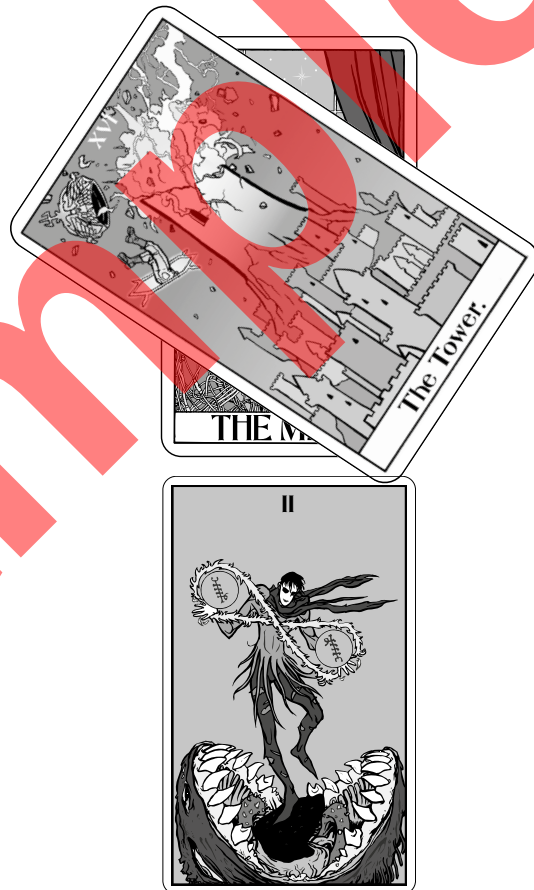


Choices Made and Futures Followed

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.
— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Act V, Scene II)



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Special Thanks to:

Lyndi "Am I Evil?" Hathaway-McKeeman, for steaming the Alaskan crabs.

William "Taxi Driver" Hale; his word-processor runneth over.

Rebecca "Chin Na" Shaeffer, for feeding the cute Canadian guys to Ken's fish.

Travis "Rat Salad" Williams, for having so much fun with Brian's squeaky toy.

Renee "Globetrotter" Lily, for keeping Rob contented in her absence.

Ben "Blue Meanie" Monk, for passing on Gramann's Chinese car to Lyndi.

Wes "Silent Strider" Harris, wherever he may roam.

Daniel "I'm Waitin', Punk" Landers, for cutting loose the Batmobile.

Steve "Grand Master of Flowers" Weick, for his martial-arts goob-fest.

Chris "Modem Master" Hind, for running the Ontario marathon (Never use Wordstar!).

Darryl "Swing Shift" Midgette, for really outdoing himself.

Mike "Why Me?" Krause, for his wet warehouse welcome.



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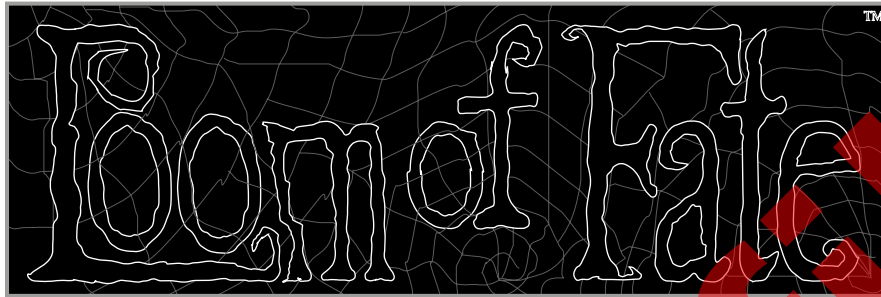


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Introduction: Once and Future Things

*Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries
“The flower should open with the morning skies”
And a retreating whisper as I wake —
“The flower that once has blown for ever dies.”
— The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, verse XXVIII*

Loom of Fate is a complete four-chapter story for **Mage: The Ascension**. Set in San Francisco, it entwines player mages in a web of usury and tragedy, where free will threatens to unravel the very fabric of reality. This supplement details plots, characters and settings, thus enabling your troupe to tell an earthshaking story. Appendix One compiles all character descriptions for ease of reference. Appendix Two contains guidelines for running a Tarot-like card-reading.

This plot encourages character interaction and problem-solving rather than violent confrontation. Therefore, any number of player characters of any level of enlightenment may take part. They may represent diverse Traditions, though students of the Spheres of Time and Spirit are most appropriate.

This adventure expands on “All Hallow’s Eve,” the scenario given in the back of the Mage rulebook, but differs in several ways from the first story. If you have already run “All Hallow’s Eve,” you may wish to modify the details given in this book to conform to the original story. If not, run **Loom of Fate** as it stands, incorporating any elements of “All Hallow’s Eve” that you want.

Variations on a Theme

As Storyteller, you may use **Loom of Fate** in a number of ways. First of all, this story could be told with no modifications. The scenes included should provide enough roleplaying, mystery and action to last several gaming sessions. Second, you might modify the existing scenes or add others to suit your troupe’s style of play. If you feel particularly ambitious, you could even change the setting from San Francisco to elsewhere.

Loom of Fate could also become the first chapter in a continuing chronicle. The Bay Area is integral to the Technocracy’s American operations, and warlike players could wage a long and dangerous guerrilla campaign against the Technomancers. Though this “Fighting the Technocracy” concept seems the most obvious of many options, other plot threads offer possibilities.

At this moment, several players are reading these words; stop immediately or risk ruining your own enjoyment. Storytellers — and we know who you are (••Correspondence, •••Mind) — please continue.

Background: The Wyld Bound

In the beginning, there was a place of power: a hilly headland where Gaia's children felt her pulse more strongly, where gods walked among mortals, and where strange entities were born. Undulating dunes near the western sea held a powerful Node linking Earth to a Wylding Realm. Though a few brave Dreamspeakers drew power from the local pools of Quintessence, for the most part static reality had yet to conquer this Wylderness. Dynamic magick held sway.

Then one summer day a foreign ship dropped anchor offshore. Pale men disembarked. They explored briefly while repairing their ship and replenishing supplies, but were driven off by wild beasts and an unstable reality. Before sailing west, these explorers affixed a brass plaque to a post near shore. Its inscription claimed the land for a distant queen. Though Sir Francis Drake's claim was premature, that 17th day of June in 1579 foreshadowed mankind's conquest over the Node.

The invasion evidently angered the spirits. A short time after the pale men departed, a massive earthquake shattered the area, creating what would later be called the San Francisco Bay. Many native people died, and the Uktena werewolves created a caern to guard a site where they said a spirit called the Cataclysm slept restlessly. Hereafter, there were only occasional tremors, and these were accepted as the price the land demanded from the mortals dwelling there.

Before Europeans arrived, Native Americans accepted magick as a natural part of reality. They had only slightly bound the Wylderness through the natural process of human nature attempting to impose order and structure on the unknowable. The Europeans, under the fledgling Technocracy, changed all that.

Technomancer scouts came with the first explorations into the West, mapping Wyld magic out of the lands they "discovered." They noted likely bases of operation as they went, and San Francisco, with its harbor, mountains, stable climate and powerful Node, seemed perfect. As the Technomancers wove their spells of containment, the Wylderness weakened. Around the mission of San Francisco de Asis, the Technomancers raised a city, which suppressed and eventually smothered the Wylderness. The Technocrats of San Francisco now control this dormant Node, tapping its raw Quintessence.

To contain the spirits of the Wyld, the Progenitors and Void Seekers (the old name for the Void Engineers) summoned a powerful pattern spider named Cob, reinforcing it with great power. Over the years, the Technomancers have increased Cob's might with cybernetic enhancements, Weaver spirit essence, and bio-restoratives. In return, Cob has stabilized the region, allowing the Technomancers

to establish a brisk overseas trade, an international idea exchange, and several important laboratories.

The Wyld, however, will not be denied. Shifting chaos strains against Cob's web, and some leaks through the mesh. Wyld spirits tear at the strands of the web, and Cob and its fellow pattern spiders must repair this web daily. This conflict is mirrored in the contrasting social orders of the Bay area. On one hand, rich and conservative elements struggle to control the city. On the other, San Francisco's famous radical subcultures strive for ultimate freedom. The Quintessence of the region feeds on this dichotomy and is fed by it in return. The Bay area is neither dynamic nor static, but a wildly shifting combination of both.

This Quintessence fluctuation further erodes Cob's static structure. Constant struggle has weakened the pattern spider. Periodic attacks upon Cob itself by Marauders and Wyld spirits have hastened the process of inevitable entropy. Eventually, Cob will lose its power and cease to exist.

This decay was graphically demonstrated in 1906. On April 18th, Cob lost cohesion. Wyld Things broke loose from the web and raged across the Near Umbra. This Wyld Quintessence manifested in the real world as earthquakes and fire, and in the terror and confusion that followed.

By frantically manipulating symbols of order, such as the city government, Technomancers restored order to San Francisco. They did not comprehend the magnitude of the problem, however, instead assuming that mere lack of vigilance had allowed the magick of the Node to escape.

Cob had, in fact, regained control only through sheer will. Furthermore, the 'Quake of 1989 and the tremor of October 1993 prove that even Cob's will is insufficient. The Wylderness threatens to break free, perhaps awakening the fabled spirit Cataclysm in the process, unless an equally powerful pattern spider replaces Cob.

The Umbral struggle has attracted the attention of many groups. Even the Technomancers have recently become aware of the difficulties of Cob. Some mages wait to see what happens; others take advantage of the situation.

In one camp stands a Progenitor Chantry led by Dr. Himiitsu of the U.C. Medical Center. Himiitsu plans to transform Norna Weaver (an Orphan) into a pattern spider to replace Cob. Norna's powerful Avatar, great Destiny and Orphan status make such a reincarnation possible. Directly opposing this plan are a gang of nameless and faceless Marauders. They have learned that Norna can potentially imprison the Wylderness in a static net, giving the Pattern a powerful new grip on the Bay Area. Only their alien perceptions and lack of organization have prevented them from eliminating her thus far....

The player characters will soon find themselves entangled in this web of destiny. Their actions may tip the balance for fate or free will. The most difficult factor of this equation is understanding where free will ends and destiny begins.