Appendix F- Ritual Magic

In character, ritual magic is largely an unknown area, so experimentation as to what can be achieved is expected and encouraged, though not without danger. Although anything can be attempted via ritual magic it should be noted that not everything is possible. In particular, we will not permit effects which cannot be phys-reped (e.g. attempting to give someone the power of flight) and will not add new calls to the game.

We also generally do not allow players to create effects that duplicate crafting and skill but more cheaply. An example of this would be giving a mage the power to perform the **COUNTERMAGIC** effect. This is a tier 3 ability requiring a lot of experience and a very expensive item made by a crafter who has also spent a great deal of experience. A ritual to do the same thing would cost many rare materials, a wagonload of currency and require an extremely skilled ritualist – be prepared for failure.

Further to this, the more powerful the effect, the greater the power required. Controlling this power safely will require a more skilled ritualist and possibly the use of specialist equipment.

Casting a Ritual

Ritual magic within the Vale can only be performed at the ritual site. Elsewhere within the Vale any power put into a ritual flows away even faster than in the rest of the world, as if being actively sucked away, making ritual magic quite impossible. The ritual site will be a clearly marked place in the area between the Duke's camp and the Khan's camp, which will form one of the resources over which the two camps will have to compete. At times when it is possible to perform ritual magic a ref will be available at the ritual site to determine the outcome of any rituals performed. If a ref is not present then the ritual site is inactive and then, as in the rest of the Vale, any mana put into a ritual simply flows away uselessly and is wasted.

Before You Start

When arriving at the ritual site, players should be ready to answer some questions from the ritual ref in advance of starting their ritual. These questions will be handled in an IC fashion as far as is possible, but the showing of character cards, etc., will be necessary. You should prepare to provide the following information:

- The name and character details of the ritualist leading the ritual. The lead ritualist must have the Ritual Magic skill.
- The ritual form you intend to use.
- The type(s) of magic being performed (Elemental Fire, Lightning, Ice or Mind, Demonology, Necromancy, etc.).
- The rune(s) you intend to use during the ritual (see Skills below).
- Character details of the participants who are there to assist the lead ritualist.

Most ritualists bring at least one assistant to help with the ritual. Ritual assistants do not need to know the art of ritual magic themselves but they do need to be magically active (have at least petty magic) in order to assist. The ritual assistants must actively participate in the ritual to be considered to be contributing.

- Details of the ritual target.

- Mana crystals and other items being contributed to power the ritual (these must be handed over to the ritual ref).

The Guild of Mages has advised that coin will be required to activate some rituals, so they have recommended adding some of this to every ritual. The reason for this is unclear and anyone who knows is not talking. Those seeking the aid of their demonic allies will undoubtedly seek to sacrifice shards and souls, the currency of the Khan's camp. Rumours that the souls somehow help to power the ritual seem both distasteful but also quite reasonable.

Casting the Ritual

Once the above information has been provided to the ritual ref's satisfaction, the ritual can commence. The ritualist and their team will then perform the ritual in front of the ritual ref. It is very important to make sure that the ref can see and hear you, as what they see and hear will determine the outcome of the ritual. Make sure it is clear when you are done.

Necessary Elements

Certain basic elements are necessary for a ritual to have a chance of success. These are:

- Enough mana must be contributed to power the ritual. How much is necessary will depend on the effect you are hoping to achieve, though too much power is difficult to control and may have negative consequences (see below).
- An appropriate ritual form must be employed to focus the mana in the required direction (see Skills below). Provision will be made at the ritual site for laying out the correct form, so players do not need to bring anything with them to achieve this.
- Magical runes must be used to form the spell itself (see Skills below). Three runes are normally necessary to control and direct mana effectively to produce a result. These runes must be drawn during the ritual. Again, provision will be made at the ritual site for the drawing of these runes, so players do not need to bring anything with them to achieve this.

Determining the Effect

Any ritual which contains the necessary elements has a chance of success. However, it is very important to make the intent of the ritual clear to the ritual ref as the effect of a ritual will be determined by the ritual ref's understanding of what you are attempting to achieve.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when determining the effect of a ritual:

- The amount of mana used. More mana will enable more powerful effects to be achieved, though this is not without risk (see Determining the Result below).
- The runes used. Each magical rune has a specific meaning which can be interpreted in various ways (see Skills below). Although many different runes may be appropriate to the effect you are attempting to achieve if incorporated in an inventive fashion, inappropriate runes (eg using the rune for ending, when attempting to begin something) may produce very different results to those intended.
- The type of magic being performed. For example, if the ritualist is skilled in mind magic, and has stated that as the type of magic being performed, then creating a physical effect may be difficult. Although some effects may be possible using various different types of magic, choosing a very inappropriate type of magic for the effect you are aiming for may produce very different results to those intended.
- The words and actions performed during the ritual. It is up to the lead ritualist and his team to weave the meanings of the runes used together to create the desired outcome for the

type of magic being performed in an appropriate fashion. This can be done in many ways, for example speech, storytelling, song, poetry, interpretive dance, etc, and inventiveness is encouraged though clarity is of the utmost importance.

Ultimately, the effect of the ritual will depend on what the ritual ref understands the ritualist's aim to be, based on the type of magic being performed, the meanings of the runes used and the words and actions which form the ritual itself, so be sure to clearly communicate your aim during your ritual or you may get a result which is very different to what you set out to achieve.

That said, it is important to keep the description of the desired effect in character, and to avoid asking for 'this undead minion to be made into a skeletal warrior', or 'these two people to be targeted by a pact spell'. Instead, descriptive comments along the lines of 'make this minion mighty and powerful so that they might slay our enemies' or 'create a lasting pact of peace between these two people' are preferred.

Determining the Result

At the end of the ritual the magic culminates in a randomisation process which involves what amounts to a bead draw (although that is not necessarily quite how it will happen). The draw will select a chit of one of three colours: White (success), Red (hazard) and Black (failure). These are then drawn by the lead ritualist, and their colour determines the outcome of the ritual.

- A ritualist starts with ten white chits as standard.
- To this, further white are added chits based upon the experience of the ritualist and the other ritual participants.
- The ref then adds red chits based upon the amount of mana put into the ritual. Most ritualists can control the mana from up to 10 crystals reasonably safely, although there is always some risk, and are likely to lose control completely somewhere between 14 and 18 crystals. A more experienced ritualist would be able to control more and the assistance of a ritual team will increase the amount of energy that can be controlled. If the total amount of mana used exceeds the ritual team's safe limit, this results in extra reds (making the ritual harder to control).
- There are no black chits initially, but as the ref watches the ritual, black chits will be added for negative aspects such as incorrectly drawn runes, the failure of an assistant to actively participate, the ritualist or participants not paying attention, disturbance of the ritual by outside forces such as combat, or even the injury of the participants.

It should be noted that anachronistic elements (modern references) are extremely likely to result in disaster, and that elements such as comedy and music are best employed wisely – when well done and relevant to the ritual they may be of benefit, but if badly done or inappropriate they may harm the chances of success.

Once the ritual is complete, one chit is randomly drawn by the lead ritualist:

- White means success – the ritual has succeeded within its capacity.
- Black means failure – the ritual simply fails.
- Red means that the ritual team has suffered difficulty in controlling the mana, and another chit is taken.
    - A white chit second means that the ritual succeeded but with a flaw.
    - A black chit second means that the ritual has resulted in a negative effect.

- A red chit second means that the ritualist has lost control of the magical energy completely, and a mana explosion results. All the participants receive a head wound and the ritualist is also affected by an appropriate dismiss effect additionally, the ritualist has any wards blasted off them.

Determining the Duration

The ritual ref will also mark the quality of the ritual as one of the following, although you will **not** be told this mark. The duration of the beneficial effects of rituals will be affected by the ritual quality as follows:

- Poor – the ritual is substandard and the effect will be of a short duration as a result.
- Average – the ritual is acceptable and the effect will last for a period.
- Good – the ritual is above the basic standard we expect and the effect will be extended.
- Excellent – the ritual is outstanding and the effect will be extended and/or enhanced as a result.

The quality of a ritual is a subjective thing, but dramatic and atmospheric elements which create an immersive and exciting feel of great magical works will be looked on favourably. In the Vale, ritual magic is about being impressive rather than "entertaining". Remember, you are performing a great work of arcane magics, and should behave accordingly! You are not putting on a play or musical, though dramatic words and actions, storytelling or songs may be appropriate depending on the desired outcome. Ritual examples can be found in the background wiki to help players who are looking for direction as to what might be appropriate.

We strongly encourage ritualists to create an atmospheric experience for themselves, the other ritual participants, and any onlookers which adds to the overall immersive feel of the game. While a very simply performed, technically correct ritual with enough power will succeed, effort to produce a more impressive ritual will be rewarded as outlined above. Although there is no technical time limit on rituals, provided all necessary elements are completed, very short rituals are unlikely to produce much impact, so as a guide you should presume that a simple ritual will need to last for at least several minutes, while a high powered ritual will need to last significantly longer. Longer rituals give more opportunity for impressive and exciting role playing experiences, provided they do not become dull and repetitive, though of course they also provide more opportunity for things to go wrong, or for the opposition to disrupt your efforts.

A Note on Safety

Although players are encouraged to be creative with their rituals, and dramatic elements such as lighting, effects, music, chanting, drums and so on are encouraged, we ask that when designing rituals, players are sympathetic to the site and do not include elements which might cause damage to the ground or local flora or fauna. Any markings made on the ground must be easily completely erased and must not cause any damage – for example, using candles or laying out rope would be acceptable, while more permanent markings such as paint would not, nor would salt as this can adversely affect plants, nor even flour as this will leave a significant mess especially if it rains. If dangerous effects such as fire, smoke or pyrotechnics are employed this must be done in a safe way which does not endanger the ritual participants or the site, bearing in mind that combat may occur at any time. The ritual ref will stop any ritual which they feel poses a danger to any person present, or to the site. As always, players must be sure to clear up after themselves and not litter the site.

Obtaining the Effect

Even when successful, ritual magic is not an instant thing. The mana which has been controlled and woven into the spell takes some time to manifest, not least because the game team may need some time to determine the exact effect and to issue new character or item cards, etc. Thus if your ritual succeeds, you should return to your camp and congratulate yourselves, then at a later point go to the games desk to collect the results. We will aim to turn rituals around within 6 hours, so you are advised to wait at least this long before going to the Games desk to request your ritual result. Although we hope that the majority of rituals will be resolved within this time, it may not always be possible. In this case, you will then be told when you can return to collect your result.

Skills

Ritual Skill

Ritualists may develop their skill over time, becoming more adept at controlling magical energy and weaving it into spells using ritual magic. As a ritualist learns more and more Runic Lore (see below) they progress from basic skill through advanced to expert.

Ritual Forms

There is currently only one known ritual form, the Inwardly Focussed form, which is known to all mages with the Basic Ritual Skill. There are rumours others, which may become available to ritual mages as they progress.

Inwardly Focussed

This form directs mana inwards, onto the target, which should be placed within the central smaller triangle.
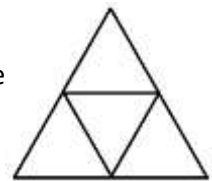
Ritual Runes

There are 27 known ritual runes. These runes are ancient and their meanings are known to mages and sorcerers but to truly control them is much more difficult. Ritualists learn to control these runes as their expertise increases – using runes that you do not properly understand runs a very high risk of losing control of the energy during a ritual.

Mages with Level 2 Magic and the Ritual Magic skill gain 1 levels of Runic Lore automatically, while mages with Level 3 Magic and the Ritual Magic skill gain 2 levels of Runic Lore. Each level of Runic Lore confers knowledge of 3 runes, and players can freely choose the runes they know from the list below. These should be noted in the character background section of the character generation form. More levels of Runic Lore will be available to characters as they advance.

Each rune has an inverted form, which is made by drawing a line above the standard rune. A ritualist automatically knows how to invert every rune they have knowledge of.

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
⋈	Beginnings, commencement, the starting of things.	⋈̄	Things without beginning, that which has always been
⟁	That which emanates forth and radiates outwards	⟁̄	That which stays within, and is confined
⩻	Chaotic and random things, which cannot be predicted	⩻̄	Order and prediction
⟈	A change, the transformation of one thing into another, or that which is changeable and	⟈̄	The immutable, that which does not change but remains the same.
⩽	All things transparent, which can be seen and passed through, or understood clearly	⩽̄	All things opaque, obscure and mysterious
Φ	Strength and the vitality of youth	Φ̄	Weakness and the frailty of old age
⨯	Light, clarity and understanding	⨯̄	Darkness, opacity and confusion
◇	Angles, points, sharpness	◇̄	Softness, roundness
⇂	Small things, and those which are easily lost or hidden	⇂̄	Large and prominent things, which stand out and cannot be obscured
▽	Divergence, the separating and coming apart of things	▽̄	That which does not separate, but holds together
Ⱪ	That which twists and turns, rotates and spins, and is inconsistent in direction	Ⱪ̄	That which continues on a straight, true path
⋋	Communication, reaching out over distance to make a connection	⋋̄	Withdrawal into seclusion and silence
⩘	Attraction, the pulling together of things	⩘̄	Repulsion, that which pushes things apart
⩗	Viscosity, thickness, and slow progress	⩗̄	That which is free flowing and moves fluidly
◇	The centre of all things, their balancing point, at which they are stable	◇̄	The edges of things, instability
⊓	Irrationality and nonsensicalness	⊓̄	Rationality, reason and logic
∫	The integration of things, turning many parts into a whole	∫̄	Those things which cannot be combined
⟋	Weightiness, that which is a heavy burden	⟋̄	Lightness, and all things carefree

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
◇	Things which are of relevance, related and connected	◇̄	Things which are irrelevant, unrelated and disconnected
⇃	Time, and correct timing	⇃̄	That which is without time, or timeless, or out of time
⥯	Discreet items, pieces and particles	⥯̄	That which is continuous
⋎	Frequency, urgency, and rapid progress	⋎̄	Infrequency, slowness and languid movement
▽	The ending of things	▽̄	That which is without ending
⨯	Wandering, deviation from the path	⨯̄	Finding your way, adherence to the route
Ⴗ	The fundamental nature of a thing, its true identity	Ⴗ̄	Masks, false identities and façades
Ⰵ	Decreasing, reducing, and shrinking	Ⰵ̄	Increasing, growing and enlarging
Σ	Things which are greater when combined than the sum of their parts	Σ̄	Things which are more powerful individually than when combined