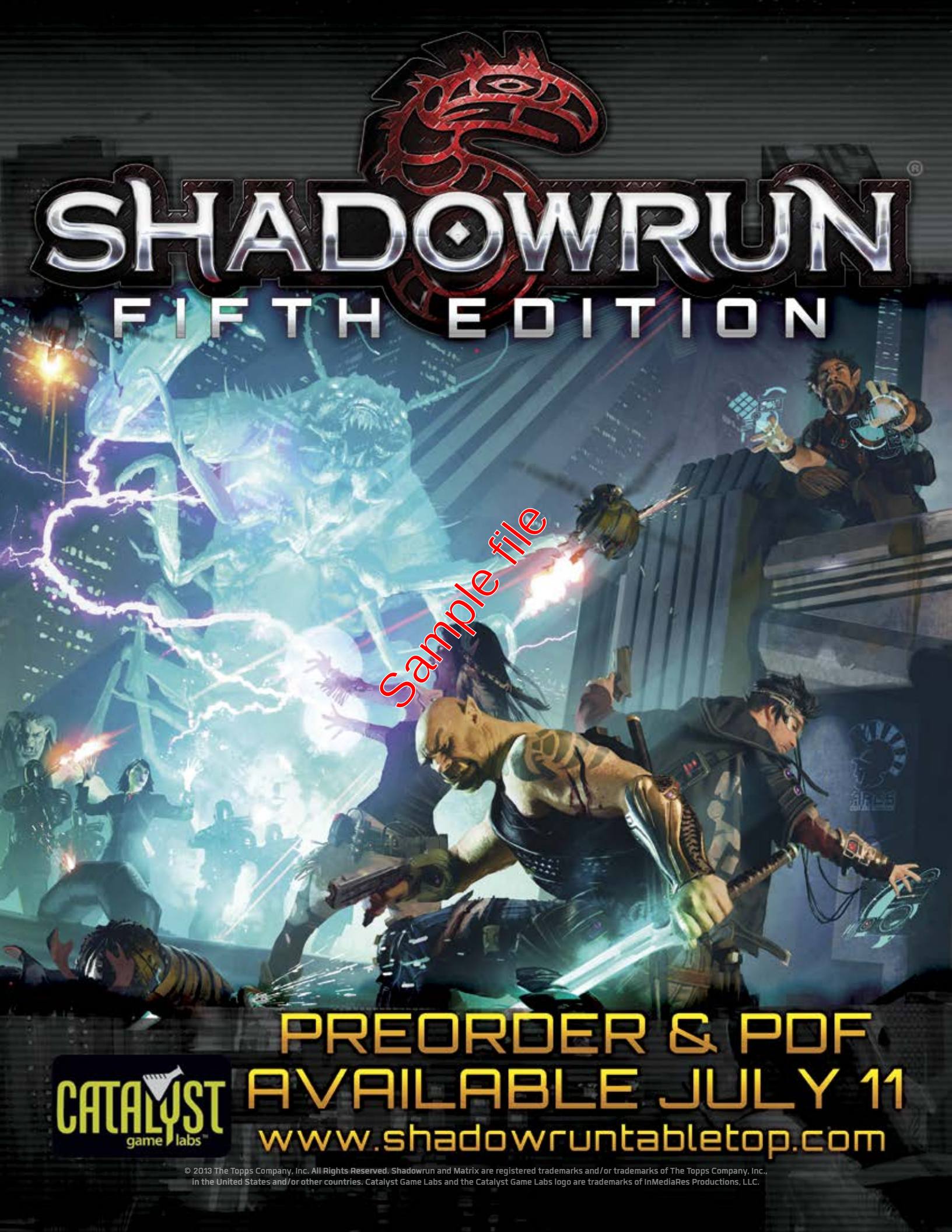




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MAGIC

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the Sixth World, certain people have been able to connect to a new force of energy, the stuff called mana. This mana is channeled through a person and projected into spells, or used to summon a being from a metaplane, or to improve their physical capabilities beyond metahumanity's normal limits. The people who can manipulate mana are called "Awakened."

As it turns out, the mana that fills the world is a fragile thing, and its presence ebbs with pollution and human misery. Despite mana's ups and downs, metahumanity has learned to harness it and practice extraordinary feats of magic.

Nowadays, there's a social order among the Awakened. At the top of the food chain are second- and third-generation **magicians** (people who can cast spells and/or summon spirits) and **adepts** (people who channel mana into their bodies to perform amazing feats). They've been able to stand on the shoulders of the people who came before them, using magic the same way kids use technology invented in their parents' time—reflexively and intuitively. The knowledge that previous generations struggled to obtain, they simply absorb as quick lessons in their youth. They sometimes have more than a touch of arrogance about them, and sometimes they go to ridiculous lengths to claim a magical heritage for themselves (don't ever get stuck listening to one drone on about how their great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother or whatever was burned in Salem as a witch). But they are good at what they do, they have corporations across the world fighting for their services, and they even have their own organizations for people born into "magic families." If they sometimes act

as if the world were their plaything, it's because in many ways, it is.

Then you have the mainstream magicians and adepts, magic's equivalent of random lottery winners. One day, often during puberty, they found out that they could make things happen just by thinking about it. They get mad, they glare, and something catches on fire; or they will themselves to incredible feats of physical prowess, leaping over hedges or fences in a single bound, leaving their friends struggling behind.

The newer group of magicians has a caste system of its own. The main divide is between aspected magicians and full magicians. Even though—or possibly because—ninety percent of those given the gift of magic are limited in the ways that they can use it (for example, they can work sorcery only or enchanting only), those who are full magicians believe they are superior to aspected magicians, though it's not like those in the latter group are terribly limited.

Where the ability came from and how they got it is anyone's guess (though several megacorporations are racing to figure out how to intentionally cause someone to Awaken). This group can now have their pick of jobs with corporations—or they can hit the streets and walk around with large targets on their back, thanks to the "geek the mage first" policy every shadowrunner has heard about. Cashing in on the cushy life seems like a no-brainer, but some mages end up on the street anyway. Maybe they've got a bad temper or a criminal record, so corporations don't want to take a risk on them. Maybe they pissed off the wrong people. Or maybe, despite all the pressures of the world, they've managed to hold on to a shred of their integrity and are not ready to sell out. Yet.

All of the Awakened, regardless of their talent level or parentage, have access to the considerable infrastructure of magical industry that has been built over the decades. Curio shops and alchemy stores filled with items of magical interest cater to mages and shamans, carrying competing corporate brand names like Alchemix and Ming Solutions.

Among the items they sell are reagents, small items that carry magical energy and are the magical equivalent of duct tape—useful in just about any situation. They can be used for temporary lodges, spellcasting aids, rit-

CORPORATE LORE STORES AND TALISMONGERS

- **Ipsissimus** (Mitsuhamas)
- **Mageworks** (Aztechnology)
- **Pentacles** (Ares)
- **Lore Stores, Inc.** (Shiawase)
- **Yin and Yang** (Wuxing)
- **Pentagrams** (Manadyne)



So maybe your offense is casting a Clout spell at a Lone Star officer who was annoying you, or maybe it's just not casting a spell when The Man snapped his fingers. Corps see Awakened people as just another resource to exploit. They try to entice magicians to work for them in exchange for a magical education, a better lifestyle, and even a corporate SIN. They're called "wage mages," and while it's not a kind term, a lot of magicians

The worst part of it is that the authorities have a good reason to be worried about magic, as some spellslingers and adepts are doing some pretty nasty drek. The legal term for illegal magic is **maleficium**, and it can get pretty ugly. From toxic magic that summons spirits from the bubbling filth of the most polluted corners of the Sixth World to blood magic where casters drain an unsuspect-

ing victim to add power to their spells, magic can go to some twisted places. Most of these practices have an impact on the practitioner, twisting their brains until they are as warped as the magical effects they create. Then they generally either become tyrants of their own small domains or get geeked by runner teams coming out to collect the sizable bounties somebody has inevitably put on their heads.

MAGIC BASICS

Here's what you need to know to use magic in *Shadowrun*.

MAGIC

Magic is a special Attribute that measures a character's magical power. Characters do not have a Magic Attribute unless they select one of the priorities that specifically provide one (see the Priority Table, p. 65). Magic has a starting value from 1 to 6 (or 7 with the Exceptional Attribute quality), but you don't have to settle for that limit forever. You can go through a process called **Initiation** (p. 324) that can enhance your abilities. The maximum value of your Magic Attribute (if you have one) is 6 + your Initiation level.

Anything that reduces your Essence also reduces your Magic rating. For every point (or fraction thereof) of Essence lost, both your current Magic Attribute and your maximum Magic Rating are reduced by one. If your Magic is reduced to zero, you can no longer use any skill requiring the Magic attribute, even if your maximum Rating is still greater than zero (but you can still raise the attribute with Karma and then get back to the spellcasting). If your maximum rating falls to zero, you've burned out, losing all magical abilities, including astral perception and projection. You are mundane forever. Burned-out magicians retain all magical skills and knowledge, but they lack the ability to use them. All Magical active skills except for Arcana become Knowledge skills.

MAGICAL SKILLS

There are three categories of magical skills. The three Sorcery skills—Spellcasting, Counterspelling, and Ritual

EXAMPLE

Jimmy Two-Tone, who has a Magic Attribute of 4 and a maximum rating of 6, has decided he can't live without some cybereyes. To keep the Essence loss low, he selects the Rating 1 model, which costs 0.2 Essence. His Essence is reduced to 5.8, his current Magic Attribute becomes 3, and his maximum Magic rating is now 5. He can get some more cyberware if he wants, as Essence reductions do not reduce his Magic rating again until his Essence drops below 5.

Casting—are what you use to manipulate magic in the form of spells. The three Conjuring skills—Summoning, Binding, and Banishing—let you conjure spirits from beyond astral space to aid or serve you. The Enchanting skills—Alchemy, Artificing, and Disenchanting—allow you to imbue mundane objects with magic on the physical plane.

FORCE

Almost everything magical has an attribute known as Force, including spirits, spells, foci, and more. This attribute is a measure of magical power of the object or being. Force is used as a limit for magical effects performed without the channeling benefits of reagents or foci.

INHERENT LIMIT: ASTRAL

If you're going to go messing about in astral space, you need a strong mind, because that's what's going to be doing all your heavy lifting once you leave your body behind. Your mind is both your best muscle and your basic limiter in the astral. Your Astral limit is equal to your Mental or Social limit, whichever is greater.

DRAIN

Drain is the price you pay for wielding awesome magical power. The manipulation of mana, whether forming a spell, brewing a potion, or bringing forth a being from another plane, can exhaust or injure you. Mana is a form of energy, and channeling greater quantities of that energy can strain the body and mind. This effect is referred to as Drain. Magical actions that cause Drain have a Drain Value, which is a measure of how much Drain they inflict.

The base Drain Value for Sorcery and Enchanting tests is listed with the appropriate spell, ritual, or preparation description. For Conjuring tests, the Drain Value is twice the hits (not net hits) generated by the spirit when it resists the Conjuring attempt. Drain generally is inflicted on you as Stun damage, though there are situations in which it can be Physical damage (see the Sorcery, Conjuring, and Enchanting sections). You resist the damage from Drain through a Drain Resistance Test; each hit reduces the Drain by one. Any remaining Drain is applied as boxes of damage to your Stun (or Physical) Condition Monitor. Drain damage, regardless of whether it is Stun or Physical damage, cannot be healed by any means other than the natural properties of the body—that means no magical healing and no medkits. If you overdo it, you'll simply need to make time for some rest.

POWER POINTS

Power Points are the quantified *qi* energy that adepts can spend to buy permanent powers. At character cre-

ation, adepts receive Power Points equal to their Magic attribute, while mystic adepts have to buy Power Points with Karma. Subsequently, Power Points can come in two ways. You get a free Power Point whenever you increase your Magic attribute, and you can gain a Power Point through **Initiation** (p. 324) instead of gaining a metamagic. For adepts, losing Essence is doubly dangerous because every time your Magic attribute is reduced, you lose an equal number of Power Points (you have to “un-buy” powers to make up the loss). If your Magic attribute is reduced to 0, you are cut off from magic and can no longer access your mystic abilities—which would be a good time for you to avoid anyone you’ve pissed off in the past while you’re trying to learn some new skills.

TRADITIONS

A magical tradition describes how you interact with mana. Sure, you don’t necessarily need things like chants, elegant hand gestures, muttered curses, and a holistic philosophy to sling spells and summon spirits, but it sure helps you connect to the magic, and your tradition gives you exactly that. Often, when looking for ways to focus, people fall back on elements of their culture or background that they associate with magic. If you spend your whole life thinking that magic happens when you wave a small wand, having such a wand in your hand helps you focus your abilities. Or maybe you’ve been told that magic can be contained in a beaded necklace—in that case, holding and fingering such a necklace is precisely what you need. All magicians are members of one of the magical traditions.

There are many different magic traditions in the Sixth World, and we have two of them for you here. The hermetic tradition values a scholarly, logical approach to spellcasting. Shamanic magic is looser, wilder, and can gain strength from the magician’s personality. Followers of the hermetic tradition are called mages, while followers of the shamanic tradition are called shamans.

Different aspects of the world (the elements) are important to traditions in different ways—the description of each tradition describes how each element lines up with the different types of spells, reagents, and spirits in their thinking, indicating which types of spirits and spirit powers they might be likely to call upon in particular situations. Each tradition’s description also includes the Attributes used in the Drain Resistance Test for spellcasters of this tradition.

THE HERMETIC MAGE

The hermetic mage relies on logic, practice, and execution of a planned formula rather than intuition and improvisation to effectively cast spells. They have learned to control magic and believe that the universe

(both the magical parts and the mundane) follows patterns of energy that can be manipulated through complex symbols, formulae, and arcane knowledge of its components. This tradition was widely practiced (if not effective) even before the Awakening, and this form appealed early on to corporations and governments due to its intellectual, formalized nature. In hermetic thinking, casting magic involves imposing the magician’s will on the universe—so you can imagine some of the egos that emerge when mages get together. Mages are scholars and often have libraries of magical information from which they design spells. Any mage worth his reagents has at least a digital copy of one of the founding texts on hermeticism (rich mages have a fancy hard copy written and bound by hand in a very fancy ceremony). Hermetic trappings also include deluxe, well-crafted equipment in archaic laboratories where mages can create preparations and carry out their research.

Mages create circles of power (they’re really just magical lodges, just with a hermetic twist, but don’t try to tell a mage that). Hermetic reagents include minerals, ores, and other elements—a knowledge of geology, paleontology, and chemistry help them find where to gather such reagents. In urban areas, items found in the esoteric, antique, and forgotten corners of the cities can be used by mages. Older buildings, graveyards, and antique shops may have pieces of brick, pottery, glass, wrought iron, and jewelry that have been imbued with magical properties of the elements. Knowledge of architecture and antiques help in the search for these reagents.

Mages, unsurprisingly, take a somewhat arrogant view on conjuring. The mage tends to believe that spirits are intelligent but inferior beings predestined for servitude. With that mindset, mages tend to be more comfortable binding spirits than are spellcasters of other traditions.

HERMETIC TRADITION

Combat: Fire

Health: Man

Manipulation: Earth

Detection: Air

Illusion: Water

Drain: Logic + Willpower

THE SHAMAN

The shaman uses mana to balance the world of nature and their own will. They believe in harmony and guidance, observing the world and using emotion to weave magic. They respect the gift of magic that connects them to the flow of the spirit of life. To the shaman, the earth is a living being, and her children are spirits who guide and aid those that support her; spirits of the sky,



SHAMANIC TRADITION

Combat: Beasts
Health: Earth
Manipulation: Man
Detection: Water
Illusion: Air
Drain: Charisma + Willpower

mountain, birds, rats, even metahumanity. Shamanism has been practiced far longer than hermetic magic and can be found in all parts of the world, although it wasn't taken seriously by modern metahumanity until the Great Ghost Dance. To the shaman, casting a spell is asking a greater universal entity, such as a mentor spirit, to grant her power.

Shamans call their magical lodges "medicine lodges." A medicine lodge (also known as a sweat lodge, inipi, kiva, temazcal, or a number of other names) can take a variety of forms, including a small domed hut with an animal skin roof or a hole dug into the ground and carefully covered with a ceiling of woven branches, or in an urban area a small room filled with skins, painting, and artistically decorative urban junk.

The wilderness is an excellent place for shamans to gather reagents, finding plant and animal parts, naturally shaped stones, and vials of water in such pristine locations. Knowledge of zoology, parazoology, botany, and parobotany help them find and harvest these materials. In urban areas, shamans find that the spirit of life also inhabits in the cities. So-called "street shamans" find reagents in urban animals, naturally worn stones in parks or waterways, and handcrafted jewelry made with natural materials. Knowledge of architecture and crafts helps find this sort of reagent.

The shamanic perspective on conjuring is based on a belief that spirits are intelligent and ancient, and they should be treated with the respect one would show an elder. Due to their belief that spirits are everywhere, shamans frequently summon spirits from the area when the need arises, rather than binding spirits for long periods. Shamans often develop personal connections to spirits, following them as they learn magic.

MAGICAL LODGES

A **magical lodge** is a stationary collection of symbols, writings, tools, fetishes, and other mystical materials that helps spellcasters record their lore, expand their talent, and practice magic. It's a basic tool of magicians across the world, about the size of a room. You need it to learn spells, perform rituals, craft foci, and in a pinch you can use it to protect yourself from magical threats. Each lodge is of a specific tradition—a shamanic lodge is intended for shamans, and a hermetic lodge for mages.

Magical lodges don't always look like lodges *per se*. A shamanic lodge is a traditional medicine lodge, but a hermetic magician's lodge is a series of magic circles, shelves filled with arcane tomes, mystical mechanisms, and alchemical apparatuses. Every tradition has its own version of a magical lodge, but they all work the same way.

Magical lodges aren't intended to be portable (although you can make a temporary one with reagents, p. 316). To create your own, you need magical lodge materials (they cost Force x 500 nuyen) that are appropriate to your tradition. Once you have the materials, find a space to put it, like your apartment, or a cave in the wilderness, or a secret abandoned sewer tunnel—someplace you won't mind spending some time. Then spend a number of days equal to the lodge's Force dedicating the space, setting up the physical components, building its astral form, setting up barriers, and harmonizing it to your aura. Once you're done, your magical lodge is up and active. An active magical lodge acts as a mana barrier (p. 315) and shares your astral signature.

If you want to move your lodge, you'll need a day to take it down, turning it back into magical lodge materials; then you can set it up again somewhere else. If you want to improve your lodge, just bring in more materials to add to the current ones and spend a day times the Force you want the lodge to have at the end of your work.

PERCEIVING MAGIC

Magic is rarely subtle. Any form of magic (conjuring, spellcasting, enchanting, magical lodges, spirits, etc.) changes the world around it. Sometimes it's obvious through a magician's gestures or incantations (magicians seen by non-Awakened people are sometimes called "twitchy fingers"). Spirits sometimes cause the air to shimmer, even from astral space. People have reported feeling chills, dread, or other unnatural sensations they can't quite put their finger on when magic is in the area.

Noticing magic is a Simple Perception + Intuition [Mental] Test with a threshold equal to the Skill Rating of the being performing it minus the Force of the magic, or 6 - Force if there's no skill involved (minimum 1 in either case). For example, if a magician with Spellcasting 6 casts

