



MAGITECNICA

**CODEX 1:
THE USE AND MISUSE OF
POWERS GREAT AND SMALL**

LUKA REJEC

*Shtiptower Haruspex,
now captained by the
wizard Vorus Hafut.*



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SDM Magitecnica

codex 1:

The Use and Misuse of Powers Great and Small

Being a volume of powers and rules and spells for use with the SDM roleplaying system and the UVG undying earth trail setting.

Stratometaedition v1.0 “Teal Rufus”

www.syntheticdreammachine.com

α

“For they as would explode forever.”

The heroes of the Stratometaship made this zine possible. Thank you.

October 2023

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Knights Grammarian:

M.O.L.W. and N.P.C.

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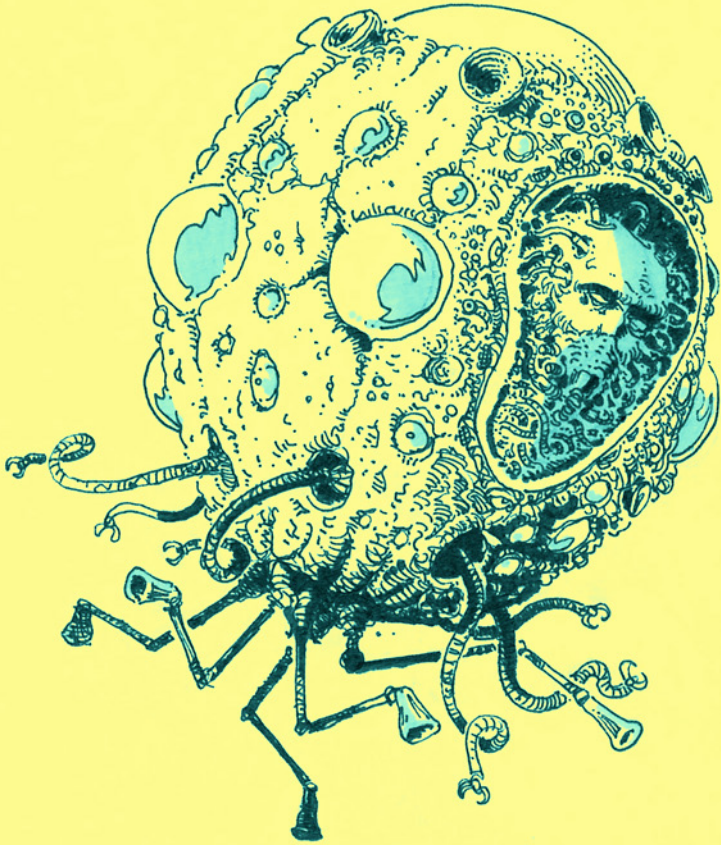
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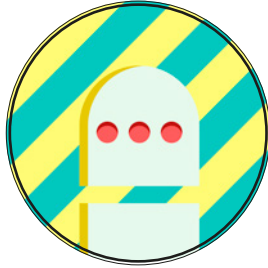
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THE USE AND MISUSE OF POWERS

“Ah, the chapter pattern of the Founders of this shiptower. *Golem triocchial osservand over sinister safety cotisse.*”

Noë nearly jumped out of her borrowed skin. The wizard’s corpuncle had floated up without a sound. Probably a no-field.

She bowed politely in her spindly robed body and murmured something polite about the wall of antiques she had been studying. If there was a secret here, a lever or answer to the riddle code for the shipmetal door keeping her out of the chamber of blueprince scrolls, she could not find it.

The corpuncle lit up with a jaune glow. It seemed to take her etiquette as an invitation to give her a guided tour.

“I do not wonder that you are stopped here, it is quite an astounding collection. Probably larger than you can afford to keep on your fast stars. My primary, the good Vorus Hafut, master of the sevenfold epicenter, has been collecting memories of the First Fall and the Turning of the Soil for over *three thousand* years now.”

It turned to face her with its barely-preserved face and hissed again to emphasize, “Three thousand years.”

I. Earlier

“I paid in blood,” whispered Onion, leaning in, fishing for a reaction. Disappointed, he continued, “not mine. Chicken mostly. Still, the dreggy was grateful. Quite the torture to take a blood-addicted vampire like that, remove its limbs and reduce it to a life a beggardry on the streets of a city with little time for post-mortals.”

Noë grimaced, “yes, yes, but did you find something out? Is the blueprince scroll vault real?”

Now Onion smiled, “oh, the dreggy promises and swears. The serum-laced blood got it talking and jabbering, all about the old lichy wizard in its fancy shiptower out in the Gnaws.”

“Is that where the drinkard was disarticulated?”

Onion looked shocked, “no, I think that was for trying to feed on a cat’s groom. No, from what it blubbered, old Bolus or Vorus ... hard to tell with the dreggy’s teeth ... was a nice enough creature. Typical timelost, a bit unanchored in the here and now, but decent.”

“Right, the Gnaws, that’s the abandoned scoured land south of the Low and High? The place where the Old Ones mined out all the minerals and then dumped their garbage?”

“Two weeks out, yes, and not so abandoned now. Trash miners there, plant floaty trees and raft their get down the Tumult.”

“Well, abandoned or not, we’ll need Safir’s gun arm. Best go find it.”

“The arm or Safir?”

“Both, preferably.”

II. Introduction

“Ok, I’m in,” whispered Noë into her headset as she wriggled out of the laundry golem’s rubbery belly.

“Great, you’re on floor six in nacelle three. From there, find a ladder and head up to floor eight. That’s where the conn ... *hiss* ... neck ... neck ... *hiss*.”

Static swallowed Onion’s thin voice. Noë snarled and banged the headset, but to no avail. Then a tinny, archaic voice erupted out of the speakers.

“...welcome, visitor, to this Guided and Precise Memorium to the powers bestowed on humanity by the Builders (in accord with the Obvious Instructions of the Maker M.B.U.T.E.) and also the lesser powers discovered by humans for themselves in their striving to escape the benevolent Garden Path.

The powers here range from those commonly utilized today in the urbanized vicinity of the Circle Sea, called the Rainbowlands by the common folk of to-day, and also other, stranger powers used by clans and quarterlings and stranger post-humans in the wilds of this Given World, from the Ultraviolet Grasslands to the baked lands of Two-Day.

You will learn how these powers work within the mechanical framework of the reality of this world and the dangers they pose to the untutored. For your delectation, a curious exhibition of power corruptions that have afflicted many a poor human over the centuries is also presented. Please do not feed the fallen humans.

Finally, we also offer a sampler, a buffet, of typical powers harvested from stray travelers in the vicinity of this humble Memorium. Do not worry, no travelers were permanently destroyed in the process!”

“..ere? Are you there?” Onion’s voice came back. Endearingly panicked.

“Yeah, yeah, hid in a wash closet.”

“Right, well, floor eight. Connection to the main tower trunk,” Onion’s voice twitched back to its affected suave setting.

III. Oldtech and Fantascience

There are powers in this vast land beyond the ken of civilized humans. Rituals for jump-starting autogolems. Handed-down sacred physics. Instructions for drawing the attention of daemons from beyond the frontiers of reality. Formulae that rip reality off the underlying chaotic maelstrom of the void like an over-ripe bandage.

Ferals call these powers magic, fools call individual techniques spells. Sages know them as sciences for mastering the Maker's creation. Dark heretics whisper that the only difference between gods and humans is how much power they possess, and that a mortal who gained sorcerous super-user privileges could ascend to become a god, beyond life and death, beyond good and evil.

Some scholars divide powers into two categories: oldtech, the techniques and useful devices given to humanity by the grace of the gods; and fantascience, the mystical permutations of the world made possible when one grasps the root levels of reality itself.

Most mystics laugh at such categorization, pointing out that there are as many types of powers as there are grains of sand on the seven heavenly beaches, but also only one power, the unified benevolence of the Maker.

Power game mechanics follow. A strange concept for the natives of this fantasy realm, for whom these are but laws of reality and no more. Still, this is for the daemons they call players and their characters.

These 'players' will also encounter additional examples featuring our intrepid referee Cat and the characters of Noë the wizard, Onion the trickster, and Safir the fighter.

III.a. Format

In the wild, powers may come in infinite shapes and sizes. On the page of this volume and others, they are trapped forever in a standard form. Deviation from the standard form is evil heresy. If you encounter any power or person deviating from the standard form, report them to the inquisition for rectification.

Thornstone Obelisk

Razorblade Tree

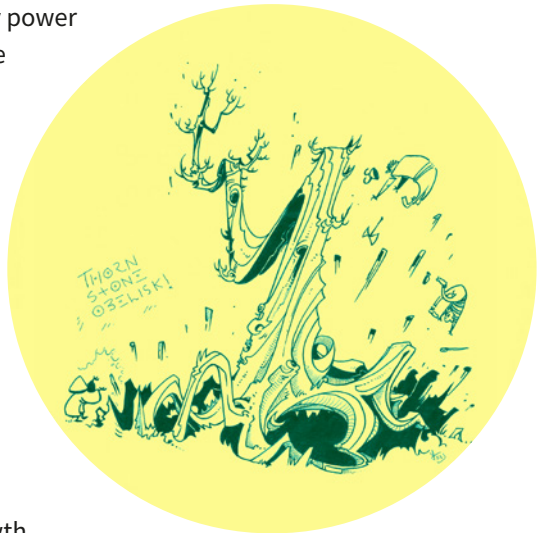
P: 3 **R:** 10m

T: planted landcoral seed
D: permanent

The petromancer spills their lifeblood, forcing the landcoral seed into sudden, explosive growth.

A medium-sized limestone tree erupts from the ground, dealing 2d6 damage to adjacent creatures. Anyone moving through its thicket of razor branches suffers 1d4 damage. The terrible growth speed kills the landcoral.

Overcharge: the growth is even more violent, dealing 6d6 damage to creatures in a small radius and scattering the ground with stone shards like caltrops. This destroys the landcoral.





IV. Using Powers

Any character can use any power. Using a power may mean reading the fantascientific formulas from an electromagnetic book, it may involve an interpretative dance routine to summon a daemon, or perhaps just lighting dribbly candles made from the fat of a bona fide angel.

However, a character who knows what they're doing (i.e. has a trait with relevant skills) is less likely to blow themselves up into a giant blueberry or unleash a plague of ear-eating wigs.

IV.a. Paying For Power

Powers impose otherworldly wrongness on the mundane. There is a price to pay for such power and the alien fires of the incomprehensible may consume one's body, spirit, and memories.

To use a power, you must first pay the price.

1 power costs 1 life

A character can also pay with ability score points, where 1 point = 1 life.

A completely clueless character, with no relevant skill or experience, pays double the price to use a power.

Traits can change the price a character pays for their powers.

IV.b. Orders of Powers

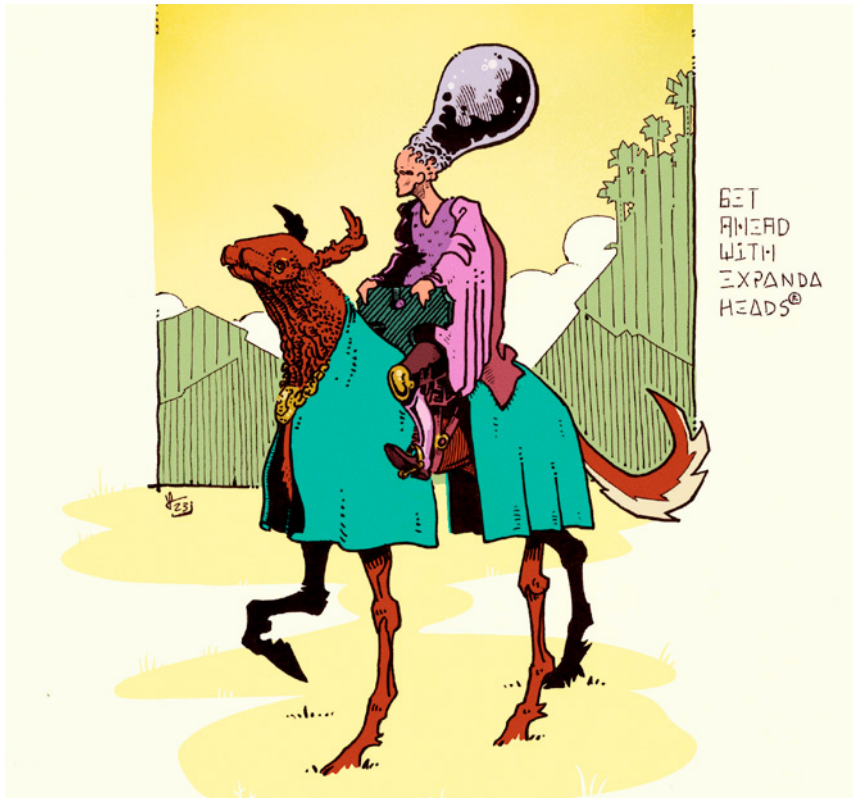
All powers are of the first order (1 power or P: 1), unless otherwise noted.

Assigning powers is more art than science:

- 0 power: a power that requires no life sacrifice. Weaker than an ordinary action, like running or firing a pistol, but allowing some specialized or unusual effect.
- 1 power: a little more valuable and powerful than the mundane equipment of this modern day.
- 7 power: a potent effect that changes the fundamental rules of a local reality in interesting ways.
- 13 power: a terrible technique that may disable enemies or make very visible and semi-permanent changes to base reality.
- 21 power: the stuff of fairytales; decades of slumber, exploding mountains, small iron stars falling from the sky, drastic reality changes.
- 42 power: power to corrupt any mortal, rewriting histories and transforming eons.
- 99 power: a power the mightiest half-divine magus used a single time, giving their life in the process.

Powers can also occupy every order in between, from 2 to 98.





IV.c. Carrying Powers (Inventory)

A character can use any power in their inventory. They may bear it as a:

- Trait: for example, strange equations locked in their mind, changing their perspective and personality.
- Item: for example, a plastic skull filled with lambent newt juice.
- Burden: for example, the weight of a malign knowledge.

Powers can be used multiple times and do not disappear after use.

Powers can be packed away, like other items, or stored in a library or other safe room. Of course, characters can't use packed or stored powers.

Power albums, technocodicals, and spell books are valuable because they let a character carry a number of powers in a single inventory slot.

IV.d. Range, Target, Duration

Self explanatory. Range (R:), Target (T:), and Duration (D:).

IV.e. Overcharge

Overcharging a power doubles its price and modifies its effect.

Some powers can be overcharged multiple times: x2, x4, x8, x16 and so on.

IV.f. Power Options

Powers may have additional mechanics. For example:

- Anchored Powers: The power is kept active and controlled with a physical anchor stored in the user's inventory. Destroying or losing the anchor deactivates the power (or worse).
- Attack Power: The power is used as an attack against the target's defense score. The defender does not save or make other rolls.
- Focus Powers: The user must focus on keeping the power active. If they are distracted by their own actions or external events, the power deactivates (or worse).
- Fueled Powers: The power requires some kind of consumable component to activate. Life alone is not enough to activate it.
- Imbued Powers: The power remains active so long as it remains imbued with the user's vital essence (the life or ability score price paid by the user). The user cannot recover imbued life or ability scores until they deactivate the power.
- Item Powers: The power locks the user's vital essence (life or ability score price paid) within an object. This is permanent, unless the item is destroyed or ritually powered down. Once an item is disabled, the user can recover their locked life or ability scores.

IV.g. Dangerous Powers

Any power may be dangerous. Powers are dangerous when:

1. a **character has no suitable skill** (for example, a celebrated influencer trying to merge their consciousness with an oldtech war machine);
2. or, **their level is lower than the price of the power** (for example, a 3rd level PC trying to use a power that costs 4 life);
3. or, **a power is known to be dangerous** (for example, playing with a cancer bomb is never safe).

When a character casts a dangerous spell, they must make a danger roll.

The roll must exceed the **target, which is the price of the power**.

The character **rolls d20 + ability** (usually aura) **+ skill** (if relevant).

A natural 1 is always a failure.

Example: Noë is beset by haggard automatons. She overcharges her second order power, Ring of Broken Forces, to knock them down and clear her escape. Using the power now costs 4 life. Since she is a first level character, this makes her use of power dangerous.

She has to roll d20 + aura (+4) + skill (her trait in the dark electronic arts gives her a bonus of +3) over a target of 4. This is a trivial roll for her, but there is a chance of catastrophic failure if she rolls a natural 1, so roll she must. Noë's player picks up the icosahedron ...

... and rolls a 17 for a total of 24. A success, indeed, an excessive success and the referee decides to narrate how the wave of barely controlled eldritch technomagic leaves the automatons knocked down and twitching, giving Noë a free round to make better her escape.

The referee applies penalties and bonuses to a danger roll. For example:

A PC without a relevant skill suffers a penalty.

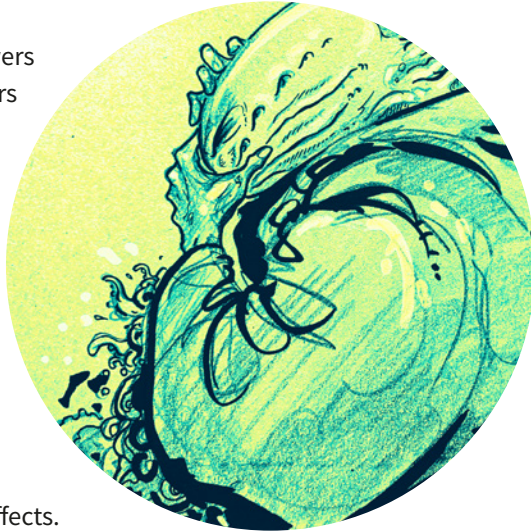
A PC whose level is higher than the power's price gets a bonus.

A character who fails their danger roll is **exposed to corruption** (V.).

V. Power Corruption

Power corrupts and the powers of the Long Long Ago builders are absolute. Corruption twists a user's body, abrades their soul, and stains their mind. Characters may be exposed to corruption in various ways:

- Failing a power's danger roll.
- Afflicted by a monster's corrupting powers or effects.
- Failing a save against environmental effects (wading through electromagnetic radiation without an enviro-suit).
- Doing something stupid (drinking glowing blue goo).



Depending on severity, corruption may take many forms.

Example: Onion fiddles with the Long Ago stasis lock and finally flings open the psychophagus. An eerie extra-temporal mist floods out, surprising the wily Onion. Still, this shouldn't be too hard for the lucky (+3 to saves) traveler. Onion's player checks with the referee and Cat confirms it's a standard save: Onion has to roll over 13.

"A dawdle," says Onion and rolls his save, d20 + 3. The big die rolls and it's a 4. Even with a +3 bonus, that's far from the 14 he needed.

He is exposed to the ancient technomagic of the stasis lock and Cat bids him roll for corruption exposure.

V.a. Corruption Exposure

When a character is exposed to corruption they immediately **gain a burden** (such as a dramatic nosebleed or headache), then **roll 2d6 + aura** to figure out their corruption exposure.

- 1 or less Power blowback. The power user's head explodes*, but the corruption keeps them alive until they die of hunger. Severe corruption exposure.
- 2 to 6 Severe corruption exposure.
- 7 to 10 Corruption exposure.
- 11 to 12 Mild corruption exposure.
- 12+ Mild corruption exposure and the power user regains the full price they paid for the power.

*Or something equally graphic and memorable.

The afflicted character then rolls based on the severity of their corruption exposure (V.a.i. to V.a.iii.).

Critically failed exposure saves and danger rolls may impose additional penalties to the exposure roll.

Traits, magic drugs, sacrifices, and special items may improve the odds.

Burdens affect the exposure roll.



V.a.i. Severe Exposure

Deleterious effects, calamitous mutations; the void peels back and chaos crawls through. The user becomes a warning to would-be meddlers.

The character falls violently ill, suffering 1d6 points of ability score damage. Over the next day and night, they permanently reduce a relevant ability score by one (1) and gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a relevant corruption trait. It can occupy a trait or item slot.

1. Only bones remain. The character is now a chaos skeleton.
2. Bones become soft or brittle. Gelatinous prognosis.
3. Eyes collapse and evaporate, leaving sockets that see the astral light.
4. Back hunches, fuses, turns into a shell-like carapace over a few weeks.
5. Strange bones erupt into spikes and thorns piercing the skin.
6. Hair develops into ropey keratin tentacles. Not quite snakes.
7. Suffused with the void, shadows permanently shroud the character.
8. Teeth fall out or become needle-sharp.
9. Hand withers and locks into a dagger-like claw (1d4 damage).
10. Skin rots and develops suppurating boils.
11. Secondary brain. It slowly develops independent thought.
12. Lower extremities turn into hooves or paws or bird feet.
13. Personality becomes alien, oblique, orthogonal to humanity.
14. Wings or flagellae. They grow capable of flight over a few weeks.
15. Secrete corrosive fluids, ruining clothes and eating through metals.
16. Strange vampiric metabolism. Consume unusual organs to thrive.
17. Secondary form. Like Jekyll's Hyde or a wolf's were.
18. Vomit up three remote sense organs. One can see, one can hear, one has a different strange sense. They have a range of a few dozen meters. If a remote organ is destroyed, the character permanently loses 1 life.
19. Undying. But not undecaying. This will become dreadful in a few decades, without a steady supply of replacement parts.
20. Psionic evolution. Acquire a power as an innate trait.

V.a.ii. Regular Exposure

Cosmetic effects, visible mutations; the user's source code is corrupted and they become a living glitch, a reminder of all that could go wrong.

The character is afflicted with terrible visions, suffering 1d6 life damage. Over the next day and night, they gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a relevant corruption trait. It can occupy a trait or item slot.

1. Face comes ... off. Leaving a living, grinning skull.
2. Flesh and skin become waxy and translucent.
3. Joints become weaker but hypermobile.
4. Ears wither away or turn into bony horns. Or tentacles.
5. Tongue fused to jaw or covered in sharp radulae. Speech is strange.
6. New vestigial arm or tail. It becomes functional over a few weeks.
7. Eyes turn milky and blind. Only ultraviolet light remains visible.
8. Fingers wither, become raw, until only undead bones remain.
9. Gills or gas breathing organs. They're functional after a few weeks.
10. Grow taller or shorter. May become much taller or shorter.
11. Voice becomes posthuman. A cascade of colors and sensations.
12. Skin becomes patterned, shifting, chameleon or cuttlefish-like.
13. Small horns or platelets cover the skin, like armor.
14. Features and skull become animalistic.
15. Body becomes bulkier or gracile, as though adapting to an alien gravity.
16. Alien organ. It activates on death, reviving a version of the character.
17. Eerie new senses: vibration, echolocation, electricity, or magnetism.
18. Labor augmentation: no longer bored with dull, repetitive tasks.
19. Mule. Can carry twice as much as normal.
20. Suffused with sparkly spores, the character now glows.



V.a.iii. Mild Exposure

Beneficial effects, lucky mutations; the Maker must have interceded to preserve the user and make them a bulwark of the Garden Path.

The character feels fine. Possibly even a little euphoric. Over the next week and a day, they gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a relevant corruption trait. It can occupy a trait or item slot.

1. Flesh crawls and regenerates, like it is a *Thing* with a mind of its own.
2. Mouth widens from ear to ear or nearly disappears.
3. Vestigial fingers and toes grow. They become functional in a few weeks.
4. Skin or hair color becomes strange and unnatural.
5. Skull becomes rounder or more elongated. Eyes grow larger.
6. Lips or nose or ears grow or disappear.
7. A biological weapon concealed within the body (deals 1d6 damage).
8. Eyes change color or shape, becoming radically weird.
9. A finger or other small appendage disappears and the character gains 1 life. Sacrifice two more for 1 more life.
10. Hair disappears or becomes voluminous and omnipresent.
11. Fingers become elongated multi-tool assemblages of chitin and bone.
12. Metabolic enhancement gives sustenance from any organic substances and immunity to most toxins.
13. Blood changes color, becoming blue or green. Gain 1 endurance.
14. Muscles grow extremely slim or bulky. Gain 1 strength or agility.
15. A sense becomes incredibly acute and sensitive.
16. Tele-empathy, like a cat. Gain 1 aura.
17. Golem-like secondary reason routines. Gain 1 thought.
18. Noble augmentation: health, beauty, and authority. Gain 1 charisma.
19. Precognitive flashes. Mostly harmless, but can spend 1 hero die per session to completely negate any roll.
20. Visions of a higher cosmos. The character becomes convinced that they are living in a synthetic hell, not a true heaven.

V.b. Other Types of Corruption

The referee may design custom corruption traits to fit the location, item, or story. Corruption traits could also be arranged in paths to fit special themes.

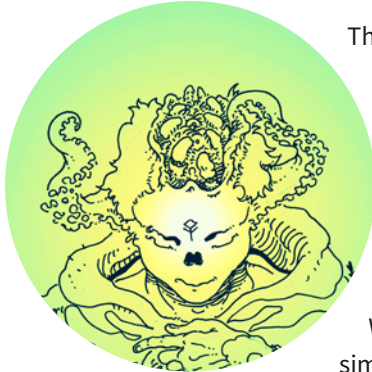
Game modules, locations, powers and items may also specify particular types and flavors of corruption.

V.b.i. Example: Blue God's Corruption Path

Cat is designing a path of corruption traits for a cultist of the Blue God, whose increased devotion is marked in their flesh.

She gives the path a name: Blue God's Sign.

And some flavor text: "from rot comes purification."



Then she invents four traits:

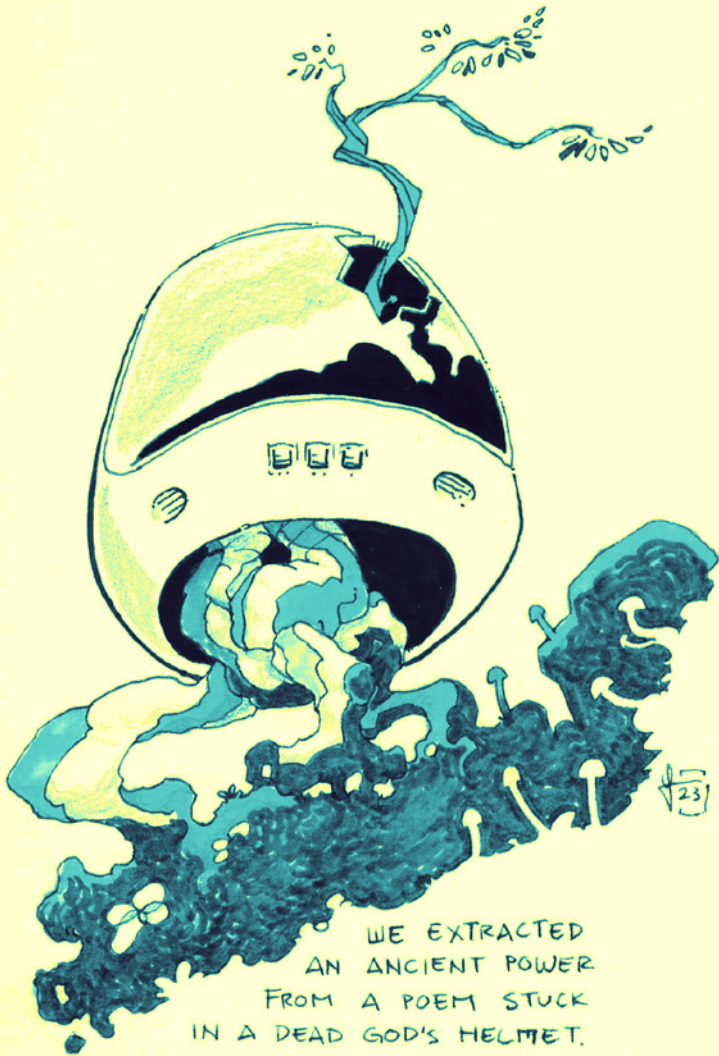
First, the oozing mark. The filth of chaos oozes from the hero's pores. They become resilient to disease, but the smell is pestilential.

Second, the blue palmata. Orifices open on the skin and ooze a blood-like serum. Wounds do not fully heal and release a similar fluid.

Third, the new skin. Skin becomes a cratered, heaving, suppurating mess covered in wriggling symbiotes that resemble grave worms. Nose, ears, eyelids, and other delicate areas may rot away.

Fourth, the sacred yogurt. A whitish substance with the consistency of clotted yogurt continually drips from the symbiotes. This milk of the Blue God has strong analgesic and numbing properties. The hero becomes entirely resistant to diseases and poisons.

Cat stole this idea from a grim writer in a strange dream. But she won't admit it.



VI. Owning Powers

Unless a PC rolls a power as a starting item or buys one with their starting cash, they start without any powers beyond their own wits and competence.

VI.a. Getting a New Power

There are five ways, from smart to stupid:

1. Learn it from a wise master, as is tradition. No roll to learn to use the power needed!
2. Purchase an original, mint-in-box power, complete with instructions. Expensive, but easy to learn.
3. Acquire a pre-loved power together with vague instructions from a power user.
4. Find it on an adventure, while looting burial goods ... er ... a treasure hoard. Hard to learn.
5. By messing with a strange artifact or aberration beyond human ken. This may well corrupt your essence.

Most cities regulate the production and sale of powers, which drives official prices up. Still, an enterprising character might find black markets and wild traders with powers for sale. The referee has final say on what powers, if any, are available for purchase in a locality.

Order of	Mint	Pre-Loved	Looted*
1	€100	€50	€25
2	€300	€150	€75
3	€1,000	€500	€250
4	€3,000	€1,500	€750
5	€10,000	€5,000	€2,500
6	€30,000	€15,000	€7,500
7	€100,000	€50,000	€25,000

*always has an unfortunate side effect.

VI.b. Learning to Use a New Power

Any PC can try to use any power.

This is not wise. Without training and study, it could blow up in their face or turn them into a translucent slughuman.

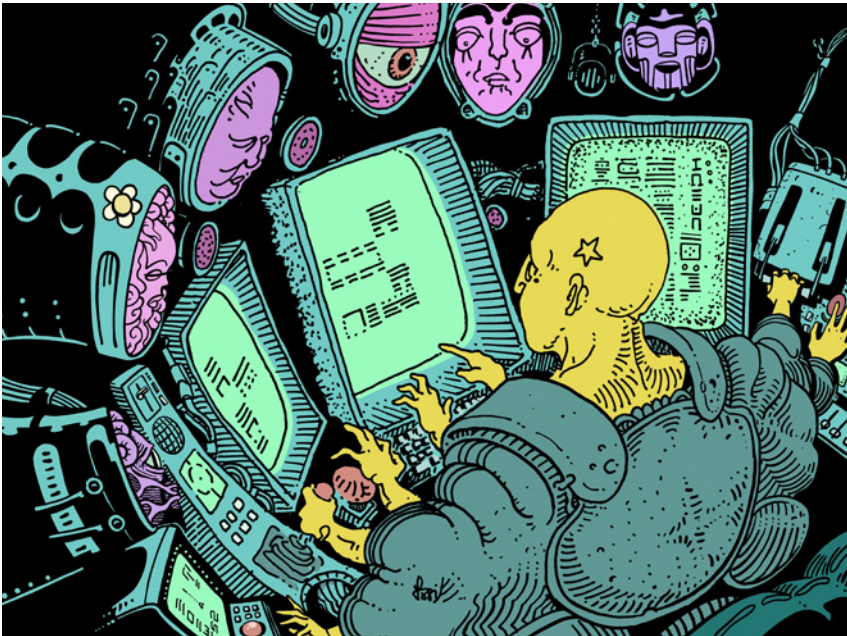
To use a power safely:

First, study it for a week.

Then, roll thought to see how your studies went:

- 1: You failed. Roll over the power's order to avoid corruption exposure; *and* if you learn to use it someday, it will have a side effect.
- Failure: You failed. Roll to beat the power or you are corrupted.
- Success: You learn how to use it safely!
- 20: Mastery. Your version gets a small upgrade!

If you make longer studies, use an oldtech laboratory, or get special help, you may gain bonuses to your learning roll.





VI.c. Modifying a Power

Any PC may attempt to modify a power know how to use. This requires a few weeks, access to a suitable oldtech laboratory or similar facility, and €50 per order of power. Example modifications:

- Power Hack. Make the power work with one of your existing traits. Very hard thought test.

Example: hacking a healing power to work with a necromantic trait.

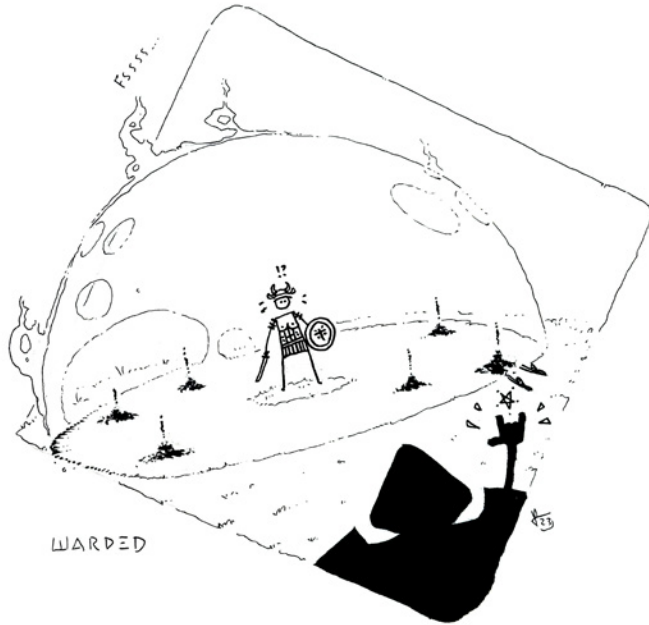
- Power Upgrade. Gain an extra or better effect. Hard thought test.

Example: upgrading a translation protocol to also improve the user's perceived charisma.

- Power Quirk. Gain a cosmetic quirk or side effect. Thought test.

Example: making mosses sprout when a hydrotechnique is used.

As with learning a new power (VI.b.), failing to modify a power risks corruption and great success offers added bonuses.



VI.c.i. Small Upgrades

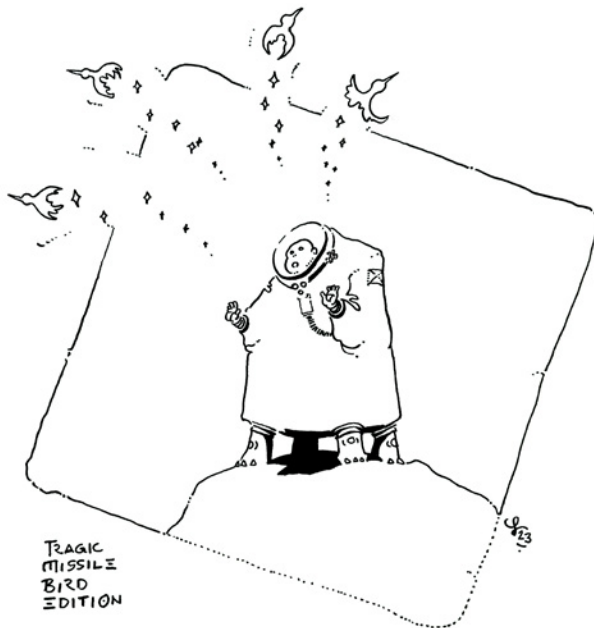
Improve powers with a bit of whizz-bang oldtech wizardry.

1. Healing. A random nearby creature or object gains 1 life when you use the power.
2. Soothing. Nearby plants, animals, and even humans feel calm when you use the power.
3. Shielding. When you deploy your power, you can shield a creature or object from its effect.
4. Silent. Very stealthy to use. Soundless, even.
5. Enticing aroma. You smell very nice and pleasant after using the power.
6. Nimbus. When you use the power, you gain a small bonus to your defenses for the rest of the round.
7. Warding. Using the power creates a field that weakens adjacent daemons or undead for the rest of the round.
8. Timer. You can set your power to activate 0 to 2 turns after your turn.
9. Retro-probabilistic. After you use your power, you gain a bonus on your next roll. It's weird.
10. Explosive. All dice for your power's effects explode.

VI.c.ii. Cosmetic Quirks

Customize your powers and show that you really own them!

1. Transfer. When you use your power, one nearby creature is left pale and cool, another becomes flushed and hot.
2. Wind. Leaves rustle, and fly as you use your power.
3. Green. Mosses sprout, plants grow, fur shines.
4. Musical. Chimes. Spheres. Tubular bells. Angelic pipes. Fortunately, you can turn this effect off.
5. Odor. Madeleines? Paingeometric scones?
6. Luminous. A gentle glow of an unnatural sort accompanies your power use.
7. Shadowy. Local shadows animate and flap away.
8. Extratemporal. Eternity beckons in an instant. Everyone nearby sees a bit of the far future and distant past when you use your power. The glimpse is cool, not helpful.
9. Whispers. From beyond the cosmic veil. They promise secrets, but never quite deliver.
10. Fourth wall. Phantom dice spin about the wizard.

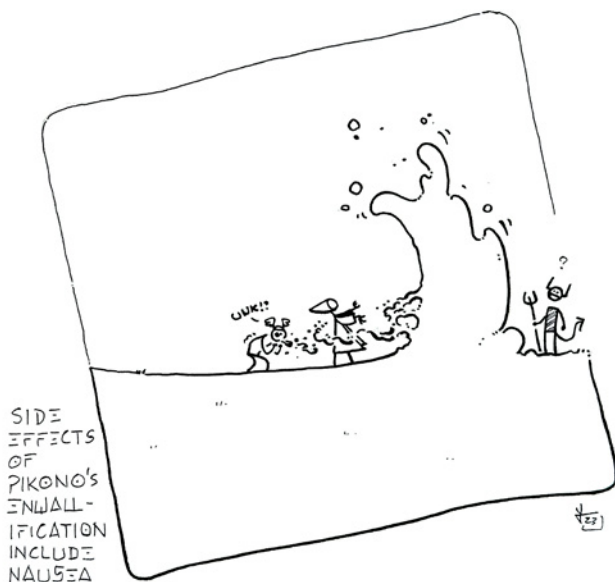


VI.c.iii. Side Effects

Unfortunately, this power is a bit busted. Still useful, just ... not nice. Sorry.

When you use it, the following effect occurs:

1. Leeching. A random nearby creature loses 1 life.
2. Baleful. Animals howl, plants quiver, humans weep.
3. Leaky. The power also partly affects a random creature near your target. Annoying.
4. Noisy. Louder than it should be. Much louder.
5. Smelly. Rotten dragon eggs? Wet howlbear farts? It's quite unpleasant and obvious.
6. Flashy. A five second holo-advertorial plays before it activates. Oof.
7. Ghastly. Disturbs nearby resting dead. Graves shake. Cloudy with a chance of zombies.
8. Slow. Takes an extra action or 1 more life.
9. Caustic. The mood of everyone nearby worsens. It just does.
10. Juddering. Any effect dice that roll a natural 1 fizzle. If the power doesn't have effect dice, roll a d12. On a natural 1 the power fails to trigger.



VI.d. Becoming a Proper Wizard®

To become a proper wizard, the PC must track down a mentor, perform 3 foolish tasks, permanently reduce their life by 1 point per level in a ritual involving strange foods at a harrowing feast, and gain a corruption trait.

Thereafter, each of their own life points spent on a power, or “spell” as they call it, is worth double.

“Proper Wizard®” is a trait and occupies a trait slot.

VI.d.i. Example: Master Nobolus of the Sixfold Hexacenter

The pupil ascends the folded stair, up the side of the great nameless emperor’s visage carved into the obsidian flanks of the Glass Mountain. The postfall locals have quarried away much of the emperor’s chin and mouth, but their needs are small and it will be a thousand years before they obliterate the face ... if their molehill culture lasts that long.

The pupil steps sideways through time as she ascends the folded stair, up the side of the emperor’s forehead, walking into the cool broken place of the Master Nobolus.

“Master, I have solved the riddle! I have come sideways through time to learn to walk the Sixfold Path!”

A strangely folded head appears from behind a plane of shadow. An origami silhouette of a body follows. Patterns of peonies and ponies chase themselves across the wizard’s flat expanse.

“So you have, so you have. That was rather quick! Complete three tasks for me, and I shall teach you.”

“Anything!”

“First, sweep the shadow spiders from the Valley of Death. Second, bring me the air bladder of the golden sky fish Nemora. Finally, bake me a golem of clay like flesh, that I may walk you to the Library of Lesions. There, I shall teach you how to embark on the Hexametric Way.”

“How could one sweep shadow spiders?”

“I don’t know. Maybe try a light broom?”

VII. Inventing New Powers

When inventing a new power for a character:

1. Come up with an idea that creates fun solutions and novel situations.
2. Describe it in three sentences.
3. Make sure it's not a universal 'I win' button.
4. Give it a memorable name.
5. Set its parameters: order of power, range, target, and duration.
6. An overcharge is optional.

Pop culture, books, movies, and songs can all give a good creative jolt. Mix those ideas with other works and concepts to create a unique power.

VII.a. Setting Parameters

This is an art not a science.

- Order of power. Compare your new power to the various orders and other existing powers.
- Range. Start with something that makes sense. See above.
- Target. See above.
- Duration. See above.
- Overcharge. Make it a little less than twice as good or useful.

You can start with a weak version, then create a stronger, advanced, or second edition version. The technowizards of these later times are not perfect rationalists and multiple versions of a power can and should exist.

VII.c. Adapting Spell Levels [from Other Systems]

Feral schools call the ancients' powers spells and assign to them levels of magical magnitude. This is nonsense, but their ravings imply:

- 1 power = 0th level spell, such as *Can Trip*
- 2 power = 1st level spell, such as *Tragic Missile*
- 4 power = 2nd level spell, such as *Hlod Person* [sic]
- 6 power = 3rd level spell, such as *Pyreball*
- 18 power = 9th level spell, such as *Big Wish*

For details consult the album *Apocrypha of the O.S.* at the end of the book.

VII.b. Adjusting Powers Through Play

Every group will find powers that are mechanically too useful, reducing the creativity of roleplay or the utility of other characters. When that happens, the players and referee should discuss what to do. There are many options short of banning a power:

1. Make it dangerous.
2. Increase the power's order.
3. Reduce the power's parameters: duration, range, or targets.
4. Adjust the power's effects: modify damage or mechanical impact.
5. Add an additional cost or drawback to the power. Perhaps it requires a strange fuel, like crushed arcane diamonds, to use.

The in-game narrative rationale for this kind of retcon (nerf) is simple. Powers require half-understood fantascience, rare components, old rituals, and goldilocks circumstances. Something has changed, and the power no longer works as it did when a character first learned to use it.

Consider, for example, the ancient and true First Soil story of the great technomancer Jekyll et Hyde, the wizard who invented the electric aerostat and the lead light bulb. Et Hyde experimented with making himself able to toil without sleep, and for a while his new powers worked, but then the batch of rare earth sugar he used to mix his anti-sleep serum ran out and destructive side effects manifested. Hyde then had to hide in a cage from the destructive, hulking rage of his released subconscious Jekyll persona.

Lying scholars suggest that the extant tales of Long Long Ago still known in the Rainbow Lands are garbled. This is obviously false.





POWERS GREAT AND SMALL

Noë breathed. Deep, slow inhale. Longer, slower exhale. Her introsopic daemon complimented her on managing her anxiety. She would have laughed, but she was afraid she might cry.

She was alone now.

Not even static on the headset. Annoying as Onion could be, at least he was human. Here, in this wizard's shiptower ... not many humans.

She opened her eyes a little and her stomach churned. Not so bad now that it was empty. The upsetting inverted colors and swimming perspective made her ill, but the breathing was helping.

Behind her, the mirror portal stood solid, shut, and mirrorless. One-way.

Well, she was where she wanted to be. Vorus Hafut's real tower. Or deep tower. The epicenter of this timelost mess.

The shadows glowed, the lights sucked at her eyes, the reds burned with ultraviolet radiation, the blues shifted into the infrared. Her Giger detector pinged with the threat of strange, corrupted alien forms beyond the walls.

Where would a stupid post-human wizard put the blueprince scroll collection? And, more vital, where would he put the exit?

A. Albums of Power

Powers are often compiled, marketed, sold, and installed as concept albums. Technowizards argue this makes for a better user experience (haha). Contramages scoff that this is simply how the magicapitalists force customers to buy bundles of subpar powers at inflated prices.

A pristine power album in its original packaging will include power recordings and reproduction instructions. To enjoy its powers, suitable equipment may be required (sold separately). For best results, one should invest in high fidelity power activation equipment from a reputable brand. It may cost more, but it has a logo!

Characters can acquire individual powers from different albums. If they grow in fame and skill, they may also create their own albums.

Albums, like trait paths, are optional compilations, not rigid schools. Walled garden fruit stores exist where well-heeled power consumers can pick and choose individual powers to complement their personality and create technomagical mixtapes.

A.1. This Album

You hold in your hand a mint condition artifact from the Long Long Ago. A wonder whose secrets promise to transport you (or your psychic emanation) to worlds undreamed of in more mediocre philosophies.

A.1.a Album Format

1. oldtech computer
2. synthskin cyber fiche
3. vials of memory fluid
4. baked clay tablets
5. tattooed skin
6. bundled bone scales
7. parchment codex
8. brazen clockwork
9. mass-market paperback
10. plastic paper scroll
11. preserved head
12. crystal-laced slab
13. compact phonograph
14. artificial mycelial mass
15. knotted net record
16. vomeronasal stimulator
17. pearlescent implant
18. tactile interface cylinder
19. mirrored glasses
20. memory daemon

A.1.b Distinctive Design

1. howls when accessing underworld cloud
2. fiddly to read on the move
3. reading causes a euphoric high
4. heavy and nigh-indestructible
5. phosphorescent & highly visible
6. iridescent, beautiful, living extra-dimensional appendage
7. silver bonds and cautionary tales
8. played with gears and levers
9. tatty, yellow, with thin sheets
10. ornate ritual reproduction
11. professorial spell slave in a jar
12. ostentatious jadeite matrix
13. highly collectible protective cover
14. produces hallucinogenic fruiting bodies
15. doubles as a scarf or flag
16. bottled with aerosol spray nozzle
17. suggests trepanation for best effect
18. inscrutable vantablack surface
19. holo bubble with AR power codes
20. traditional bronze pazuzu-style statuette

A.1.c Feature, not Bug

1. demon-haunted
2. requires micro-lens reader
3. needs refueling
4. infested with memories
5. requires reading assistant
6. looks like valuable cash
7. corrupted arcane sigils
8. sings when used
9. disappears and reappears unpredictably
10. keeps coming loose
11. requires host neural network
12. strongopinionsonpoeticpolitics
13. corroded by fae memories
14. skips records if jostled
15. prone to overgrowth
16. coded in bureau-cratric triplicate
17. alien tastes
18. autocorrected keyword blocker
19. obscure gesture interface
20. freemium micro-transaction model



B. The Sixfold Hexacenter

A color theory psychemagic developed by the hypothetical wizard Spectrum Claire-Sin ZX. Also called the prayer of the five permitted colors and the ritual of the unmentioned hue.

If you spin these powers swiftly, they look like white magic.

The Child of Mind

“There, upon those steps, under the ring stars,” gestured the quarterling with one dappled paw.

“That youth is the wizard?” asked Noë.

“No, the halo. The radiation out of time. The youth is but an emanation, an embodiment, an avatar.”

“A radiation ghost wizard? Are they not mere echoes of people?”

“No ghost, a post-corporeal mind,” the quarterling rolled its barred eyes.

It picked up its hamper and motioned Noë to follow. The youth did not turn to face them as they approached with the offerings, but the halo glowed. The quarterling took out a patterned cloth and laid it out on a flat tumbled diorite slab. On the cloth it laid out figs and almonds and pickled citrus, flat bread and pale milk and a traditional plastic-wrapped delight.

The youth turned its fine-sculpted head and looked, amused, “you supplicate me as though I were some deity. What do you seek?”

“Horrors the human has seen,” the quarterling indicated Noë, “and its mind is shatter-scatter now. The purple memories need to be drawn out, the bliss lord’s dream needs to send them into the noö-noö.”

“Far you’ve come for mind-alteration! Why would you trust a ghost out of time to treat your psyche?”

Noë swallowed and held up the *Nihil!* blueprince scroll she had found in Vorus Hafut’s shiptower.

The youth’s eyes widened and it whispered, “ahh.”



Red Mist

Tactical Aggression Augment

P: 1 R: short, maybe 20m T: one creature D: a few minutes

Rubra's need overcomes the target. Anger and passion boil, threatening to break its composure.

It rerolls its reaction roll with a single d8. Choose whether they add or subtract your charisma.

Overcharge: affect a number of creatures equal to your level + 1.

Blue Lotus

Maximum Somatic Contentment

P: 1 R: short, maybe 5 meters T: one creature D: an hour

Soma's bliss brings contentment to the target. It saves. Success: it loses its next turn to a blissful reverie. Failure: it sits down, lost in blissful reverie for an hour.

Overcharge: affect a number of creatures equal to your level + 1.

Orange Dream

Forgotten Spider's Labors

P: 1 R: whisper T: one creature D: an hour

A neutral or friendly creature agrees to do what you ask for an hour, so long as it does not appear immediately dangerous or risky.

Overcharge: even a hostile or violent creature will listen, provided you can whisper in its ear.

Green Haven

Arbor Sanctuary

P: 1 R: nearby **T:** a 7 meter diameter sphere **D:** a night or a day
Convince shrubberies, grasses, brambles, and other plants to form a hedge igloo, a sanctuary to rest and hide in. Enemies need at least one turn to pass through the hedge. They are vulnerable in the shrub wall. After a night or day, the plants return to their ordinary ways.

Overcharge: sculpt a thorny hedge wall measuring 200 meters square and 1 meter thick. Its thorns cut anyone forcing their way through like daggers (1d4 damage).

Yellow Cloud

Sands of Lost Times

P: 1 R: nearby **T:** a 9 meter cube **D:** a few minutes
Fine, obscuring yellow dust rises from the ground and hangs in the air. A veil no sight can pierce. The dust irritates the lungs of air breathers. After a few minutes, it blows away.

Overcharge: summon into shimmering immobility a wall of dust measuring 200 cubic meters.

Purple Memories

Comic Emotional Display

P: 1 R: touch **T:** a creature **D:** several minutes
The barest word or sensation triggers vivid memories, thoughts, and emotions. How could anyone keep thought or fact a secret in this state? Or resist a fine, rousing song?

Overcharge: affect up to twice your level creatures.



C. Dawn's Highway

A compilation of folk road magic by the ethnologist and hedge wizard Fritzu Na (AM/FM). Also called Road Magic by the uninformed, and the Way of Ways by the hobo hieratics of the Right Road.

No album makes the crooked road straighter.

Runner of Roads

The prince's lip wrinkled slightly as they beheld the quarterling blocking his entourage with its wheelbarrow. The quarterling did not see this, of course. Polite masks hid the prince's faces.

The servant ran forward, intuiting the prince's distaste from the tension in their shoulders, and shouted, "you, little desert rat, off the road with you!"

The ferret-like quarterling straightened its shoulders and grimly invoked the path-right of pan-humanity. The milestone beside it glowed, confirming the quarterling's human credentials.

The prince rolled their eyes and a junior corper strode forward and performed the minimal polite bow, "greetings, fellow human traveler in the vast, away from Garden and the Green. Do you need aid?"

"No, no, but your postal ... help. Your ambicyclic is large and strong, my wheelbarrow is small and humble. Good for roots, not for this..." with a dramatic flourish the quarterling pulled aside the patterned cloth to reveal a plaz case two cubits square.

"Sarcopsykter!" yelled two of the prince's corpers, disregarding their psychemorphic conditioning.

The prince clamped down on this fragmentation and the junior spoke again, "it is not empty, I take it."

"Non! A human inside, old morph, very traditional. Mind healing. Needs transport to a human warren and I need to go back to my burrow home."

"And shipping fees?"

"It leaves this *Damp Mass* copy," the quarterling offered the little artifact.

Damp Mass

Nosigoro Logistical Augment

P: 1 R: touch T: 1 sack D: 1 day

A sub-reality field halves the object's interactive mass. An object of 100 kilos acts like one of fifty.

Overcharge: the mass is halved again. Or it affects an object twice the size. Or it lasts a week instead.

Better Pastures

Darehodo Patch Choice

P: 1 R: self T: self D: 1 hour

Meditate at a crossroad for an hour, observe the flow of its energies, the flight of birds, the waft of milkweed seeds. Ask one objective yes / no question of the crossroad, and it shall answer. Will this path reach water within 50 miles? Is there green grass along that path within 20 km?

Overcharge: ask a second question or clarify the first.

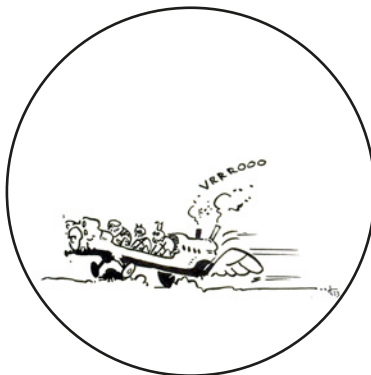
Wing And Prayer

Dirty Fixing

P: 1 R: touch T: vehicle or steed D: 1 day

Use your faith to mend an axle or splint a leg. Your vehicle or steed can ignore one failure or injury for a day, but then the damage is worse.

Overcharge: the fix lasts a week; but the damage is even worse after.



Roadfinder

Blacktop Sniffer

P: 1 **R:** a day's march **T:** self **D:** 1 hour

Sniff the world's road fields, gard the astral way-lines. Detect the nearest road a day's march or less away.

Overcharge: the detection range is doubled or the sense lasts a day.

Highway Cruiser

Foolself Driving

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** vehicle or steed **D:** 1 day

Summon a driver daemon from the noösphere and bind it to your vehicle or steed for a day. Lo, the chariot now drives itself! Hopefully, the daemon understands your language to enable voice commands.

Overcharge: the daemon is capable of more complex maneuvers and adapting to changing road situations, like stopped ambling lancers.

Roadmaker

Stradograd's Engine of Civility

P: 6 **R:** one metric mile **T:** rock and soil **D:** 1 day

By the channeled powers of the great converter, Chem Caoutchouc, base reality is rearranged. Over a day, a faststone road grows from the land, theodolite straight, cambered and elevated, a fortunate 7 meters wide and a metric mile long. The road crosses swamps, sways across valleys, and bores tunnels through ridges. Without additional fixatives and preparation, the faststone road surface decays in a month.

Overcharge: the faststone sets into standardstone overnight, creating a surface that will last a century without maintenance.



D. The Viridian Practice

A traditional projectile combat practiced by the gun monks of the Crater School. Legends say it was founded by the nameless gunslinger named Jill. Also called Gan-Fu by untrustworthy urban fans; bootleg versions have become popular in the Sailing Islands and other dens of disorder.

Does your album include all these powers as well as an ivory-handled peacemaker original? If it does not, it may be a pirated bootleg! Report pirated albums to the Organization of Organized Power. Piracy is theft.

Viridian Practice Album Features

Skill with projectile weapons carries over to the Viridian powers.

The powers are anchored to a hallmark projectile weapon (gun, wand, bow, etc.) of level 1 or higher. You can use a single anchor weapon for all the powers in the album.

≡

Wagon Fort Morning

“She’s coming to!”

“About time.”

Noë opened her eyes. Everything felt stiff and creased. Time felt strange. Folded. Papery. Dry.

“Water,” she croaked.

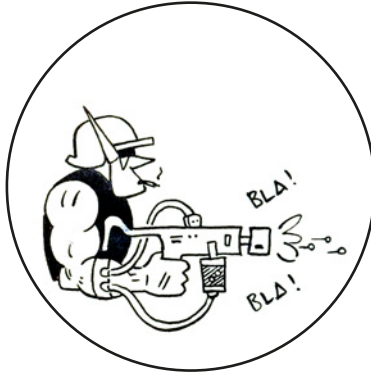
“Quick, rehydrate her, then get her ready. You’re a wizard, yeah?” a grimy face floated into view.

“No, granny, a techno.”

“Yeah, she’s a wizard. Good. She’ll know how to use the big gun-ta.”

“Gun-ta?”

“The big tarret. Our golem took a worm to the brain. Can’t operate now. You’ll do, you’ll do. Come, quick, hydrate her! We don’t have much time!”



Mother of Bullets

Blood Made Lead

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** anchor weapon **D:** instant

Reloads your weapon as a free action, turning life force into semi-real projectiles.

Overcharge: the first semi-real projectile to strike a target deals extra damage equal to your level plus the power's price (2 + level).

Dancing In The Hail

Dodgebullet

P: 1 **R:** self **T:** self **D:** one round

Reduce your metaphysical "hit box" to the size of your weapon. All ranged attacks against you suffer major penalties (i.e. disadvantage).

Overcharge: any ranged attacks that do hit only deal half damage.

Ring of Lead

Rapid Metal Spin Cycle

P: 1 **R:** adjacent **T:** all creatures **D:** one action

Use the buzz saw stance to unload all your ammo at once, attacking every* adjacent creature with a single action.

Overcharge: no attack roll required.

*subject to how much ammunition their anchor weapon holds.

Eyes of the Arrow

Panoptic Projectile

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** one projectile **D:** a minute or so

Bind a strand of your consciousness to a projectile. It acts like a remote eye (or other sensor).

Overcharge: the projectile maneuvers in flight with the agility of a dove.

Counterfire

Panoptic Projectile

P: 1 **R:** a dozen meters **T:** one attack **D:** interrupt

Deflect an incoming attack, melee or ranged, with a projectile.

Overcharge: the attacker must save or be disarmed.

Depleted Heavy Metal Rain

Bigger Bang

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** anchor weapon **D:** a few minutes

Imbue your next shot with an inertial error. Roll damage dice twice. The dice also become exploding (for example, as long as a d6 rolls sixes, keep rolling and adding up the total).

Overcharge: Roll damage dice thrice.

≡

Manual Acquisition

Noë thumbed through the plastic pages of the manual. None of this made any sense. She couldn't use this old blaster turret. It was hooked right into the golem's rattled mind. Well, she could override it, but that would be risky. The thing was leaking heat and gods knew what else.

The leathery nomad prodded her with her scavvie rifle, "go on, lock in. We paid good money for your frozen ass."

Thoughts stumbled. Frozen ... no ... yes. Sarcopsykter. Right, after the radiation wizard cleaned out the shatter-scatter. Bit of her mind felt like an empty tooth socket. The nomad prodded her again. Shit. She hoped they had a receipt. Needed to figure out what happened.

"Yes, yes, I'll need a life source. A soul for the gun."

E. Apocrypha of the O.S.

Powers implied in documents salvaged from the ends of existence. Fine scholars employed by the Institute of Industrial Accountability and Civilian Recycling (Purple Branch) have worked hard to recreate these powers for a modern audience. Not so much as an album, as a box of incomprehensible odds and terrible ends.

Can Trip

Two Left Foot Curse, Clumsy Cat-astrophe

P: 1 R: a few meters T: someone who can hear you D: instant

You wish someone sprawled and humbled and your muttered curse may make it so. The target's shoelaces are suddenly undone or a stone or stick hops to trip them. They save or sprawl.

Overcharge: There's no save. The target is tripping.

Tragic Missile

Antipersonal Guided Force Bolt, Cupid's Cranial Penetrator

P: 2 R: roughly 30–50m T: anything with a mind D: instant

You visualize a channel connecting the local ambient energy fields with the soul-personality dyad of an entity you can see or imagine. Once you release your visualization, the energies fly into the nexus of that entity's mindspace, like a noöspheric homing missile. The effect is quite painful, dealing 2d4 damage plus 1 damage for every level, charisma, aura, and thought point of the target. Yea, the stronger they are, the harder tragedy strikes. The missile leaves no mark.

Overcharge: You visualize three channels at once, striking a single target thrice or three different targets.

Hlod Person

Dyslexic Demon's Binding, Leshnik's Unforeseen Constriction

P: 4 R: close T: a person D: 1 hour

Wave your hand like the six-times folded frond and watch your target become as a log of wood. Hard, stiff, unmoving, receptive to carpentry.

Overcharge: The change is permanent.

Pyreball

Instant Incendiary, Damora's Placid Inferno

P: 6 **R:** touch, or as thrown **T:** 10m diameter **D:** a day, then instant

You take a ball-sized burning ember from a pyre or bonfire and speak the placatory formulas to trap the entire fire within. When the ball strikes a hard surface (or is struck), all the trapped fires suddenly erupt, dealing 5d6 damage to all creatures caught in its blast radius. An unexploded ball dissipates harmlessly after a day.

Overcharge: the ball deals 10d6 damage or its fires keep for a month.

Nihil Est!

Life's End Made Present, Hadi's Self-Immolation Binding

P: 8 **R:** touch **T:** a sentient target **D:** 1 year

Between one step and the next, you flicker between existence and non-existence, you age a year and a creature you touch disappears into the nothing of wormspace for a year. No save.

Overcharge: you age seven years and a kilometer diameter sphere centered on your soul disappears into the nothing of wormspace for a year. Overcharge again to remain behind to watch the sphere disappear.

Dangerous: no matter how powerful you are, this spell imperils your existence.

Big Wish

Keep on Turning, Supplication of the Perverse Demiurge

P: 18 **R:** self **T:** demiurge **D:** a day, then permanent.

You call upon a demiurge, an echo of the Builders, and command it to grant your wish. The demiurge will do its level best to misunderstand you, probably because it is an alien from out of time and space.

The protective circle takes a day to draw, otherwise the spell could be dangerous. The summoning itself takes but three gestures and one shining, reflective object.

Overcharge: you get three wishes in a crystal chalice. Drink its sour liquid to summon your demiurge.



Fed up with the wilderness? Tired of the past's rusted ruins? Looking for a place to rest and invest? Ready for some riot and revivification?

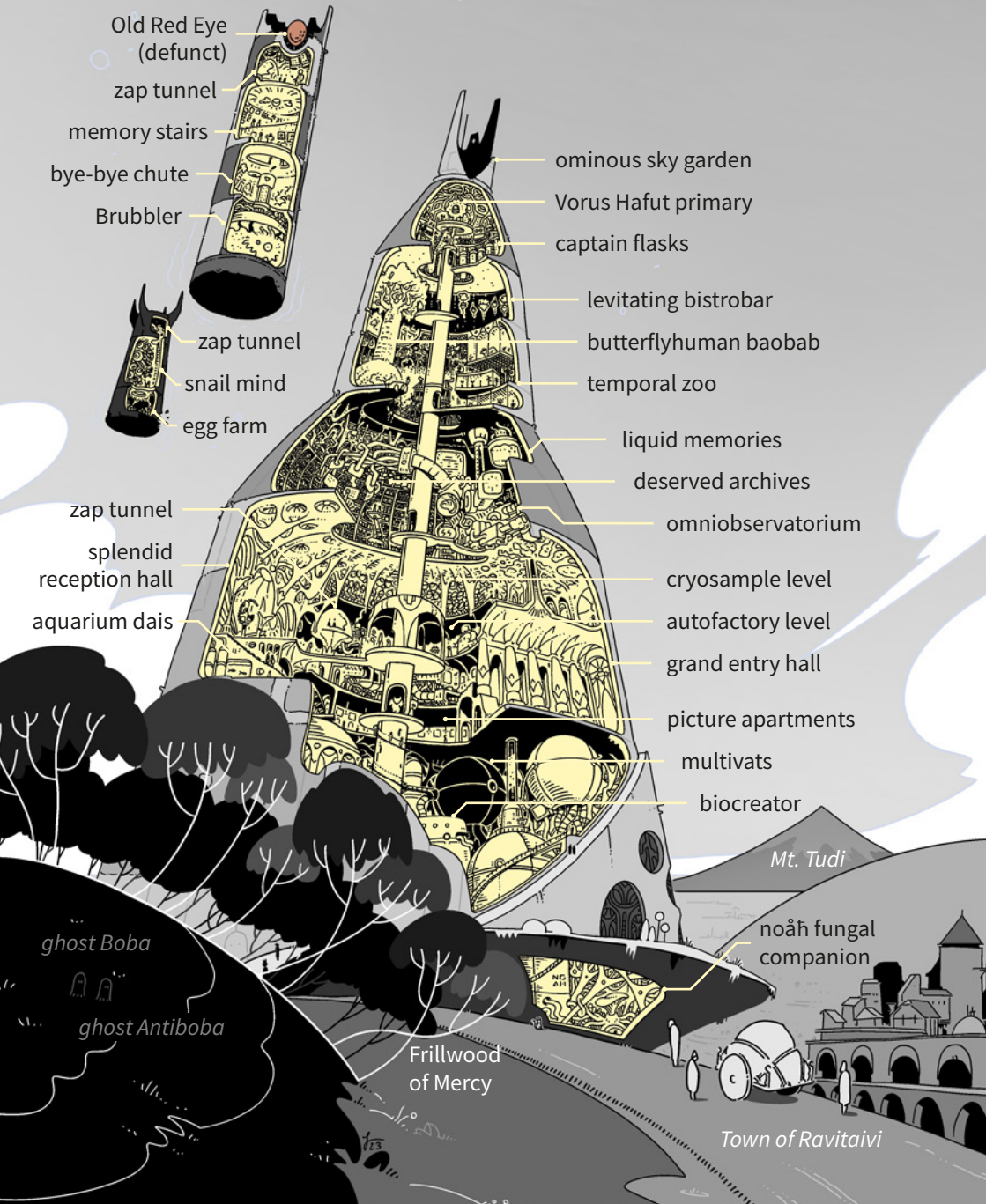
Visit the Red Lands and get a taste of Civilization.

From the blood wine to the best in biomantic surgery, enjoy the peace, quiet, and refinement provided by the noble night knights and the safe economic asset growth ensured by our highly representative republic.

Ω

For a guide to all the Rainbowlands, activate your anticipation armillaries! Verily, we say, before the next year shall taste its winter, *Our Golden Age* will be here. **The [•]quel to the Ultraviolet Grasslands is happening.**

***Shiptower Haruspex,
y.o.t. Double Ration.***



Old Red Eye
(defunct)

zap tunnel

memory stairs

bye-bye chute

Brubbler

zap tunnel

snail mind

egg farm

zap tunnel

splendid
reception hall

aquarium dais

ghost Boba

ghost Antiboba

Frillwood
of Mercy

ominous sky garden

Vorus Hafut primary

captain flasks

levitating bistrobar

butterflyhuman baobab

temporal zoo

liquid memories

deserved archives

omniobservatorium

cryosample level

autofactory level

grand entry hall

picture apartments

multivats

biocreator

Mt. Tudi

noah fungal
companion

Town of Ravitaivi



A text to entice the reader and tempt the buyer.
A tome of magic sufficiently advanced. A zine of
powers in the psychedelic wonderland of the
synthetic dream machine. A codex for wizards in
the Ultraviolet Grasslands and beyond.

<FLEE! FLEE! DO NOT TRUST THE WIZARD! IT IS
AN EATER OF DREAMS AND SOULS! IT WILL PICKLE
YOUR BODY AND STEAL YOUR MIND! FLEE! FLEE!>

EXALTED
FUNERAL

