASTIGOS

Warlocks on the Path of Scourging, Scions of the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet in the Realm of Pandemonium, Kingdom of Nightmares and Abode of Demons

MASTER

WARLOCK




Ruling Arcana: Mind and Space

Inferior Arcana: Matter



TEMPTER

THE PATHS



MOROS

Necromancers on the Path of Doom. Scions of the Watchtower of the Lead Coin in the Realm of Stygia, Kingdom of Crypts and Abode of Shades

ARTIST

ALCHEMIST



Ruling Arcana: Death and Matter

Inferior Arcana: Spirit



SCIENTIST

THE PATHS



OBRIMOS

Theurges on the Path of the Mighty, Scions of the Watchtower of the Golden Key in the Realm of the Aether, Kingdom of the Celestial Spheres and Abode of Angels



Ruling Arcana: Prime and Forces

Inferior Arcana: Death



LEADER

ZEALOT

CRUSADER

THE PATHS



THYRSUS

Shamans on the Path of Ecstasy, Scions of the Watchtower of the Singing Stone in the Realm of the Primal Wild, Kingdom of Totems and Abode of Beasts

SHAMAN

BEAST



Ruling Arcana: Spirit and Life

Inferior Arcana: Mind



HEALER

A Mage's Path is always present via their **Mage Sight**, a passive awareness of Supernal phenomena that can be focused to various degrees in order to reveal magical secrets. A Moros sees the Supernal manifest in the world differently than an Obrimos, for instance.

When a Mage uses their willpower and focus to create a visualization of an intended effect (an **Imago**), they can impose Supernal Truth on the Fallen World, modifying it in impossible ways and creating the convoluted effects we call magic.

When a mage creates an Imago and casts a spell, they are bringing one or more Arcana to bear to create the intended effect. There are many spells recorded in the rulebook, but you are not limited to these spells as written. You can do almost anything within the bounds of your Arcana.

A Mage's Path determines the Arcana they have the most proclivity for, but you are not limited only to those Arcana. You can even become skilled in your Inferior Arcana, especially if you have a mentor.



Effects like creating lightning or wind, speaking to ghosts, summoning infernal or elemental creatures, teleporting matter, scrying the future, slowing time, or turning invisible are examples of magical effects. Some effects can be strengthened by tools, special locations, or rituals replete with Supernal symbolism.

The sky's the limit.

BUT REMEMBER



**PARADOX IS
COMING**

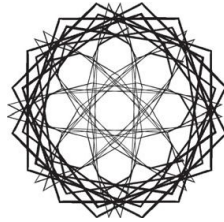
**THE ABYSS IS
ALWAYS WATCHING**

**WHEN WILL YOUR
HUBRIS RUIN YOU?**

Though Mages tend to jealously guard the results of following their Obsessions, many Mysteries are easier to unravel with help.



They may choose to join a **Cabal**, a small group of their peers who pool resources and skills.



In doing so, a Mage can pull off plans and perform rituals that they never could have completed alone.



A cabal is a small, local group of Mages, generally 2-30 members in size. By contrast, the **Sects** of the Awakened world are hugely influential global organizations. A Mage will often be part of both a Sect and a cabal, although not necessarily.

Sects have unique cultures of their own, and resources well beyond the capacity of even the largest cabals. There are five Sects:

The Orders of the Diamond



The Guardians of the Veil



The Mysterium



The Silver Ladder



The Adamantine Arrow

and...



The Free Council

Together, these Sects form the **Pentacle**. Though the Free Council disagrees with the **Atlantean** founding myth of the Orders, the legalistic system of the **Consilium**, and their dismissive attitude toward Sleeper civilization, they are unified in their eternal war against the ancient enemy...

The Seers of the Throne are those Awakened Mages dedicated to the will of the **Exarchs**, ancient mythic humans who caused the Fall after Ascending to the Supernal World.



Seers entrap and seduce Mages with promises of immense material wealth and power. Many Mages concerned only with their own hedonistic desires join the Seers in order to dominate and reap the rewards of service to the Tyrants.

These Tyrants, dedicated only to maintaining their grip over the Universe by maintaining the Lie, communicate with their Seer servants through dreams – although from time to time a ravaging Mage speaks of the intercession of terrible **Avatars**...



Seers are very talented, able to compete with each Sect in their chosen areas of expertise. However, to the relief of most sane Mages, backstabbing and intrigue among their extremely hierarchical society is common, often neutering their plans.

Hartstone is a fictional city in the San Juan mountain range in south-east Colorado.



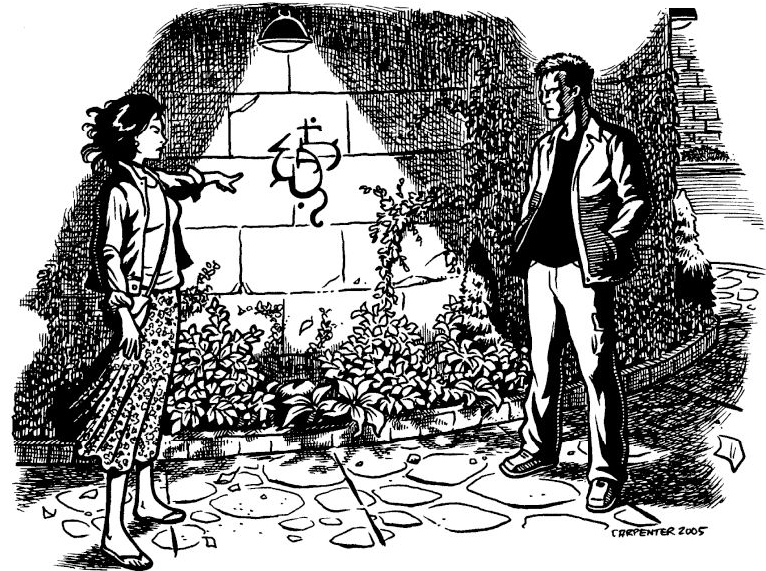
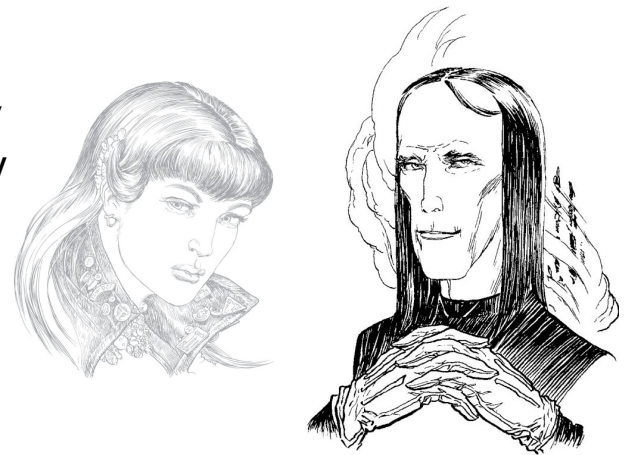
Hartstone

Hartstone University dominates the town. Founded by the Awakened Master Raúl the Wolf in 1872, it has grown into both a massive Sleeper institution and an Awakened powerhouse. While it doesn't have the global reach of an Order, within Hartstone and the surrounding area, the University has proven a dangerous and wily adversary for the Orders, Free Council, and the Seers of the Throne over the last 150 years.





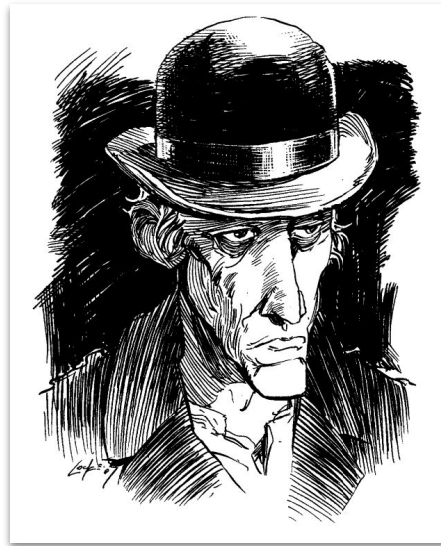
The Chancellorship of the University is passed along in a hereditary monarchy of Raúl's descendants. Curiously, every single member of the despotic Wolfe family has Awakened... to the alarm of the rest of the Awakened world.



Six months ago, the throne passed to the oldest Wolfe sister, Alexandria, after a brutal succession dispute with her brother Charles.

Now, with the multiple Wolfe siblings missing and the University in disarray, Hartstone teeters on the edge of chaos.

Of course, the robust local Order presence, the Council, the cabals, and the myriad Awakened beings whispering in the dark have not sat idly by.



And of course, there's you. What part will your characters have to play in this momentous time in Fallen history?

...and what's up with the Mayor, anyways?

Whispers abound: will the Wolfe family finally fall? Are there Seers present in the city?

An **Interfactor**, a Consilium executioner, was recently spotted stalking the streets of the campus.

In the foothills surrounding the town, darker things have begun to stir.

And some Mages swear, in the dead of night, they can hear the sound of gears turning...



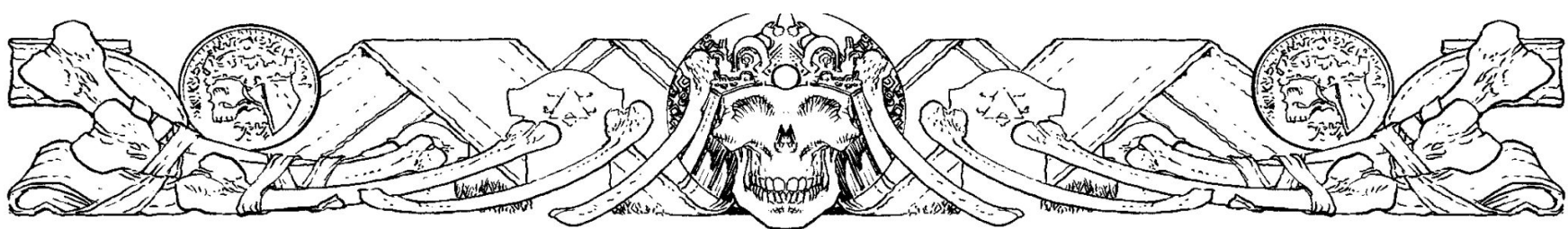


Session 0 (Character generation) will be on **January 8th**. Come with a character concept in mind, but you don't need to figure out how to systematize them in terms of game mechanics. Who are they? What are they like? Some prompt questions are on the last slide to get your brain churning.

Session 1 will be on **January 17th, at noon PST**. The first few sessions will introduce us to the mechanics of play, kind of like a tutorial, so don't sweat it.

Mage: The Awakening will be so cool! Some general advice going into the first sessions:

- You are immensely powerful, but be sure not to fall to Hubris. Power has consequences. Exercise wisdom.
- Tremendous flexibility means tremendous numbers of options. Try to think outside the box, and try not to succumb to decision paralysis.
- This will be more RP-heavy than previous campaigns.
- Your enemies are tremendously clever. Probably more clever than any of us.
- Have lots of fun! I have built in mechanics so we're not too punished for our mistakes, at least initially.



- Who was your character prior to Awakening?
- What was their Awakening like? Which Path are they/which Watchtower did they scale?
- How did they change after their Awakening?
- What is their Virtue? Their Vice?
- What is their Obsession?
- Why are they in Hartstone?
- What is their relationship to other mages and mage society? Are they in an Order? Are they associated with the University?
- What is their view on selfhood?
 - On fate?
 - On volition?
- Do they feel like they control their own life? Why or why not?