

# MAGIC

At its most fundamental, magic is a supernatural energy and medium that can be manipulated to affect the underlying fabric of reality by an effort of will. The world of Caen normally exists in a state of stability and natural law, where matter and energy follow predictable and otherwise inviolable patterns. Magic allows those who master its principles to defy or bend natural law, whether subtly or overtly, creating causality that would not be possible without the manifestation of the arcane. Practitioners of magic have at their disposal tremendously useful but also singularly dangerous forces.

Some would say this is the power of the gods made manifest—a way mortals can perceive and affect the weft and weave that is the ineffable essence of reality. Many arcanists view it rather as a natural force that has its own strict laws, limits, and predictable interactions that are simply not yet fully understood. Some practitioners make it their life's work to add to the understanding of these powers and pass this lore to their peers. For others, magic is purely an outpouring of one's own will and is wielded intuitively like a weapon. Mortal minds find it difficult to control the vast and dangerous energies required to shape reality, but a very few reach levels of power that blur the line between mortal and divine.

Producing magic requires the ability to tap into a source of this supernatural energy and shape it by mentally visualizing and manipulating formulae comprised of mystical runes. It is by these runes that magical effects become fixed, their energies lying dormant but ready. Once an arcanist is satisfied with his formulae, he activates the runes to trigger the release of energy, by which the spell is completed and the magic invoked. For those practiced in these arts, this entire sequence takes mere seconds.

In order to accomplish this exploit, one must have the special Gift to see and shape mystical runes. This is sometimes described as an unlocked talent inherent to fully awakened immortal souls. This Gift can be found in humans, dwarves, elves, trollkin, and some other races, but remains dormant and unharnessed by most. Humanity has had a complex relationship with this talent, as for most of recorded history only priests could manifest magic. This changed during the Orgoth Rebellion, and as the ability became more widespread it also began to appear unpredictably in young individuals.

Those who spontaneously manifest arcane potential and develop this power without formal training are known as sorcerers. They still use mystical formulae when working magic, but their runes are less distinct and their formulae less precise and complex. The power of sorcerers is linked to a particular elemental affinity, such that the magic they can summon gives them power over rock and stone and manifests as blazing fire, flashes of lightning, or freezing winds.

Such natural aptitude is rare and has historically been met with fear and persecution in the Iron Kingdoms. This was exacerbated by incidents wherein incautious sorcerers unleashed destruction through unrestrained manifestations of elemental powers. Numerous organized efforts have cropped up over the years seeking to find and eliminate sorcerers. In the present day, sorcerers are no longer universally loathed and feared, but they are still seen as potentially dangerous. In many regions sorcerers are encouraged to seek formal training so their powers can be put to productive ends, such as within a kingdom's military.

## MAGIC OF THE DIVINE

Since before written history there have been those who invoke magic through faith: priests and shamans. These spiritual leaders mix prayer and formulae to create magic through small miracles they credit to their divine patron. The greatest priests occasionally manifest miracles sent directly from the gods, and these serve as a tangible reminder that higher beings are watching and intervening in the world through their mortal intermediaries.

Most arcane scholars and theologians believe divine magic flows from the connection between the immortal soul and Urcaen, serving as a bridge for the energies of the gods. Others insist faith has inherent power and that truly divine energies are present only for the rarest and most spectacular miracles. Though the source of a faith caster's magic differs from that of secular arcanists, the fundamentals of how it is wielded are not dissimilar. Some faith casters rely on the force of their will to summon magic appropriate to their faith, whereas others tap into their powers with effortless ease or facilitate their magic by a connection to living beasts. All must still manipulate the mystical runes and formulae that allow magic to shape reality.

Faith casters rarely possess a deeper understanding of the complex rules by which magic functions and manifest magic strongly associated with the attributes of their divine patron. They sacrifice some flexibility to stand as an unwavering mortal conduit for the power of their god on Caen. In compensation, those who are truly faithful and become favored might be granted access to miracles beyond the power of scholarly arcanists.



Gifted individuals with any degree of instruction are deemed arcanists, even if their occult education is limited to the self-directed study of tomes. Arcanists make systematic efforts to understand and improve their control over magic. Some sorcerers pursue formal arcane study after realizing the limits of intuition, and join the ranks of the educated. Many of the most successful arcanists began their careers as sorcerers and eventually learned to temper and amplify their natural power through diligent study.

By empowering runes and unleashing this power in a controlled fashion, an infinite variety of magical effects are theoretically possible. That said, not all who practice magic are on equal footing. Access to the wellspring of magic varies and is manifested in different ways, analogous to how water can be gathered. For practitioners called will weavers, accumulating magical energy is a laborious process requiring exertion, like pumping water from a deep well, while those called focusers have access to a steady and constant flow like a man standing beside a river or a fountain. Some readily see mystical runes and effortlessly shape them, but others require a lifetime of careful study to apply these forces without risking destruction. Although there are a variety of traditions by which magic can be shaped, the underlying power is the same.

## ARCANE TRADITIONS

All spellcasters belong to an arcane tradition that determines how their magic works in play. This book explores two, will weavers and focusers. Other arcane traditions will be explored in future products, such as harnessers (warlocks).

Most sorcerers and arcanists are **will weavers**, who rely on their own physical stamina and the force of their mental will to summon and direct arcane energy. This process can be incredibly taxing to the arcanist's body and mind but allows for the subtle weaving of intricate formulae. For these practitioners, siphoning mystical energy from its source requires concentration and fortitude. The greater the magical power called upon by the will weaver, the greater the risk as he pushes himself to exhaustion.

Some will weavers learn to augment their powers through engineering by mastering mechanika or studying alchemy, both invaluable skills. An exceptional few rise to the upper echelons of powerful arcane societies and gain access to formidable occult secrets and techniques. By tapping into their reserves, these masters of magic can become living arsenals of arcane power, aiding their allies by bending reality to suit their needs.

Rarer still are **focusers**, those for whom access to the flow of magical energy is instinctive and constant. Focusers tap into the magical forces both within the depths of their souls as well as all around them, acting as natural conduits. A focuser must still practice and train to refine their powers, but access to these energies comes unbidden.

Once a focuser becomes aware of the arcane energies flowing through him and can recognize the runes and formulae underlying reality, he is irrevocably changed. Arcane energy

## RUNES AND FORMULAE

Harnessing power that can ignore the laws of nature or be transformed into tremendous surges of awe-inspiring elemental force is not a subtle or invisible practice. Although their techniques of summoning and shaping magic varies, all casters work through runes and formulae and these become visible to those around them when a spell is cast.

The exact shape and color spectrum of these runes varies by a caster's background and training, although there are fundamental sigils shared by many groups. For example, all modern human arcane orders draw from the same foundation, based on sigils developed during the early rebellion against the Orgoth. A caster inherits the runic forms of his source material, whether from a tutor or tome of recorded lore. Untrained sorcerers have less distinct runes and simpler formulae for this reason, pouring raw power into their sigils to make up for a lack of finesse. Sorcerer runes are closely aligned with their elemental affinity, being a more limited vocabulary describing manifestations of fire, ice, lightning, or earth. Some arcanists learn to customize the manifestations of their runes, but this requires considerable practice.

When an arcanist casts a spell, glowing runes depicting a tangible manifestation of formulae appear briefly surrounding his person, in a size and scope relative to the power being invoked. Less potent spells are prefigured by circles of runes around the caster's hand or an item used as a point of focus, such as a weapon. Larger effects result in concentric rings of runes around the caster's body, sometimes at waist height, at the shoulders, or around the head. If a spell is affecting someone else nearby, runes briefly manifest around that person as well.

To most people these glowing runes are indistinct and quickly forgotten manifestations of magic, with no meaning other than as an ominous sign of gathered supernatural forces. For other arcanists, it is possible to anticipate the scope and nature of the magic being gathered by witnessing the runes, an aptitude that can provide a tremendous tactical advantage. While bright, the appearance of these runes is too brief and focused to be utilized as a source of light, although they certainly draw attention to a caster in a dark place.

Casters involved in clandestine activities sometimes develop the ability to mask these runic formulae. Runes must always manifest for magic to function, but a skilled practitioner can change the hue and minimize the size and intensity to the point that they are all but unnoticeable. Certain spells specifically designed to augment stealth include these techniques as part of their casting.



is not an abstraction to the focuser, but as inseparable from his being as the blood in his veins. This enables him to extend his will into the environment in unique ways, augmenting his actions and easily tapping into mechanical devices. Though a focuser has certain advantages over a will weaver, they do not have the same ability to plumb their inner reserves. A focuser's flow of magic is even and steady, but it can also be temporarily depleted and require time to replenish.

Compared to a focuser, a will weaver has a less finite supply of magic at any given moment. Drawing on magic requires more effort, but a skilled will weaver can push beyond his limits for special exertions. A will weaver has a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of the arcane and is practiced in fully exploiting that power.

## DETERMINING YOUR CHARACTER'S TRADITION

A character's tradition determines the rules he uses when spell casting. All characters with the Gifted archetype begin the game with an arcane tradition. Once determined, a character's arcane tradition does not change.

Unless your character begins the game with the Warcaster career, his tradition is will weaver. Characters with the Warcaster career have the focuser tradition.

## WILL WEAVERS

Will weavers rely on their force of will to summon and harness arcane energy. They do this by calling upon arcane formulae, often through some combination of thinking it, reciting it, and reading it. The mental formulation is the most important aspect, where the will is invested in the visualized image of the runes, but complex formulae are difficult to maintain perfectly in the mind without assistance. Most arcane practitioners utilize a variety of techniques to create mnemonic associations, and this can include the chanting of rote phrases, performing sequences of gestures, and complex written passages and diagrams. Many of these techniques are not strictly necessary to complete a spell, but arcanists find it easiest to perform magic by keeping to techniques they have repeatedly practiced, thereby entering into a meditative state.

As a will weaver works his magic, he generates fatigue points. Fatigue represents the mental toll of bending arcane forces to the spellcaster's will. A will weaver who operates within the limits of his capabilities runs little risk of overexerting himself, but one who pushes himself to the limit risks exhaustion, becoming unable to cast spells until taking a respite.

A will weaver can call upon his magic to cast and upkeep spells and to boost magical attack and magical damage rolls. As he does so, the will weaver generates fatigue points. Provided the will weaver does not exceed his ARC in fatigue points, nothing happens. If the character exceeds his ARC in fatigue points, he must make a fatigue roll to determine if he becomes exhausted. A will weaver cannot exceed double his ARC in fatigue points as a result of casting, upkeeping, or boosting spells.

## GAINING FATIGUE POINTS

A will weaver can gain fatigue points to:

- Upkeep a Spell – A will weaver gains 1 fatigue point for each spell he upkeepes during each Control Phase.
- Cast a Spell – When a will weaver casts a spell, he gains a number of fatigue points equal to the COST of the spell.
- Boost a Magic Attack or Magic Damage Roll – Each time a will weaver boosts a magic attack or magic damage roll, he gains 1 fatigue point. Boosting must be declared before rolling any dice for the roll. Remember, a single roll can be boosted only once, but a will weaver can boost as many different rolls as he can afford.
- Increase the Range of a Spell – A will weaver can gain 1 fatigue point to increase the RNG of a spell by thirty feet (5"). Each spell cast can have its RNG extended only once as a result of gaining fatigue. Spells with a RNG of CTRL or SP cannot be affected in this way.

## REMOVING FATIGUE POINTS

Will weavers remove a number of fatigue points equal to their ARC each Maintenance Phase.

## FATIGUE ROLLS AND EXHAUSTION

If his fatigue points exceed his ARC, a will weaver must make a fatigue roll immediately after resolving each spell he casts. To make a fatigue roll, roll 2d6. If the total is equal to or over the number of fatigue points the will weaver currently has, nothing happens. If the total is less than the number of fatigue points the character has, he becomes exhausted.

When a character becomes exhausted his turn immediately ends and he cannot cast spells during the next round.

## FOCUSERS

Focusers are able to tap into and manipulate the ambient arcane energy that permeates the world around them. The ability to extend one's mind into the environment to shape latent energies also allows focusers to connect with mechanika and affect these complex devices at a distance. This enables focusers to meld their minds with the inner workings of the cortexes within steamjacks. It is for this reason that only focusers have the potential to become warcasters.

For a warcaster to harness and channel his will into both steamjacks and other advanced mechanical tools properly, he must spend some time attuning themselves to these items. By a concentrated exertion of mental effort, the focuser creates a lasting and unique bond with the mechanical conduits of his most vital tools, and through this bond his energy can flow more easily (see the Bond ability, p. 158).

By these bonds, a focuser can empower warcaster armor to receive his arcane energy, wield mechanical weapons to deadly effect, and use 'jacks as extensions of his will. Together these qualities have allowed warcasters to become unparalleled masters of the modern battlefield.



A focuser's arcane energy takes the form of focus points that he can allocate to the steamjacks he controls or spend to cast and upkeep spells, make additional attacks, or boost attack and damage rolls.

During the Control Phase of each round, a focuser receives a number of focus points equal to his Arcane stat. Unlike will weavers, who gain fatigue points as a result of casting spells or otherwise using their arcane powers, focusers spend the focus points they receive to work their magic.

A focuser can spend focus points to:

- **Upkeep Spells** – A focuser must spend 1 focus point for each spell he upkeeps during each Control Phase.
- **Casting a Spell** – When a focuser casts a spell, he must spend a number of focus points equal to the COST of the spell.
- **Boost Attack and Damage Rolls** – A focuser can spend focus points to boost magic attack and magic damage rolls. A focuser can also spend focus points to boost attack and damage rolls with a mechanika weapon he is bonded to. Each time a focuser boosts an attack or damage roll, he must spend 1 focus point. Boosting must be declared before rolling any dice for the roll. Remember, a single roll can be boosted only once, but a focuser can boost as many different rolls as he can afford.
- **Make an Additional Attack** – A focuser can spend focus to make additional melee or ranged attacks with a mechanika weapon he is bonded to during his turn. The focuser can make one additional attack for each focus point he spends.
- **Allocate to Steamjacks** – A focuser can allocate up to 3 focus points to each steamjack in his battlegroup in his control area. For full rules on how focusers interact with steamjacks, see pp. 321–324.

Unless otherwise stated, a character can spend focus points only during his turn.

## REMOVING FOCUS POINTS

Remove all focus points from the focuser and the steamjacks in his battlegroup at the start of each of the focuser's Maintenance Phases.

## GUN MAGES AND RUNE SHOT SPELLS

Gun mages are arcanists who channel their magic through special rune cast bullets. Gun mage is not a tradition, and a gun mage can be either a will weaver or a focuser (if he also has the Warcaster career). A gun mage works his magic through specially crafted weapons called magelocks that fire magically imbued rune shots.

### RUNE SHOT SPELLS

Rune shots are specially crafted bullets designed to harness the arcane energies of a gun mage. Many gun mage spells are defined as rune shots. These spells are cast onto the ammunition round before the gun mage fires it, thus charging the round with arcane energy.



## WARCASTER ARMOR

Warcaster armor is among the most advanced mechanika ever developed. In addition to providing physical protection in the form of masterwork armor, warcaster armor also integrates an arcane turbine, a highly efficient and advanced steam engine fueled by coal and designed to tap into and transform the focuser's arcane power into a protective field. The steam engine driving the arcane turbine is required to power small internal mechanisms, the negligible weight of which allows the turbine to run for many hours on a very small quantity of coal. The heart of the turbine is a complex series of wire-coiled wheels spinning inside a thinly layered

metal lattice, all constructed of arcane-sensitive alloys. When worn by a focuser who has bonded to the armor, the turbine powers a protective field of force around the warcaster that also helps negate the encumbrance of the armor. This field absorbs damage that would otherwise be sustained by the focuser and can be replenished by redirecting the focuser's arcane power to the field. The focuser can also temporarily enhance the field's protective qualities by using focus to overboost the field.

A full description of warcaster armor can be found on p. 289.



Rune shot spells must be cast the turn they take effect and affect only the character's next shot with his magelock. If the character casts a rune shot spell and does not make an attack, the spell expires at the end of the turn. Unlike other spells, casting a rune shot spell does not require a quick action and any number of rune shot spells can be cast on a single shot. Although the gun mage can empower a single round with multiple spells, he can empower each round with the same spell only once and can empower each round only with a single rune shot spell that has an AOE.

A target directly hit by a rune shot attack suffers the effects of the ranged attack along with any spell effects the shot was empowered with.

## CONTROL AREA

Gifted characters, both will weavers and focusers, have **control areas**. A control area is a circular area centered on the character with a radius that extends out from the edge of his base equal to his ARC x twelve feet (or twice his Arcane stat in tabletop inches). A character is always considered to be in his own control area. When a special rule changes a character's ARC stat, his control area changes accordingly. Some spells use the control area, noted as "CTRL," as their range or area of effect.

A character can measure his control area at any time, measuring the distance from himself to any point within his control area.

## SPELLS

Some characters have the ability to cast spells during their turns. Will weavers cast spells by generating fatigue points. Focusers cast spells by paying the spell's COST in focus points. A spell can be cast multiple times per Activation Phase, but its COST must be paid each time.

With the exception of gun mage rune shot spells that do not require the expenditure of an action to cast, spells are cast as quick actions. A character cannot cast a spell during a turn in which he runs.

When a spell is cast, resolve its effects immediately.

### STEAMJACKS AND CONTROL AREA

A steamjack must be in its controlling warcaster's control area to receive focus points from the warcaster or to channel spells.

