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ENCYCLOPAEDIA
ARCANE

CHAOS MAGIC

WILD SORCERY



This Product Requires the use
of the Dungeons and Dragons®
Player's Handbook, Third Edition,
Published by Wizards of the Coast®

SAM WITT

CHAOS MAGIC SUMMARY SHEET

Casting Chaos Magic

Effect	Base DC
Damage	
Raw	10
Persistent	5
Degrading	10
Materialisation	
Negligible (1 oz./caster level)	5
Minor (1 lb./caster level)	10
Moderate (2 lb./caster level)	15
Major (5 lb. caster level)	20
Chaos Construct	20-30
Movement	
Minor (20 ft. + 5 ft./2 caster levels)	15
Moderate (100 ft. + 10 ft./caster level)	20
Major (400 ft. + 40 ft./caster level)	25
Extreme (1 mile + 1 mile/caster level)	30
Universal (1 plane)	35
Transformation	
Negligible	5
Minor	10
Moderate	15
Total	20
Chaotic Reconstruction	30

Additional Elements

Element	+ DC
Area	
Single Subject	+0
Burst	+5
Cone	+10
Spread	+10
Enemies Only	+5
Allies Only	+5
Chosen Subjects	+1/subject
Objects Only	+0
Range	
Touch	+0
Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 caster levels)	+1
Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./caster level)	+5
Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./caster level)	+10
Extreme (1 mile + 1 mile/caster level)	+15
Duration	
Instantaneous	+0
Round (1 round/caster level)	+5
Minute (1 minute/caster level)	+10
Saving Throw	
-1 Penalty	+2
-2 Penalty	+5
-3 Penalty	+10
-4 Penalty	+15
-5 Penalty	+20
Spell Resistance	+ subject's SR

Casting Check

1d20 + chaos mage level + Cha modifier

Encyclopaedia Arcane Chaos Magic

Sam Witt

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INTRODUCTION

Your foot is on the wild path, the road of chaos. As you explore this strange school of arcane sorcery, the power of static magic will fall away, revealing the primal, wild forces corkscrewing through the world around you. A strong will and a quick mind is required to harness the essence of chaos, but even the wildest may not survive their brush with the raw element of creation. Though chaos magic does not deal with malevolent, intelligent forces or the denizens of the grave, its power is wild and untamed and wholly unnatural within the material world. It is in constant flux, coiling and writhing just beyond everyday life, and whatever it touches . . . changes.

Those who tamper with the chaotic energies flirt with transmutation with every spell cast. Though mortals may tap into and direct chaos magic, it is beyond true understanding and control. At best, chaos mages can hope for a career balanced on the knife-edge between disaster and fabulous power. At worst, they find themselves caught in a spiral of maddening change that leaves them twisted far beyond recognition and comprehension. In many ways, dealing with chaos is far more dangerous than contracts with the infernal or pacts with the dead – chaos neither knows nor cares what happens to those who tamper with its roiling currents, leaving such mages at the mercy of primal forces. Still, the power promised by direct manipulation of chaos is too great for many to ignore and the number of chaos mages continues to swell.

No sane man would willingly embrace the changes wrought by the Paths of Chaos, no matter how beneficial they may seem. Then again, there are few chaos mages I would define as sane in any traditional sense.

The Morals and Ethics of the Arcane – Ypesliva

Chaos mages are often regarded as insane, an opinion difficult to argue with in the face of the mental and physical changes most practitioners willingly accept in their pursuit of power. None who bathe in the Sea of Quiddity emerge unscathed, and many do not return at all. Of those who pursue the ultimate power offered by chaos, only a handful survive long enough to gain great power, and all of these have but a tenuous hold on their humanity. It cannot be stressed strongly enough – primal chaos changes all that it comes into contact with, and

those who believe themselves the master often find themselves bound in chains forged from their own altered flesh, bone, and spirit.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANE

Chaos Magic – Wild Sorcery is the third volume in the Encyclopaedia Arcane series, presenting a new and intriguing form of magic. Designed for easy integration with any fantasy-based d20 games system, the Encyclopaedia Arcane series does far more than merely introduce new spells to extend existing magic-using character classes. Instead, each book covers a completely new form of magic, adding further dimensions to campaigns. Such arts are not just intended for Games Masters to use in conjunction with non-player characters, however. Each book of the Encyclopaedia Arcane gives full details for players themselves to try the new magic system, along with plenty of information to aid Games Masters in the introduction of each book into his campaign.

CHAOS MAGIC – WILD SORCERY

This volume of the Encyclopaedia Arcane series gives players and Games Masters alike the information they need to begin using chaos magic within their campaign. You will find chapters devoted to those who dare to tap into this primal energy, the methods used to channel primal chaos and information about the marvels and horrors of the Paths of Chaos. New feats, magic items and character types are also introduced to aid and hinder the neophyte chaos mage and his static magic counterparts.

Chaos magic is not for every player – those who are unwilling or unable to maintain the daring or force of will necessary to harness these great, unwieldy energies will find themselves destroyed by the very power they seek. The true unfortunates will while away their days locked into forms never meant for mortal eyes, let alone mortal flesh. Many are the failed practitioners of this art, and their wildly deformed bodies and warped minds serve as living testament to the dangers inherent in tampering with the basic forces of the universe. Yet there is no shortage of those willing to throw themselves into the teeth of the storm, hoping against hope that they will be the one legends speak of, the master of wild forces, a true chaos mage.

The tear is small, a shallow rent in the smooth stretch of pale flesh in the hollow of her shoulder. She touches its feathered edges, tracing the raw, pink flesh with the tip of her ruby-lacquered fingernail. Just below the surface, an aquamarine glint winks at her, a curiously alien colour hidden by a lacy screen of oozing tissue. She knew the risks, she understood the strange dangers that would haunt her progress as a Chaos Mage, but this is not what she had imagined.

With a sigh she lifts a slender nail file from the sideboard of her vanity and examines its tip. The grooved metal is slender and flexible, but the tip is sharp and unyielding, just what she needs. She tilts the mirror before her, adjusting the angle of reflection until she can clearly see the gemstone flash buried in her flesh. The end of the file slips into the wound, its passage sending a brief tingle of pain spiralling away from the wound, tickling the surface of her thoughts. She scrapes the metal across the gauze of her flesh, parting the web-like tissue with ease.

The nail file drags lightly across the blue within her, releasing the faint, muffled tinkling of crystal. She can hear the sound in her head and she can feel it vibrating in her muscles like a quivering strand of silver wire. It hums across her nerves, dredging fine beads of greasy sweat from her pores. She feels queasy and euphoric, the revelation of this alien crystal has stripped away precious layers of sanity from the wild thicket of her mind. 'Out,' she grunts, probing the file around the visible edges of the tinkling spot of blue in her shoulder, 'come out.'

Hooking the tip of her make-shift surgical tool under the crystal gives her the leverage she needs, and she forces the file down to pull it out of her body. Flesh tears and pain skewers her nerves with jagged hooks, but she perseveres and the digging continues. Her brow is beetled in concentration and tiny ruby droplets splash up from the wound to stain her face with pink threads of mingled sweat and blood.

Then the crystal obeys her will, sliding up, away from her flesh. Its faceted angles are revealed in a rush, a crystalline crescent of deep blue that glimmers with an uncertain light. The sound grows louder as it worms its way to the surface, no longer a subtle tinkling but the cacophony of shattering glass. She can no longer hear her grunts of pain and is glad for the distraction as she seizes the tip of the thing with bloody fingers.

A savage jerk of her fist yanks the crescent further from the sheathe of her flesh, but cannot drag it the last bit to extract it from her skin. 'Please,' her voice is a petulant whine, a pleading whimper, 'please.'

But the sound of shattering echoes in her ears, and the wicked hook of aquamarine crystal juts from her bloody shoulder, a bitter reminder of her failure. Why she thought this time would be different she cannot say, but she knows now that there can be no going back. With deft fingers she threads a needle and begins stitching the wound closed, sealing the ragged wound around the alien protrusion. In the mirror she sees the other marks, the growing line of crystals sprouting in a sinuous line down her sternum and across her abdomen.

'Such is the price of power,' she laughs, a mad bark, and goes back to her stitching.



CHAOS MAGIC - AN OVERVIEW

The world is composed of two things – substance and form – all else is illusion. On the one hand, all sentient creatures are servants of Law, as sentience can only exist where there is order. Their thoughts, wishes, and desires form the basis for the shapes of all things. Without Law, without some order, the universe would be a raw and seething mass of undifferentiated chaos inimical to life as it is now understood. In the constantly shifting maelstrom of chaotic forces there would be no permanence, no sense of growth or stability, only an eternal state of change.

But without chaos, the universe would be filled with empty concepts yearning for realisation. Into the forms Law has created, primal Chaos pours, flowing through the interstices of reality to create a living and vibrant multiverse. As the raw stuff of creation, Chaos is filled with possibility, and those that understand how to use these possibilities for their own benefit can rival the gods.

Or so the chaos mages believe. This is their view of the multiverse, stripped down to its most basic components, Law and Chaos. Where other mages squeeze power from reality via the channel of spells, chaos mages craft their magic from the raw stuff of creation, focusing the power of primal chaos into a freeform, instinctual magic. Even sorcerers, with their ability to spontaneously cast any spells they have learned, are still limited by the stringent framework provided by those spells. Chaos mages know no such limits and can fashion spells as desired, though the effort may be considerable and the danger great.

THE NATURE OF CHAOS

All things spring from Chaos, and it is the nature of all things to return to its primal state. Mortals rise from random collections of primitive blood, flesh, and bone; they spend their lives struggling to reach their goals, to apply the order of their thoughts to their world. In the end, however, they find themselves falling apart, stricken with illness or injury,

their body becoming less stable, their thoughts more erratic. And once the spirit passes from the realms of the living, flesh and blood and bone is once again reduced to primitive, decaying mulch. Even the gods are at the mercy of chaos – their best laid plans are often disrupted or halted by unforeseen circumstances or the fickle hand of random occurrence.

Chaos is the force behind all change, it is the potential that defies categorisation and rigid stability. It is also the corrosive energy that eats away at any order that is imposed on the multiverse by intelligent creatures. While it is the potential of chaos that enables men to build empires and dwarves to carve mighty homes of stone, it is the constant changes of chaos that causes kingdoms to fall into barbarism and caverns to collapse into shattered ruins. Though nothing is possible without chaos, neither is anything allowed to last in its presence.

At its best, chaos is the fuel for great transformations that leave the world changed for the better. But at its worst, chaos gives rise to depravity and madness as the constant influence of change erodes the minds and bodies of those it affects. For all of that, chaos can be wielded as a powerful tool, a primal force that has no will or desires of its own, merely waiting for a hand to guide it.

DISCIPLES OF CHANGE

Chaos mages attempt to harness the great potential of chaos for their own ends. Through sheer force of will they channel chaotic energies into spells that are at least the equal of more traditional spellcasting. Unfortunately, the price for direct



manipulation of chaos energy has great potential to change the user, often with fatal results. Those who follow the path of the chaos mage must balance their own desire for power with their instinct for survival.

The call of chaos is powerful, especially when one considers the difference between chaos mages and their static magic counterparts. A wizard will spend years just learning how to perform a simple cantrip, and many spend their entire lives without advancing far beyond this point. Sorcerers are able to cast spells more quickly than wizards, but are still bound by the same rigid, arcane laws governing magical effect. Chaos mages, on the other hand, are often crafting spells within moments of their exposure to chaos energies. They do not need to learn spells at all, and the very idea of memorising arcane formulae in order to unleash magical effects seems laughably restrictive. They alter the fabric of reality to conform to their desires, and need no musty tomes to tell them how to do it.

Still, it is rare for a wizard or sorcerer to keel over dead from a miscast spell, or for a static mage to suddenly sprout horns or see their flesh grow waxy and translucent as a result of inadvertent errors in formulating magic. Chaos mages must be aware of these and other dangers as they work their art, and failure to use caution and common sense can lead to horrific side effects. This possibility for sudden death or disfigurement keeps the numbers of practising chaos mages low in comparison to wizards or sorcerers. While there are many who have the ability to tap into chaos, and any mortal can be given the ability through exposure to raw chaos, most fall from the wild path within a short time. Many are simply too frightened of their own powers to continue, others find the possible dangers of continuing to be too much to deal with. Of course, there are also those who believe themselves to be far more competent than they are – inevitably ending their lives suddenly and horribly, leaving behind a lesson for others who also tread the wild path.

The Cauldron of Quiddity and Moulds of the Gods

Many chaos mages believe there are but three real forces in the universe – everything else is a reflection or derivation of these forces.

The first force is the World. It is the stage upon which all things happen, the plane that provides a foundation for everything else. In the eyes of the chaos mage, the World encompasses all things, from the material plane to the Abyss, and all else in between. The walls and boundaries that have been erected by gods and men are useful ways to denote specific places within the World, but they are not truly separate places themselves.

Above the World are the Moulds of the Gods. The Moulds were originally constructed by the primal gods when they planned how to populate the World. Over the aeons, gods and men alike have added new moulds to the originals, expanding the diversity of the World. Each Mould is an ideal, a blueprint for the creation of a specific type of thing within the world. There are Moulds for men, Moulds for dogs, Moulds for trees, and even Moulds for concepts such as Good and Evil. Before something can exist, there must first be a Mould.

Below the World, a great Cauldron boils. Filled with the raw essences of being, the Cauldron of Quiddity is the substance from which the World and all within it is created. Within the Cauldron one finds the unformed mass of being, the strange and wonderful essence of things yet to be. The Cauldron is emptied and filled as things in the World are created and destroyed, ensuring the cycle of existence will continue.

When a thing is created, substance from the Cauldron is poured into a Mould and the result appears in the World. Because the substance of the Cauldron is unstable and made of various unpredictable elements, what comes out of the Mould is not always what was predicted, and one Mould may create an infinitude of different, but similar, things. All men, for example, are poured from the same Mould, but no two men are alike.

Chaos mages create their magic by drawing tiny amounts of primal chaos from the Cauldron and passing them through lesser moulds crafted through the strength of their own will. Like the world itself, this can make chaos magic unpredictable and dangerous, but also wondrous and exciting. Such is the way of chaos.



STATIC MAGIC DABLERS

Chaos mages may be few in number, but the ability to channel chaotic energies is not rare. There are many wizards and sorcerers, in fact, that use chaos to provide enhancement to their own, static magic. These dabblers, known as 'wantons' by pure static and chaos mages alike, face a much reduced risk, but they are also wielding only a small portion of the power that is at their fingertips.

The arcane art of wizards and sorcerers is known as static magic, a derisive term coined by chaos mages to denote its unchanging and inflexible nature. The predictable nature of static magic does not always work well with chaos energies, but it is possible to weave chaos into a static spell to augment its power. When doing so, the static mage exposes himself briefly to the raw chaos of the universe, an experience most find distasteful and unnerving.

Because of their aversion to the drawbacks of chaotic power, wantons do their best to formulate new spells or magic items to protect themselves from its more alarming effects. Their avoidance techniques limit their ability to draw upon this

primal force, but also prevent them from being slain or altered by it. The dabblers peek into the cauldrons of chaos, but are too fearful to embrace the power that calls out to them, a crippling weakness chaos mages do not possess.

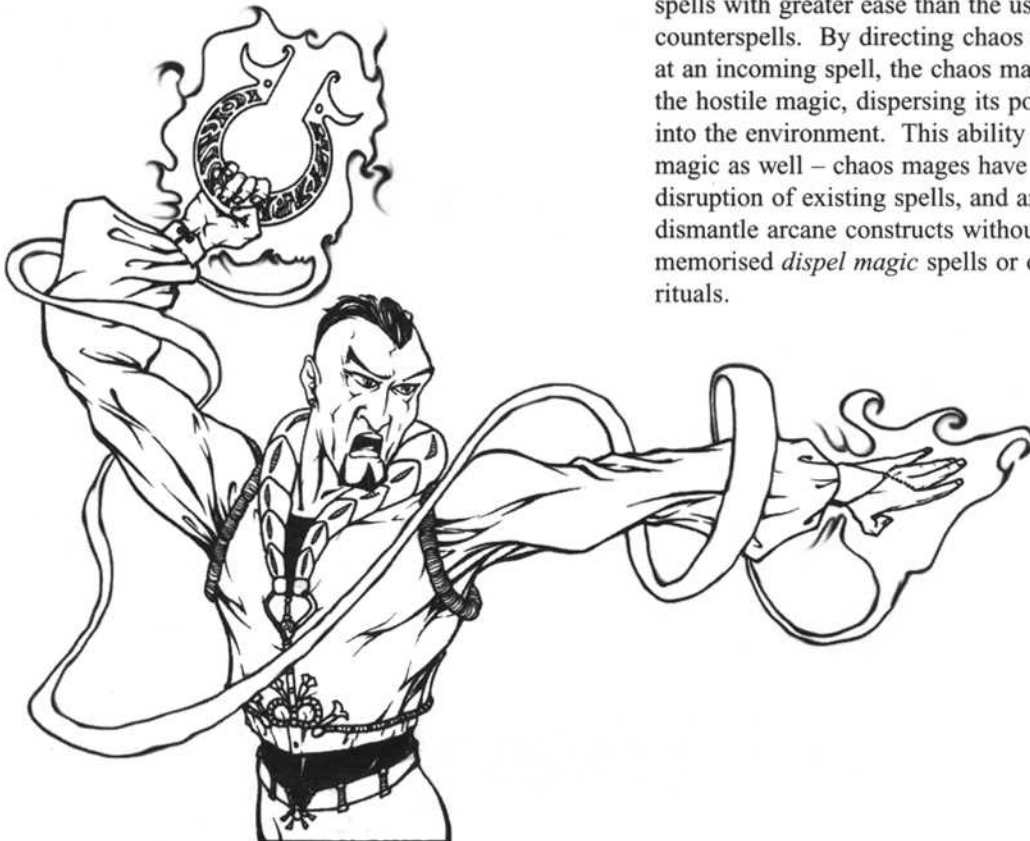
After pain, there is inspiration. Beyond inspiration, there is transcendence. Within transcendence, there is power.

Introductory inscription to 'Awakening of Chaotic Talents in Static Magic Disciples'

THE POWER

Simply put, chaos magic has the benefit of being extremely powerful, fast and flexible when compared to static magic. Though spells can be constructed slowly to provide a greater degree of safety for the chaos mage, most spells are whipped off with a single thought and are created as quickly as the need arises. Likewise, chaos mages are not bound to the slavish adherence to study, memorisation and rest that hinder arcane casters. When they need a spell, they create it on the spot and unleash the power of chaos to do their bidding.

With this flexibility comes the capability to fend off spells with greater ease than the use of clumsy counterspells. By directing chaos energies directly at an incoming spell, the chaos mage can unravel the hostile magic, dispersing its power harmlessly into the environment. This ability extends to static magic as well – chaos mages have mastered the disruption of existing spells, and are able to dismantle arcane constructs without resorting to memorised *dispel magic* spells or other cumbersome rituals.



Chaotic familiars, like the power from which they spring, also tend to be more powerful and flexible than their arcane counterparts. While sorcerers and wizards rely on more or less natural creatures for their familiars, chaos mages create their familiars from primal chaos. These creatures respond instantly to the commands of their masters and are intimately linked to the spirit of those who have created them. Overall, chaos mages have access to a much different kind of power to other arcane practitioners. These abilities come with a price, however, and one that cannot be underestimated.

THE PRICE

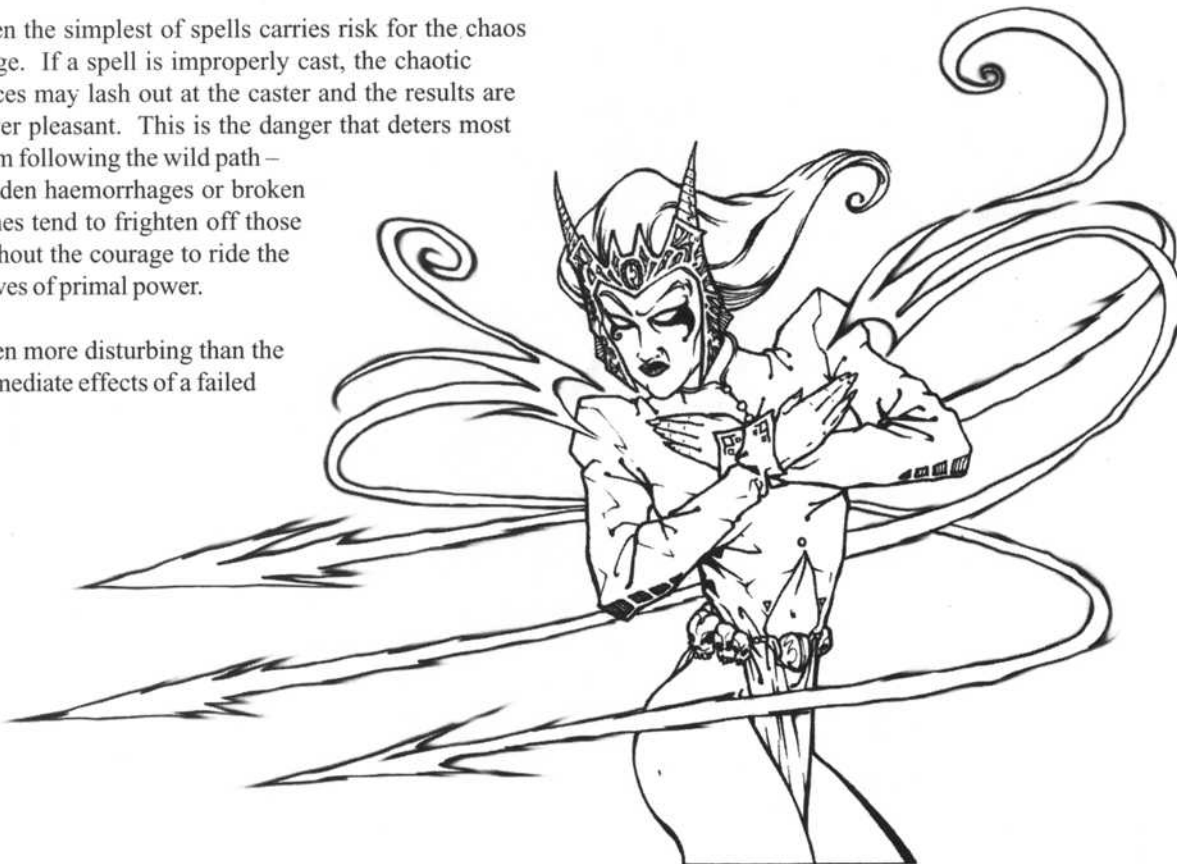
Chaos magic works best when applied to straightforward magic that can be formulated quickly to create a specific effect. Spells with multiple effects, or effects that are meant to persist for a very long time are difficult to create with chaos magic. The naturally disruptive effects of chaos energy makes such spells complicated to control or direct, and few chaos mages are willing to take the risks entailed in them. In short, chaos magic is direct and fast, relying on the subtle layering of magical effects is not the hallmark of a successful chaos mage.

Even the simplest of spells carries risk for the chaos mage. If a spell is improperly cast, the chaotic forces may lash out at the caster and the results are never pleasant. This is the danger that deters most from following the wild path – sudden haemorrhages or broken bones tend to frighten off those without the courage to ride the waves of primal power.

Even more disturbing than the immediate effects of a failed

casting are the so-called Paths of Chaos that many mages find themselves treading after repeated failures. As the powers of chaos flows over and through a caster, they begin to work subtle changes on his body and mind. Failures cause unconstrained flows of primal energy to course through the blood and spirit of the chaos mage, resulting in more drastic and elaborate changes. As a chaos mage progresses through his career, such failures are inevitable, leading to grotesque and frightening alterations. Each failure exaggerates the changes of those that came before, so that a chaos mage becomes more alien with each step he takes along the path. The ultimate end of all paths is the complete transformation of the chaos mage into something strange and distant, a true artifact of chaos.

It is inevitable that chaos mages will fall into conflict with those who do not understand their path, and many misguided clerics and wizards proclaim them to be demonologists or worse. Chaos practitioners must take care when dealing with static mages, for the jealousy wizards and sorcerers feel can lead them into ill-advised actions against the adherents of chaos. The wise chaos mage does not reveal himself except to trusted friends.



FLIRTING WITH CHAOS

While only chaos mages can truly exploit the powers of chaos, static mages may also make use of some lesser aspects of the primal power to energise their spells. Known as wantons, the static mages that draw upon chaos have a difficult road to tread – they are distrusted by other static mages because of their dealings with chaos, and chaos mages have little patience for their timid approach to magic. Though wanton magic is much safer than raw chaos energy, it is neither as powerful, nor as instinctual to use.

This chapter details the way in which static mages can work with the power of chaos, and how they go about developing their chaotic powers.

THOSE WHO EXPERIMENT

Sorcerers are the most likely to become wantons, as their undisciplined early careers may find them pursuing unconventional means to increase their power. They perform obscure rites and research the magical traditions of ancient peoples, all in the name of arcane knowledge. Such sorcerers may never truly understand what they have stumbled upon, viewing it simply as another variety of undisciplined magic. While they may eventually come to realise they are not like other sorcerers, by that point most have come to an acceptance of chaos that makes them loathe to relinquish their power.

Wizards who have learnt wanton talents tend to be rebels and malcontents, chafing under the restrictions of their mentors and unsatisfied with the slow-and-steady pace most practitioners adopt. They chase strange rumours, pursuing every myth or legend of arcane power in their quest to learn more, to enhance their own prestige and surpass the limits placed on them by static magic.

Whatever course they take to this end, both sorcerers and wizards are capable of harnessing small amounts of chaos to enhance their own abilities. The following rules allow a player character to become a wanton.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAOS

Static mages spend a great deal of their early life in study. Even sorcerers must learn the basics of magic if they wish to be able to counter hostile spells or make use of scrolls and other arcane devices. During the course of these studies, they may come across hints of strange rites practised in distant or ancient lands, tantalising titbits that point to an exotic and powerful art.

In fact, most of these little bits and pieces are descriptions of wanton talents, those chaotic abilities used to enhance static magic. There are almost no written works detailing chaos magic, but there are numerous scrolls and tomes written by wanton wizards that describe the known talents. More rare, but no less important than descriptions of the talents themselves, are explanations for how a static mage can awaken his own chaotic potential.



The fools tried to warn me away, told me to give up my outside studies and focus on what they wanted me to learn. I cannot believe I allowed them to blind me to the possibilities for so long; so much time wasted, all because of the fear of old men. I am so glad that is behind me now.

Lugaruth showed me the truth. They spent years trying to hammer me into the moulds they had created for their students, all the while completely ignorant of the chaos mage living right under their noses. He took me into the hills one night and beat me bloody. He was stronger than I would have thought, his crooked limbs and bent back concealed a hideous strength that he put to good use pummelling me into submission.

I spent the night up there, lost in a haze of pain and terror. The voices came to me in the deep of night, whispering things that I could not understand and taunting me with knowledge that I could not grasp. For hours I lay in the dewy grass, straining to hear what they were telling me. And then, as the sun rose between the jagged peaks of the mountains to the east, it fell into place for me.

My bones have been broken and my flesh scarred by my quest for enlightenment, but now that it is mine, the pain of my body was a small price to pay indeed.

There are several talents available to wantons and each one must be activated individually before it may be used. Because these talents have drawbacks and dangers built into them, one of which is the activation process necessary for their use, they are not feats or skills – characters that learn how to use these chaotic capabilities do not need to take a feat to use them, nor is there any associated skill cost. The sections below describe the various activation methods and known talents for static mages looking to adopt wanton magic.

ACTIVATING WANTON MAGIC

Any wanton talent must be activated before a wizard or sorcerer may use it. Such a character must perform one of the activation methods described below and, if successful, is permitted to roll on the Wanton Talent table on p11 to determine which exact talent has been awakened – as static mages will soon learn, there is much randomness in chaos magic and one can never be quite sure what the results of its tampering will be.

Only characters with arcane spellcasting abilities are permitted to activate wanton talents. No character may have more than one wanton talent per character level.

CHAOTIC EXPOSURE

While it is hardly advisable to randomly toy with raw chaos, there are those wantons that attempt to learn a new talent by thrusting themselves into an environment rich in raw chaos and hoping for the

best. Though the results may be far from what is expected, when successful this method immediately sparks a new talent within the character.

Finding an area with enough raw chaos can be difficult – whilst shrines to primal chaos do indeed exist, they are often jealously guarded by chaos mages. Other areas are rich in the forces of chaos magic caused by some catastrophe in the past, due either to a powerful divine presence manifesting itself in the material world or, more commonly, a chaos mage losing control of his art in a dangerous and highly explosive manner. The Games Master is the final arbitrator of where such places may be found but the influence of so much raw energy on the local flora and fauna should create some... interesting challenges.

Once the character finds a location steeped in chaotic energy, there is still no guarantee of the successful activation of wanton talents. Any character wishing to expose themselves to raw chaos must remain in the area for a full day and night. At this point, they are allowed a Will save at DC 20 to channel the power of chaos into their body. A failed save results in an automatic step on a Path of Chaos (see p32) – the powers of chaos have run riot through the body and soul of the aspirant, working their changes with no benefit to him. The character may attempt activation again after advancing another character level.

Success on this save indicates a strong will on the part of the character, and the ability to channel the powers of chaos in more productive ways. The character is now able to use a random talent, but has



FLIRTING WITH CHAOS

also taken one step along a Path of Chaos. Sudden inspiration in the ways of primal chaos always come at a cost.

DEATH

A brush with the grave can be enough to shake the mental foundations of even the most stolidly static wizard. There is something about the passage into the lands of the dead that often shakes something loose in a man, bringing him to a new awareness of his life and place in the universe. This shift in the mindset of an individual can be enough to awaken a chaotic talent, bringing it to full bloom in very short order. A character that attempts to activate a talent in this way must plan carefully – without a cleric to raise him from the dead, the experiment quickly becomes meaningless. Assuming that he does have a cleric standing by and willing to tamper with the forces of death, the wizard or sorcerer must carefully plan out his own death. This can be a daunting task, as the soul must be coaxed from the body rather than simply ripped free in one brutal stroke.

The execution process takes eight hours, after which the character has perished, his soul slipping free of the flesh that houses it. At the final moment of death, a Will save must be made at DC 25 in order to maintain concentration and find the knowledge sought on the other side. If successful, the character automatically gains a random wanton talent, rolled for on the table on p11. If failed, the character has not activated any talent. If he survives, the character may attempt this process again once he has gained another character level.

RESEARCH

The simplest way to gain information about any type of magic is to take it from those mages who have committed it to paper or vellum. Wizards are notorious for their voluminous notes and extensive libraries – those who dabble in wanton talents do not lose their orderly nature and it is not uncommon for them to take notes when experimenting with chaos magic. The Games Master is welcome to make such notes and tomes available to any arcane spellcasting character within his scenarios, though they should be incredibly rare or very expensive to procure.

To glean anything from such notes, a

Knowledge (arcana) check must be made at DC 20, success indicating the wizard or sorcerer has learned a random wanton talent. If the check is failed, the character is not allowed to make another attempt until he either gains another character level, or discovers further texts describing the use of wanton talents.

*They are to be feared, these men who touch
Creation's core. But they are to be pitied as well,
for their days are numbered and swiftly fleeting.*

The Morals and Ethics of the Arcane – Ypesliva

WANTON TALENTS

Once a character has successfully used one of the methods detailed above to gain a wanton talent, he rolls on the table below to determine the exact nature of his new talent. Characters with several wanton talents already in their possession must re-roll any duplicates.



Wanton Talent Table

1d20	Wanton Talent
1-3	Chaotic Component
4-6	Chaos Flare
7-9	Chaotic Trade
10-12	Infuse Chaos
13-15	Penetrating Flux
16-18	Random Amplification
19-20	Random Reduction

Chaotic Component

Rather than make use of his usual spell components when casting, the wanton can use this talent to substitute chaotic energy instead, using its raw power to drive his spells. By channelling dangerous amounts of chaos energy into his spellcasting in this way, he may avoid one of the greatest restrictions of static magic. For every 25 gold pieces, or part of, a spell component is valued at, the caster loses 1 hit point. A minimum of 1 point of damage will be dealt, no matter how minor or seemingly valueless the spell component.

Chaos Flare

When a spell is enhanced by this talent, all random elements of the spell have their listed dice (the damage of a *fireball*, or the number of Hit Dice affected by *sleep*, for example) changed as shown on the table below. Whilst this does not guarantee a spell will have a greater result than normal, it does greatly increase the chance of an improved effect. The caster suffers 1 point of damage for every dice increased in this way, as the flow of chaos plays havoc with his body and mind.

Original Dice Used	New Dice Used
d3	d4
d4	d6
d6	d8
d8	d10
d10	d12

Chaotic Trade

By willingly accepting the worst possible result of a random element within a spell effect, the wanton is able to generate the greatest possible result of a second random element within another spell. When this talent is used, the next spell the wanton casts with a random element (such as a damage roll) automatically has the lowest possible result without



a need to actually roll the dice. Following this, the wanton has one hour in which to cast another spell of the same or lower level than the first spell in conjunction with this talent. This second spell will have the maximum possible result in its random elements.

Infuse Chaos

This talent allows the wanton to deliver a chaotic payload alongside the standard attack form of any offensive spell, causing an additional 1 point of damage per level of the caster. Directly manipulating the flow of primal chaos in this way can be disorienting to the static mage, however, and a successful Will save at DC 15 is required to avoid becoming shaken (-2 morale penalty on attack rolls, checks, and saving throws) for 1d4 rounds.

Penetrating Flux

Spells sheathed in a sleeve of chaos are difficult to resist as the fluctuating force finds its way through the defences of the target. Such intimate contact with raw chaos is dangerous, and for the wanton, also very damaging. When this talent is used, saving throws made against the spell it enhances suffer a -2d6 enhancement penalty, whilst the caster has his hit points reduced by the same amount.



Random Amplification

Using this talent gives the wanton a chance to greatly enhance the effect of his spells, but chaos is anything but predictable, and it may well have disastrous consequences. When this talent is used, any random element of the spell being enhanced is calculated by rolling the listed dice total twice. The two separate dice roll totals are compared and the table below consulted;

Dice rolls	Effect
One dice roll odd, the other even	The lowest dice rolls is used
Both dice rolls odd	The highest dice rolls is used
Both dice rolls even	The average (round down) of the dice rolls is used
Both dice rolls same total	The total of both dice rolls is used

Random Reduction

By focusing chaotic energies away from a spell casting attempt, the static caster may assure there will be no highs or lows in the random elements of

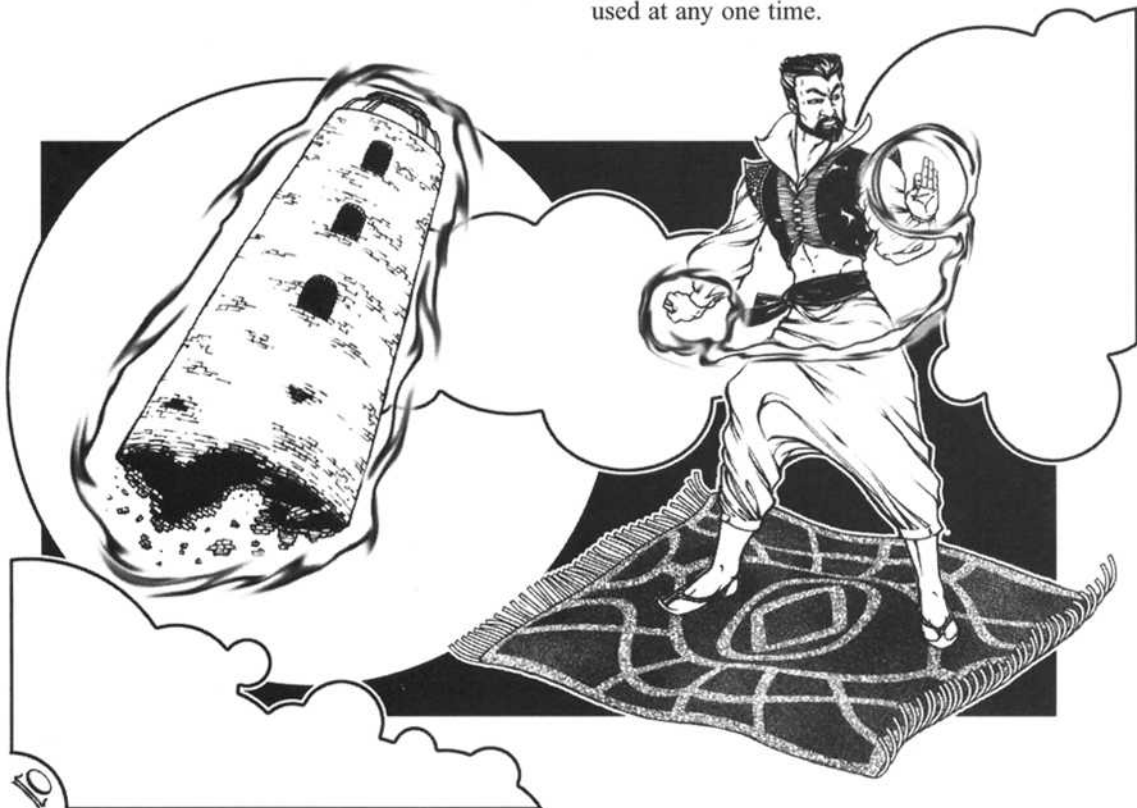
the casting. If a spell description calls for dice to be rolled to determine an effect (such as damage, number of targets effected, or range, for example), the effect is instead presumed to be equal to one-half the possible maximum, rounded down.

Drawing upon the power of chaos to reduce random elements in a spell is risky, for the caster must make a successful Will save at DC 15 or be overwhelmed by the effort of harnessing primal chaos – he will be considered flat-footed until his next action.

For example, a fireball that would normally cause 5d6 damage would instead result in exactly 15 points of damage inflicted upon those within its area of effect when Random Reduction is used.

USING TALENTS

In order to use any wanton talent, the static mage must make a Concentration check at DC 10 + the level of the spell to be affected in order to harness the forces of primal chaos. Failure indicates the static mage cannot effectively channel chaos into the formulae of the spell and suffers subdual damage equal to the amount by which the Concentration check failed. This damage is applied immediately following the casting of the spell and thus does not force a second Concentration check to avoid losing the spell. No more than one wanton talent may be used at any one time.



COURTING WILD SORCERY

In the wild places where the laws of mortals give way to the rampant growth of nature, primal chaos seeps into the world. In the echoes of a madman's scream and the peals of a mistress' brazen laughter, chaos rings its alien chimes. Those who can find the strange places and hear the whispered secrets that fill the world around them know they are different. Of those few, a handful will pursue the mysteries of the universe and discover the constantly changing ways of primal chaos. They will become chaos mages.

TO HEED THE CALL

As mentioned above, there are those who can hear the siren song of primal chaos and are aware there is *something* different in the way that they perceive the world. Most, however, choose not to pursue their hidden knowledge. They spend their life attempting to ignore their talent and hoping against hope that they will live as normally as possible. These individuals tend to be intelligent, but lack the force of character and lust for knowledge that would prompt them to pursue every avenue exposed to them. Those who do listen, however, are just the opposite. Many powerful chaos mages are of no more than average intellect, having spent their lives using their personality and determination to get them through rather than rely on studied knowledge. Most enjoy travel and spend their young adulthood as a member of a merchant caravan, a gypsy troupe, or other group of travellers, and always there is the hunger - for knowledge, power, and understanding what it is that sets the chaos mage apart from his peers.

Some discover they have a knack for sorcery or the brand of magic practised by bards and find fulfilment in those professions. An unfortunate few destroy themselves in their early, fumbling attempts to harness the great power that calls to them. These, in particular, have given chaos magic a poor reputation - immolating oneself in purple flames or levelling a village with corkscrewed thunderbolts are the kinds of incidents that do not make for a good impression.

But the remainder learn to harness their power, to focus the energies that answer their command. These, the fraction of a fraction with the potential to become chaos mages, learn the basics and then embark upon their quest for knowledge. Most will die early, some will retire when the strain of primal chaos becomes too much to bear, and some will become legends.

STATIC AND CHAOTIC MAGIC

While sorcerers and wizards may draw upon a trickle of primal chaos, only the chaos mage has the ability to fully accept this powerful energy into himself. By opening up to the primal energy of creation, chaos mages are able to spontaneously create spells, fashioning magic at a moment's notice. This magical flexibility comes at a price, however, as the very forces they use to create their spells can have unintended side effects on body and psyche.

Unlike most static mages, chaos mages often have no formal training in the magical arts. Everything they do is instinctive, and each chaos mage spends a great deal of time stumbling along and discovering the rites and practices that work best for them. This is not to say that chaos mages are stingy with their knowledge - because of the dangers inherent in their pursuit of power, chaos mages are more than willing to take on students if they can find them. In some cases, small groups of beginning chaos mages will band together to share their experiences in an effort to help one another avoid pitfalls and mistakes. There are legends of entire schools devoted to chaos magic, but such an enclave would be in constant danger not only from its enemies, but from the sheer potential for disaster brewing within its corridors and classrooms.

THE CHAOS MAGE

Whatever name he goes by, the-chaos mage is powerful and unpredictable. His ability to cast spells quickly and without the need for study or memorisation gives the chaos mage an important advantage in the realms of magic, but extracts a dire cost. The chaos mage must carefully weigh his decisions, choosing when it is best to use his chaotic powers and when it is best to resort to more mundane solutions. The life of a chaos mage is not for all, but those who choose it would have it no other way.



Adventurers: The quest for others of their kind, or simply for more information about their chosen path, leads many chaos mages into the adventurer's life. Where else is a person likely to be given the opportunity to raid the dungeons and towers of evil mages, liberating their years of research in a few moments of frenzied battle? Chaos mages are also able to find more willing companions amongst adventurers, who have fewer qualms about associating with individuals possessing so many dangerous quirks. The frenetic, often confusing, lifestyle of the adventurer is also attractive to mages on an ideological level. By joining with an adventuring party, the chaos mage ensures he will experience life at its wildest and most intriguing. This also tends to shorten the lives of chaos mages, but such is the price of experiencing life on the edge of true freedom.

Characteristics: The defining element of every chaos mage is the ability to touch the powers of primal chaos and bend those energies to their will. New spells are created on the spur of the moment as the chaos mage needs, crafted with imagination and willpower.

Though not physically powerful, successful chaos mages tend to have bodies healthy enough to sustain considerable abuse.

Unbridled chaos can disrupt flesh and bone easily and cause great damage. Because of this, a wise chaos mage spends more time developing a strong body than is typical of arcane spellcasters. Chaos mages can craft magical items and familiars, though neither of these are permanent like those of wizards and sorcerers. Chaos magic items are bound to their users and can only exist as long as the wielder is willing to maintain a link to chaos with his own life-force. In a similar way, chaos familiars are an extension of the chaos mage's will wrapped in thick weaves of primal chaos to give them form. Something quite different from an intelligent pet, the chaotic familiar is a part of the chaos mage on a fundamental level and one cannot survive without the other.

Religion: With their intimate connection to the primal force of the universe and dangerous lifestyles, chaos mages tend toward more primitive, informal religions if they bother paying homage to any god at all. When they do choose to follow a deity, chaos mages will worship those that promote change, conflict, or transformation of one sort or another. Gods of war, gambling, chance, chaos (naturally), and fertility are popular amongst chaos mages, with gods of gambling leading slightly in number. Any god requiring elaborate ceremony or strict adherence to ritual will have very few chaos magic followers, and some chaos mages go out of their way to disrupt such organised religions.

Background: Chaos mages are often solitary, both because their mind-set is so different from the norm and because there are so few of them. Though groups of chaos mages do exist, they rarely last for long and are not easily found. Primitive cultures tend to give rise to larger numbers of chaos mages than do civilised lands, with a proportionate decrease in the number of static mages. Above all else, chaos mages realise that they are different from others, and do their best to turn those differences into strengths rather than liabilities.

Races: With their sturdy constitution and affinity for all things magical, gnomes find themselves exploring the realms of chaos magic quite often. In the latter half of their careers, gnomes use their natural skill with alchemy to craft strange and dangerous objects of chaotic power, making up for their average Charisma. Always flexible and inventive, humans are also likely to follow the wild path, especially in areas dominated by tribal cultures. Elves and half-orcs are the least likely to become chaos mages; elves have long traditions tied to static magic, and most half-orcs simply lack the Charisma to focus the powers of chaos successfully.

Halfings, with their wandering ways and natural curiosity have a fair number of chaos mages among



their number and their resistance to fear and general resilience aids those who do follow the wild path, giving them the courage to brave the dangers of primal chaos. Half-elves, if raised by their human parent, are as likely to become a chaos mage as if they were truly human; those raised in the company of elves will rarely pursue the course of primal chaos, choosing instead to study the arcane magic that surrounds them on a daily basis. The ordered nature of dwarven society, coupled with their weak natural Charisma limits dwarven exposure to chaos magic and most will stick to the more comfortable and predictable static magic, if they become practitioners at all.

Other Classes: Chaos mages are competent when operating on their own, but shine brightest when working with others. Fighters can shield them from enemies and give them the opportunity to unleash devastating spells while clerics provide them with the healing that allows them to survive the ravages of chaotic spell casting. Paladins and monks tend to be annoyingly rigid in their thinking, but chaos mages do their best not to judge the ideologies of others when their own is considered so alien.

Alignment: Any chaotic.

Hit Die: d4.

Class Skills: Alchemy (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (arcana)(Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Spellcraft

The spellcraft of chaos mages is not directly comparable to that learned by static mages and divine spellcasters. Instead, it represents the knowledge a chaos mage has of his own form of magic and its effects. One-half of his ranks in Spellcraft may be used if the chaos mage is attempting to study the workings of a static or divine magic item or spell. The reverse is true of divine spellcasters and static mages – they in turn are permitted to apply only one-half of their Spellcraft ranks when dealing with chaos magic items or spells.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int Modifier

Class Features

The following are all class features of the chaos mage character class.

The Chaos Mage

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Chaos Magic
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Chaos Familiar
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Multiple Effects (2)
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Countermagic
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Multiple Effects (3)
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Purge Chaos
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Multiple Effects (4)
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Multiple Effects (5)





Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The chaos mage is proficient with all simple weapons but has no proficiency with armour or shields of any sort. Armour interferes with the chaos mage's ability to 'feel' the flows of chaos in the environment leading to a greater chance that his spells will fail. Any armour worn has the same chance for causing arcane spell failure for a chaos mage as it does for a static mage, though with far more dire consequences (see p32).

Chaos Magic: The chaos mage is attuned to the forces of chaos and can manipulate these forces to create magical effects. See the following chapter for information regarding the Chaos Magic system. In addition, chaos magic is anathema to those practising the static arts. A character cannot multiclass into chaos mage if he has any levels as a sorcerer or wizard.

Chaos Familiar: The chaos mage does not start his career with a familiar. Unlike wizards and sorcerers, the chaos mage crafts his own familiar from the primal forces of chaos, infusing the

creation with a fraction of his own essence. Chaos familiars are much stronger and more capable than their static magic counterparts, but the pain caused by their death or injury is also much more devastating for the chaos mage. See the Servants of Chaos chapter for more information.

Multiple Effects: The chaos mage may start to combine several effect elements into single spells, as described on p26. The maximum number of effect elements that may be included within a single spell is listed within parentheses on the table below.

Countermagic: Chaos mages are able to unleash raw chaos to counter the spells of their opponents. This is identical to the counterspell ability of any other arcane caster, but with the following changes;

The chaos mage does not need to make a Spellcraft check in order to determine the spell being cast. As he is not attempting to disrupt a specific spell but instead using sheer force of will to thwart the casting, it is unnecessary to know exactly what spell is being cast.

Lurz ground his teeth against the pain roaring through his body. Every nerve was aflame as his muscles stretched and contracted under the assault of chaotic energies. Once again he had pushed too hard for too long, and now he had to pay the price. The Paths left him weak and disfigured, but the power within him would not be denied.

The earth around Lurz glowed with spirals of writhing power that emanated from the soles of his feet to form a wide, oval pattern. He forced his mind and concentration down, down through his feet into the safety of the earth where the pain could not reach him and the waves of chaos had no power. His flesh shuddered and jerked as it attempted to free itself from the chaos-wrought changes. Lightning flashed across the sky above him, purple and jagged against the darkness; thunder rolled across the hills an eternity later, the sound distorted by the seething power leaking from his skin.

Sparks jumped from the ends of his hair, trailing behind his head like a mane of stars and falling to the earth like burning meteors. With a final effort, Lurz pushed with his will, driving the excess chaos out of his body like pus from a wound. He gasped and his eyes opened wide when the primal fluid boiled out of his pores in a screaming rush.

The chaos mage lay on the scorched earth, panting with relief. Once again, he had stepped backwards on the Paths and delayed his destiny by another day.

A Casting check at DC 15 + the level of spell being countered must be made for success. The standard chances for backlash, manifestation and steps along the Paths of Chaos apply as normal. See the Chaos Magic chapter for more details.

Note that countermagic is capable of blocking any arcane spell, even those not normally affected by counterspell. This fearsome ability to shut down the spells of static mages causes practitioners to cast a leery eye toward the chaos mages. Countermagic has no ability to affect divine spellcasting.

Purge Chaos: The build up of chaotic energies around chaos mages is one of the great hazards of the profession. Those who survive long enough learn how to shunt the primal forces away from themselves and will increase their lifespan (and quality of life) considerably. Once per week, a chaos mage can invoke this ability and free himself of one level on his Path of Chaos. This has an experience cost equal to 500 x the level of the step being negated. Paths to Chaos are covered in more detail on p32.

For example, the chaos mage Argren Lurz decides that the eighth step is too far to be along on his Path to Chaos. Invoking Purge Chaos, and paying the cost of 4000 XP (8 x 500), he puts himself back to the seventh step, a little further from the maw of chaos but still uncomfortably close.

Ex-Chaos Mages: If a chaos mage ever becomes non-chaotic in alignment, or multiclassed as a static mage, he will no longer be able to use chaos magic or any of his other class abilities. Furthermore, he will be unable advance any further as a chaos mage. If the character ever returns to a chaotic alignment, he will be able to continue his pursuit of this class from the point he left it. As long as a chaos mage retains his chaotic alignment, he may freely multiclass as a divine spellcaster without penalty.

It should also be noted here that chaos magic is considered arcane spellcasting – clerics gaining the Chaos domain through their divine character class do not receive any further benefit to their chaos magic casting.

There is nothing I can teach you that you cannot learn yourself. But there is much that I can show you so that you do not have to suffer yourself.

Excerpt from a speech given by Malachai the Blind to his apprentice



CHAOS MAGIC

The actual process of wielding chaos magic is relatively straightforward – the chaos mage taps into his own force of will to channel mighty chaos energy and craft it into useful spells. While it sounds simple, the dangers are great and it requires equal parts of luck and skill to avoid the many pitfalls of the wild path. Chaos mages wield great power, but must use their magic with care to avoid its many hazards.

Despite these risk, chaos mages are often envied by static mages who do not truly understand the inherent risks involved in handling primal chaos. A skilled chaos mage can create many types of spells at a moment's notice, and is quite capable of casting many more spells a day than an equivalent static mage. What these jealous wizards and sorcerers do not always see are the chaotic haemorrhages caused by uncontrolled spells, or chaos mages who end their lives as gibbering shells.

'I don't understand why you don't just blast them out of their boots.' Aniel was young, and her enthusiasm was infectious. For a static mage, the young wizard had proven herself to be remarkably exuberant and reckless.

Filrin winked at her friend and shook her head. 'Because magic isn't always the way to solve problems. Don't you wizards learn that?'

With a snort Aniel glared at her friend, then slapped her arm in mock outrage. 'You're one to talk, it's not like you even know *how* to cast a spell without blowing yourself up.'

'This is true,' Filrin wrinkled her lips in distaste and rolled up her left sleeve to expose a watery blue eye winking from the centre of her forearm. 'On the other hand, I have a constant reminder that not every problem can be solved with magic, eh?'

THE SYSTEM OF CHAOS

These rules for chaos magic allows single-roll spell creation and requires no more work than simple addition. By following the steps outlined below, a spell can be created quickly and easily. Games Masters are strongly encouraged to become familiar with this system to allow for balanced on-the-fly

adjudication of new spells. Wise players should create their more complex spells between game sessions and run them by the Games Master for approval ahead of time to avoid lengthy discussions during play.

With that said, this system enables the creation of spells that fall in line with existing d20 system spells available to a static mage at a similar experience level. The power of the chaos mage lies not so much in sheer destructive power as it does in flexibility; a chaos mage can have a spell tailored for the situation ready at the drop of the hat, allowing them to handle a wide variety of circumstances without the need for extensive planning beforehand. Chaos mages are also able to push themselves harder in an effort to create more spells in a given day than could be memorised by a static mage – the danger is that pushing too hard for too long can have disastrous consequences for a chaos mage.

CRAFTING CHAOS MAGIC

Fashioning raw chaos into a controlled magical effect is not as effortless as releasing a memorised spell or discharging the eldritch energy held within sorcerous blood. It can be compared to touching a bolt of lightning, to standing in the centre of a shrieking hurricane or to riding on the powerful back of a diving dragon. The casting of chaos magic is the ultimate act of will as the mage reaches through the fabric of reality to draw forth streams of seething primal chaos to fuel his magic. Only the strongest of will and body can hope to harness this power for long – the weak find themselves obliterated beneath a crashing wave of implacable chaos.

SUMMARY

The rules for creating chaos magic spells encompass the entirety of this chapter and, whilst intuitive in use, can seem a little daunting with a first reading. Presented here is a summary to guide players as to the principles required in using chaos magic within games.

Chaos magic spells are extremely flexible and are 'built' through a number of steps with which a player may add a wide variety of variables to fine-tune his casting. The combination of individual elements will provide a DC used for a final Casting

check to unleash the spell. The steps involved in casting chaos magic are listed below;

1. Choose Effect Element

All spells have a final effect, be it as simple as causing damage, or as elaborate as finely crafting an object from the raw forces of chaos.

2. Choose Area Element

Chaos magic spells also have an area of effect, allowing a practitioner to concentrate the effect upon a single target, or across a wide area.

3. Choose Range Element

It is relatively easy to hurl a spell at a target just a few feet away, but chaos mages have the potential to cast spells with extreme ranges measuring several miles.

4. Choose Duration Element

Most chaos magic spells are instantaneous in nature, though a powerful chaos mage may be able to extend its duration for a great length of time. No chaos magic spell may be permanent, however.

5. Choose Saving Throw Element

There are many magical defences to thwart spellcasters, but chaos mages have the ability to overwhelm a target with huge amounts of chaos energy, smashing apart any such shields in an effort to destroy their enemies.

6. Casting the Spell

The combination of all the different elements listed above will produce a DC the chaos mage must match with his Casting check. If he succeeds in the check, then the spell works as planned. However, failure can produce catastrophic results as the chaos mage loses control of the very chaos energies he was attempting to harness.

There are many different options available to the chaos mage within each of these steps, for chaos magic is truly the most flexible art within arcane spellcasting. However, players should not be intimidated by the size of this chapter, for the system is very intuitive and they will soon be hurling bolts of chaotic energy at their enemies with ease!

The following sections of this chapter describe in detail the steps listed above, all necessary to craft a

chaos magic spell. A chaos mage will start by choosing an effect element for his spell, where he will find the base DC required for the Casting check needed to successfully cast the spell. He will then work through the other listed elements, choosing options as desired, which will modify the DC of the Casting check. By the time he reaches step 6 to actually cast the spell, he will have a final DC for the Casting check.

A Casting Check is 1d20 + chaos mage's class level + Cha modifier.

Players and Games Masters alike should spend some time familiarising themselves with these rules before introducing them into an existing campaign, in order to speed play.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE EFFECT ELEMENT

All spells have an effect element – if there is no desired effect to be achieved by casting the spell, there is no spell to cast! The chaos mage has a wide range of effects available when crafting a spell, and these form the basis of the spell's casting Difficulty Class. The list below describes each of the effect elements and provides rules for their use.

Raw Damage Effect

Casting DC: 10

Save: Fort halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The most straightforward of all effects, raw damage is simply a rush of violent energy directed at one or more targets. Raw damage spells do 1d8 points of damage per caster level, though a chaos mage may intentionally cast them with less dice.

Persistent Damage Effect

Casting DC: 5

Save: Fort halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: Yes

Rather than expend all its damage in a single blast of raw power, a spell can be crafted so it gradually increases the damage it causes upon an enemy until it reaches full potential. Spells of this effect element take longer to deliver damage, but are easier to cast than a single blast of raw chaos. The persistent damage effect causes 1d8 points of damage upon its target in the round it is cast, with





the damage steadily increasing by 1d8 on each subsequent round until all of available damage has been dealt. Persistent damage spells do a total of 1d8 points of damage per caster level, though a chaos mage may intentionally cast them with less dice.

For ease of play, it is recommended that the chaos mage's player put aside a number of dice equal to the damage dealt by a persistent damage effect, removing and rolling dice from this pool every round. When all dice have been rolled, the spell is complete.

For example, Carsius casts a spell with a 5d8 persistent damage effect at an unsuspecting ogre. On the round the spell is cast, the ogre suffers 1d8 points of damage. On the following round, he

suffers 2d8 points of damage. On the final round, the spell causes an additional 2d8 points as this is all that remains of damage result ($1d8+2d8+2d8 = 5d8$).

Degrading Damage Effect

Casting DC: 10

Save: Fort halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: Yes

Spells of this effect type deliver an initial blast of magic that continues to damage the target over several rounds. Degrading damage spells do a total of 1d8 points of damage per caster level, though a chaos mage may intentionally cast them with less dice. On the first round it is cast, a spell with degrading damage causes one half of its total dice of damage, rounding down. The damage caused in the following round is equal to one die less than that caused on the initial round, and subsequent rounds further reduce the damage caused by one more die until no damage dice remain.

Degrading damage provides a strong enhancement to the damage potential of a spell, but it has its limits – no spell using this effect element may cause more than a total of 30d8 damage.

For example, Carsius is tangling with ogres again, and launches an 8d8 degrading damage spell against an enemy. On the first round, the spell does 4d8 points of damage. On the round following, it causes an additional 3d8 points of damage, followed by 2d8 on the next round, and on the final round, the ogre suffers the last 1d8 of damage. Carsius cast the equivalent of a 10d8 damage spell with the same casting difficulty as an 8d8 raw damage spell.

Appearance of Damage Causing Spells

Spells that make use of the damage effect element generate vivid visual effects that are unique to each caster. Eerily silent flames, roaring beams of venomous green energy, and roiling streams of colourless fluid have all been seen, but there are no limits as to what other types of manifestation may exist. Games Masters should work with their

players to determine a suitable appearance for their damage causing spells.

In addition, the chaos mage player is free to choose whether his newly created spell deals electricity, fire, cold, acid or force damage.

Materialisation Effect

The materialisation effect element allows the chaos mage to fashion solid items from the fluid body of primal chaos. All such objects appear unnatural, their surface covered with crackling threads of chaotic energy in a myriad of unnatural shades. Materialised objects are roughly as strong as bronze and have the same density, though they are obviously not metal but some alien, impermanent material. They can appear anywhere within the range of the spell and do not have to appear all in the same place if more than one object is materialised during the same casting.

The objects created must have enough space to allow for their materialisation - a spiked ball cannot be materialised inside the skull of a target, for example, because there is not enough space for it. In addition, a chaos mage must remember to include a duration element, or the created object will disappear as soon as it appears!

All materialised objects created through this effect element will radiate a magical aura, for the purposes of detect magic spells, though they will have no additional inherent magical properties.

Listed below are the growing levels of effect that can be generated with this effect element;

Negligible

Casting DC: 5

Save: None

Spell Resistance: No

Continued Concentration: No

A single item of up to one ounce in weight per level of the caster can be created from the force of chaos. Alternatively, a quiet noise or very dim light equivalent to a candle can be materialised.

Minor

Casting DC: 10

Save: None

Spell Resistance: No

Continued Concentration: No

A single item of up to 1 pound in weight per level of

the caster can be created from primal chaos at this level of effect. This level of effect can also be used to create noise or strangely-inflected but simple speech, or a multi-coloured light with the brightness of a lantern.

Moderate

Casting DC: 15

Save: None

Spell Resistance: No

Continued Concentration: No

One or more items with a maximum combined weight of two pounds per level of the caster can be created from raw chaos at this level of effect. Alternatively, loud and complex sounds and speech may be created, as well as spectral lights in a variety of colours with the equivalent brightness of a *daylight* spell.

Major

Casting DC: 20

Save: None

Spell Resistance: No

Continued Concentration: No

One or more items with a maximum combined weight of five pounds per level of the caster can be created from raw chaos at this level of effect. The items may also be imbued with the sounds and/or light described under the moderate level of effect.

Chaos Construct

Casting DC: 20-30

Save: None

Spell Resistance: No

Continued Concentration: Yes

A chaos mage can choose to create an animated materialisation, a creature known as a chaos construct that has a simple intellect and the ability to follow orders. These entities are crafted from primal chaos and appear as humanoids covered in swirling patterns of energy. When summoned, they coalesce anywhere within the spell's range and are already aware of their first command.

There are three classes of chaos construct, as shown in the table below. Round all fractions down.

Chaos Construct (Su): All chaos constructs are able to obey a single, simple command at a time. The summoning mage can change this order at any time - the chaos construct can receive mental commands as long as it and its caster are within 100 ft. of one another. They are also immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, and disease. Chaos



Chaos Constructs

	Minor Chaos Construct	Moderate Chaos Construct	Major Chaos Construct
Hit Dice	1d4 per caster level	1d8 per caster level	1d12 per caster level
Initiative	+1 (Dex)	+1 (Dex)	+1 (Dex)
Speed	20 ft.	30 ft.	30ft.
AC	10+¼ caster level	10+½ caster level	10 + caster level
Attacks	Slam +¼ caster level	Slam +½ caster level + 2	Slam + caster level + 3
Damage	1d4 - 1	1d6 + 2	1d8 + 3
Face/Reach	2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft. / 2 ½ ft.	5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.	5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Attacks	None	None	None
Special Qualities	Chaos Construct	Chaos Construct	Chaos Construct
Saves	As caster	As caster	As caster
Abilities	Str 8, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1	Str 14, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1	Str 16, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1
Casting DC	20	25	30

constructs are also unaffected by critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, and death from massive damage. They are considered outsiders and share their caster's alignment.

Movement Effect

One of the conveniences often used by chaos mages, the movement effect element allows the caster to move himself and others quickly through space and time, or even across different planes of existence. The difficulty of a movement element is based on distance – the further the caster wishes to move, the more difficult the element is to incorporate into a spell.

It is safer for the chaos mage to move only himself for, when transporting others, the chaos mage places them at risk from damage due to exposure to primal chaos they are simply not prepared for. Chaos mages may also use a movement effect to speed up their allies or slow down their opponents, effectively paralyzing foes at higher levels of effect.

Minor

Casting DC: 15

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The maximum distance it is possible for any affected subject to travel is 20 ft. + 5 ft. per 2 caster levels.

Instead of magical movement, the chaos mage may instead use this level of effect to give the spell's subject an additional move equivalent action in the round *following* the casting of the spell.

Alternatively, the chaos mage may instead choose to deprive the subject of its next move equivalent action.

Moderate

Casting DC: 20

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The maximum distance it is possible for any affected subject to travel is 100 ft. + 10 ft. per caster level.



'Run!' Turzan shouted at his companions and ducked below the scything blade of the enraged ogre. 'Run!'

The rest of the camp was already on the move, heeding the chaos mage's warning. Behind the ogre, a train of shrieking goblins crested the hill, their hooked scimitars glinting in the dying rays of the sun. Turzan dodged another blow from the ogre and slapped his hands together to release the chaos magic he had been struggling to craft. The ogre stopped in surprise as a blue-green flash ripped through the air in front of it and air popped into the space Turzan had been occupying a second before.

Ahead of his companions now, thanks to the hastily crafted spell, Turzan paused for a moment to wipe the trickle of blood leaking from his nose. The blood was a bad sign, but Turzan was sure he had one spell left in him. Angar was not going to be happy, but there was not much choice – if the goblins caught up, they were all going to die.

Another clap of his hands flooded the air in front of him with swirling golden sparks. The chaotic energy flowed around Turzan and his friends, ripping them out of the World and spiriting them through the Cauldron. An eternity passed in an instant, and the five of them were expelled back into the World on a spiral of crimson light, miles distant from the goblins.

Angar clutched his stomach and fell to his knees. 'At least we're alive,' he groaned. His last meal soon splashed to the ground.

Instead of magical movement, the chaos mage may instead use this level of effect to give the spell's subject an additional partial action in the round *following* the casting of the spell. Alternatively, the chaos mage may instead choose to deprive the subject of its next partial action.

Major

Casting DC: 25

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The maximum distance it is possible for any affected subject to travel is 400 ft. + 40 ft. per caster level.

Instead of magical movement, the chaos mage may instead use this level of effect to give the spell's subject an additional standard action in the round *following* the casting of the spell. Alternatively, the chaos mage may instead choose to deprive the subject of its next standard action.

Extreme

Casting DC: 30

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The maximum distance it is possible for any affected subject to travel is 1 mile + 1 mile per caster level. The caster must be familiar with the

area to which they are teleporting, or the spell will automatically fail.

Instead of magical movement, the chaos mage may instead use this level of effect to give the spell's subject an additional full round action in the round *following* the casting of the spell. Alternatively, the chaos mage may instead choose to deprive the subject of its next full round action.

Universal

Casting DC: 35

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

The caster may move himself and other subjects between the planes of existence. Each casting may only move a subject to a plane of existence 'next to' their current location. In addition, there is a +5 insight bonus applied to the Casting DC when moving to or from a chaotically-aligned plane, but a -5 penalty when moving to or from a lawfully-aligned plane.

Chaos Movement

Anyone, except for a chaos mage, affected by a chaos magic spell with a movement effect must make a Fortitude save at DC 10 or suffer 1d8 points of subdual damage due to close proximity with the raw forces of chaos.



Transformation Effect

Though very simple at the lower levels of casting, transformation effects are capable of creating complex and radical changes in their subjects. Lead to gold, flesh to stone, and man to beast are all examples of physical transformations, but chaos mages are able to enact mental transformations as well.

The total amount of material that may be transformed in any way (whether physically or mentally) is equal to 20 pounds per level of the caster. Several effects listed below allow the caster to grant a variety of bonuses or penalties to a subject.

In every case, the exact bonuses and penalties may be specified by the caster, though the maximum adjustment possible is +1 per two caster levels.

Games Masters and players are welcome to invent their own transformation effects, using those below as a guide to their relative strength and power.

Negligible

Casting DC: 5

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

At this level of effect, the chaos mage may;

† Clean or repair minor damage to an object. This includes restoring damage such as tears in fabric, chips in wood or metal, or stains and spots.

† Grant a subject an enhancement bonus to one type of saving throw (chosen by the chaos mage at the time of casting) for the duration of the spell.

† Alter the appearance of a subject, providing an enhancement bonus to any Disguise checks.

† Create or erase writing (one sentence per caster level) by transforming the patterns on a surface.

Minor

Casting DC: 10

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

At this level of effect, the chaos mage may;

† Grant an enhancement bonus or penalty to a subject's saving throws, Armour Class or attack or damage rolls.

† Apply an enhancement bonus or penalty to one ability score of a subject.

† Blind, stun, or deafen a subject.

† Render a subject invisible – an attack or other action that draws attention to the subject will end the spell immediately.

† Change the material of one object into another, similar type – for example, paper to cloth or steel to stone.

Moderate

Casting DC: 15

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

At this level of effect, the chaos mage may;

† Cause a solid object to become ethereal and able to move through other solid objects.

† Transform one magical effect upon a subject into a harmless enchantment that dissipates immediately.

† Increase or decrease the size of a subject by 10% per level of the caster, up to a maximum of 50%. Note that the subject can only expand to fill the limits of its environment, and will only reduce until it meets the resistance of objects it contains. Therefore this effect cannot be used, for example, to crush a warrior in his own armour by reducing its size or increasing his. See the table below for the effects of increasing or decreasing the size of a creature or object.

† Convert the state of non-living matter – for example, water to steam or stone to sand.

Total

Casting DC: 20

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

At this level of effect, the chaos mage may;

- † Convert raw materials to become finished, crafted objects. For example, a sturdy stick of wood and a bar of iron can be transformed into a hammer.
- † Convert non-living matter in the spell's area of effect into harmless, light-based energy.
- † Grant a subject an entirely new form, complete with special abilities such as flight.
- † Dispel any and all illusions within the area of effect to transform it back to its natural state.
- † Convert non-living materials from one type to a dissimilar type – for example, water to steel or wood to fire.
- † Transform the direction of gravity in an area of effect.
- † Increase the size of a target by up to 100% or decrease it by 90%. See the table below for the effects of increasing or decreasing the size of a creature or object.
- † Grant a subject *improved invisibility*

Chaotic Reconstruction

Casting DC: 30

Save: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Continued Concentration: No

At this level of effect, items are transformed into pure chaos that may be refashioned under the control of the spellcaster. Weight may be increased or decreased by up to 10% per level of the chaos mage, uniquely beneficial features can be added, and the composition of the object can be changed in utterly unnatural ways.

At the moment of transformation the chaotic energies flare in a 20 ft. radius, causing 1d8 damage for every 20 pounds transformed, up to a total of 10d8. No creature with Hit Dice greater than the current level of the caster may be affected by chaotic reconstruction.

All modifiers are rounded down. Note that creatures affected by this effect may move between size classes, as defined in *Core Rulebook III*, and suffer Armour Class and Base Attack Bonus modifiers in the process.

Note that the target can only expand to fill the limits of its environment, and will only reduce until it meets the resistance of objects it contains. Items

Chaotic Reconstruction

Size Change	Height/Length Modifier	Weight Modifier	Strength Modifier	Hit Point Modifier
-90%	X .1	X .01	-5	-45%
-80%	X .2	X .02	-4	-40%
-70%	X .3	X .03	-3	-35%
-60%	X .4	X .06	-3	-30%
-50%	X .5	X .12	-2	-25%
-40%	X .6	X .22	-2	-20%
-30%	X .7	X .34	-1	-15%
-20%	X .8	X .50	-1	-10%
-10%	X .9	X .75	-0	-5%
+10%	X 1.1	X 1.3	+0	+5%
+20%	X 1.2	X 1.7	+1	+10%
+30%	X 1.3	X 2.2	+1	+15%
+40%	X 1.4	X 2.7	+2	+20%
+50%	X 1.5	X 3.4	+2	+25%
+60%	X 1.6	X 4.1	+3	+30%
+70%	X 1.7	X 4.9	+3	+35%
+80%	X 1.8	X 5.8	+4	+40%
+90%	X 1.9	X 6.9	+4	+45%
+100%	X 2	X 8	+5	+50%

that are worn by a living creature will grow or shrink to match the new size of the wearer. Weapon damage will increase or decrease by their size category, as noted in *Core Rulebook I*.

It is possible, however, to cause incidental damage to objects when they are enlarged or reduced. The hinges on a door, for example, will likely break free of the door if it is reduced and a rope that is reduced in size will surely break if any weight on it remains the same.

Multiple Effects

It is possible for chaos mages to combine more than one effect into a single casting. To determine the Casting DC of a spell with more than one effect, determine which of the effects begins with the lowest Casting DC themselves. Add one-half of this to the higher to find the Casting DC of the final spell.

For example, Exrak wants a spell that not only causes damage to the target, but also paralyzes the target for the duration of the spell. The damage effect has a DC of 10, but paralyzing the target will require a movement effect with a DC of 20. Adding one-half of the lower DC of 10 to the higher DC of 20 gives us a total base DC of 25.

When multiple effects exist within a single spell, they all share the same area of effect, range, duration, saving throws, and ability to defeat Spell Resistance, as detailed below. An instantaneous damage element may be included with effects of a differing duration, however, without penalty. Persistent or degrading damage effects may be included, too, and will last as long as necessary to deliver their damage (unless the caster's concentration is broken) even if the rest of the spell's effects end before this time.

For example, a degrading damage spell with a base

of 10d8 will have a duration of 5 rounds to deliver its entire damage. If it is included with another effect in a spell that has a duration of only 3 rounds, the other effects will end when the spell's duration expires, but the damage element will continue for two more rounds in order to deliver its full damage.

STEP TWO: CHOOSE AREA ELEMENT

All chaos magic spells are considered to affect only a single target by default. However, the chaos mage may extend his power across wider areas, potentially affecting many different subjects with a single casting. The complete definitions of each area of effect listed below may be found in *Core Rulebook I*. An area of effect may be freely selected by the chaos mage to enhance his spell, but each will modify the Casting DC of the spell, as detailed below.

Burst (DC+5)

The minimum burst radius is 5 ft. and the maximum equal to the caster's level x 5 ft.

Cone (DC+ 5)

The minimum length of a cone is 10ft. and the maximum equal to the caster's level x 10 ft.

Spread (DC+10)

The minimum spread is 5 ft. and the maximum equal to the caster's level x 5 ft.

The area of effect can also be enhanced through the use of any of the following:

Enemies Only (DC+5)

The spell affects hostile targets only. Note that this does not require the caster to know who his enemies are – the magic knows the intent of all those within its area of effect.

Felrin leapt backward, stumbling over her own feet in her haste to get away from the undead. Skeletons were twisting up out of the floor, bursting through the layers of plaster that hid their crypts from the adventurers. In a heartbeat, they were all surrounded.

Regaining her feet, the young chaos mage began formulating a spell, working the flows of chaotic power over and around the struggling forms of her friends. She could see the bright bands of light cascading over the skeletons. With a shout, Felrin unleashed the power, sending blasts of coruscating energy slamming into the undead, knocking them from their feet and sending shards of shattered bone whirling away. As she looked around, she was pleased with her casting. Not one of her friends had been touched by her magic.

Allies Only (DC+5)

The spell will affect only those targets in the area that are friendly to the character.

Chosen (DC+1 per subject)

The caster specifies which creatures in the area of effect will not be affected. Note that subjects so specified do not have to be visible to the caster when they are chosen, though he must be aware of them. The Casting DC modifier is +1 per subject *not* affected but within the area of effect.

Objects Only (DC+0)

The spell only effects inanimate objects, including those carried, worn, or held by a creature.

It should be noted that all chaos magic spells require a clear line of effect between caster and subject (or targeted area) in order to be successful. In other words, it must be possible to draw a straight, unobstructed line between the caster and subject or the centre of the targeted area. It is not necessary for the caster to be able to see the target or the centre of the area of effect, but there must be no physical obstruction between the origin of the spell and the spell's impact point.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE RANGE ELEMENT

All chaos magic spells are considered to have a personal range by default that may only affect the caster himself. However, the chaos mage may project his power across potentially great distances.

Games Masters are encouraged to not allow precise measuring of ranges during combat. After all, chaos mages are known for their rash disregard for formal measurements – they simply pick a range and let their spell fly! However, a chaos mage may make a Spellcraft check at DC 15 to determine any approximate range for a spell. Any range may be freely selected by the chaos mage to enhance his spell, but each will modify the Casting DC of the spell, as detailed below.

Touch (DC+0)

The spell discharges to any object touched by the caster. If attempting to touch an unwilling target, a touch attack is required. The charge of a touch spell can be held by the chaos mage for a number of rounds equal to one-half his level, rounded down. If

the spell has not been discharged by that point, the chaotic energies that went into its creation leak away harmlessly and the spell is lost.

Close (DC+1)

The maximum range of the spell is 25 ft. + 5 ft. per two caster levels.

Medium (DC+5)

The maximum range of the spell is 100 ft. + 10 ft. per caster level.

Long (DC+10)

The maximum range of the spell is 400 ft. + 40 ft. per caster level.

Extreme (DC+15)

The maximum range of the spell is 1 mile + 1 mile per caster level. Without divination magic (which chaos magic cannot create) or intimate knowledge of the target (such as if the subject were an acquaintance or the target an area the caster knows well), the caster cannot target a spell effectively beyond his line of sight.

STEP FOUR: CHOOSE DURATION ELEMENT

All chaos magic spells are considered to have an instantaneous duration by default. Chaos magic is difficult to control and does not respond well to continual demands being placed upon it, but a talented chaos mage can force his spells to have longer lasting effects.

Any spell with a damage effect (raw, degrading or persistent) may only ever be instantaneous in duration, though the latter two continue to affect a subject over several rounds, and all damage is permanent. For all other spells, any duration may be freely selected by the chaos mage to enhance it, but each will modify the Casting DC of the spell, as detailed below.

By Round (DC+5)

The spell has a duration of 1 round per level of the chaos mage.

By Minute (DC+10)

The spell has a duration of 1 minute per level of the chaos mage.



Combining Area and Duration Elements

When a spell is created, its caster can freely specify one of two additional effects, so long as area and duration elements have been chosen;

† The spell's effects will apply to a specific area for its duration and thus the spell is applied only to subjects that remain in this area of effect. Any subject that moves out of the area will no longer be affected by the spell.

† The spell's effects will apply to a specific subject for its duration and thus the spell is applied only to those in the area of effect when the spell is first cast. Those that move into the area at a later time will not be affected, whilst those who started in the area and move out will remain under its effects.

STEP FIVE: CHOOSE SAVING THROW ELEMENT

All chaos magic spells have a base saving throw Difficulty Class equal to 10 + the caster's Charisma modifier + ½ the caster's level.

This means most chaos magic spells will be far easier to resist than a spell cast by a static mage of a similar level. Static magic has had millennia to perfect the penetration capability of its spells, whilst chaos magic is much quicker and dirtier.

Chaos mages may, however, focus the chaos at their command into a more potent spell with a higher saving throw Difficulty Class. This raises the Casting DC of the spell itself, as detailed below;

-1 Penalty to Subject's Save

The Casting DC is modified by +2.

-2 Penalty to Subject's Save

The Casting DC is modified by +5.

-3 Penalty to Subject's Save

The Casting DC is modified by +10.

-4 Penalty to Subject's Save

The Casting DC is modified by +15.

-5 Penalty to Subject's Save

The Casting DC is modified by +20.



Overcoming Spell Resistance

Enemies possessing spell resistance can prove to be a particular problem for mages, as such defences render magic almost useless. Chaos mages can worm their spells through these defences, however, using twisting strands of chaos to thread their way through an enemy's natural resistance, but the cost is great.

To overcome a subject's spell resistance, and avoid the necessity of making the required caster level check, add the SR to the Casting DC.

STEP SEVEN: CASTING THE SPELL (REQUIRED)

Once all elements have been chosen, and the modified Casting DC determined, the spell may be cast.

A chaos mage simply makes a Casting check to equal or exceed the Casting DC of the spell. A Casting Check is $1d20 + \text{chaos mage's class level} + \text{Cha modifier}$.

Success will result in the spell working as the chaos mage planned. However, failure can have dreadful consequences. The chaos mage will suffer real damage instead of subdual damage for casting the spell (see below) and also be stunned for the rest of the round as primal chaos overwhelms his senses.

In addition, if he rolls a 1 on this Casting check, he also suffers a backlash of chaos power – see p32 for more details.

Using Chaos Magic

All chaos magic spells have a casting time of a standard action. They are also all assumed to provoke an attack of opportunity and have both verbal and somatic components.

If a chaos mage is distracted whilst casting, all Concentration check Difficulty Checks are modified by the spell's Casting DC. If he fails this check, the chaos mage is assumed to have also failed to cast the spell, with the penalties detailed in this chapter being immediately applied.

Longer Casting Times

It is possible to further reduce the Casting DC of a spell by increasing the time required to cast the spell, thus ensuring a greater chance of success.

By increasing the casting time to a full round action, the Casting DC may be reduced by 1.

Every additional round of casting time beyond this further decreases the Casting DC by 1, up to a maximum reduction of 10 for a 10 round casting time.

LIMITS OF MIND AND BODY

Unlike static mages, those who follow the wild path do not have 'spell slots' or a hard limit to the number of spells they may cast each day. However, utilising chaos magic causes actual physical harm to the wielder and extensive use can lead to death or terrible disfigurement. Only injury and common sense limit the chaos mage and wise practitioners will pay heed to the latter before the former puts an end to their foolishness forever.

Every spell attempted will deal one point of damage to the chaos mage for every 5 full points in the spell's Casting DC. This damage is applied immediately after the Casting check has been made, regardless of whether it was successful or not.

A successful spellcasting will deal subdual damage, whilst a failed cast causes real damage.

Thus, casting a spell with a Casting DC of 10 will always cause two points of subdual damage, whilst a spell with a Casting DC of 23 will cause four points of subdual damage, and so on. While subdual damage heals fast, there is still a very real limit to the amount of strain a chaos mage can withstand. Any chaos mage that is staggered or knocked unconscious as a result of this subdual damage from spellcasting can cast no more spells until they have had eight continuous hours of full rest.

On top of the damage caused by channelling the forces of chaos, there is also the ever-present Paths of Chaos. Long-term exposure to such chaotic, fluctuating energies can wreak all manner of changes upon the body and mind of the chaos mage,





as he begins to tread the Paths of Chaos. These are detailed in the next chapter.

All of the above serves to emphasise the dangers chaos mages face on a daily basis, and the price they must pay for the enormous power they are permitted to tap.

CONCENTRATION

Some effect elements detailed earlier in this chapter are listed as requiring Continued Concentration as these spells rely on the will of the chaos mage to maintain coherence for their entire duration. This requires the mage to use a standard action each round concentrating on the spell to prevent it dissipating harmlessly.

This maintenance of the spell does not provoke an attack of opportunity, but is otherwise regarded as a

standard action in every way. Anything that can disrupt a character's attention while casting a spell can also break their concentration while maintaining a spell, requiring a Concentration check as detailed in *Core Rulebook I*. When determining the DC of these Concentration checks, use the Casting DC of the chaos magic spell in place of normal spell level. Characters concentrating on one spell cannot cast another spell, though they may voluntarily drop their concentration at any time, ending the spell immediately - there are no penalties or side effects for voluntarily releasing a chaos magic spell. If a character fails a Concentration check, the spell ends immediately, and the chaotic energy invested in the spell dissipates immediately.

SAMPLE SPELLS

The two following spells have been designed using the system detailed within this chapter to provide examples of what is actually possible in the hands of a clever and wily chaos mage.

Explanations for the design process are also provided, in order to give some insight into the ways spells can be created.

Ambush Tap

Flanking a target is a rogue's prime aim in combat, but on a crowded battlefield this is far easier said than done. To help allies get into position to launch such a sneak attack, the chaos mage can use movement spells to simply place them where they need to be.

In creating such a spell, the effect element will obviously be movement, and we'll settle for the minor movement effect. With a minimum movement of 25 feet, this should be far enough to get the rogue into position to deal some damage. In addition, we will be able to move the rogue across the intervening space without causing him to generate attacks of opportunity.

Area and range elements are not an issue - we'll use target for the area of effect and touch for the range. We only want to move one person at a time, and we'll make sure that our rogue friend knows where

he needs to be if he wants to receive the ambush tap. Duration is likewise a non-issue, as it is instantaneous and there is no need to worry about adjusting for saving throws or spell resistance. That leaves us with a Casting DC of 10 – easy enough for almost any chaos mage to pull off with only minor strain. If the rogue holds his action, he can be moved into position and attack before the opponent can respond – the downside, of course, is that the rogue may suffer damage from his chaos-induced travel.

Push Wave

This spell is designed to give the chaos mage a little room to breathe when a swarm of enemies attack. The desired effect is to push back all enemies in a given area, moving them away from the caster. As an added bonus, anyone that is not a chaos mage will suffer subdual damage after being affected by the spell.

We start by selecting a minor movement effect element – this will provide enough push to move all those effected 25 ft. + 5 ft. per caster level. At low levels this will be enough to shove most enemies back far enough to let the fighters intervene and at high levels the push wave will be able to move them far enough away they will no longer pose a threat. The base casting Difficulty Class for this is 5, leaving plenty of room to expand the spell with a nice area of effect and other modifiers.

The spell is intended to work very quickly, using the power of chaos to repel attackers to a safe distance from the caster. We want the spell to have a radius centred on the caster, so a burst area is the best choice. This adds 5 to the casting DC, bringing the total Casting DC to 10 so far. To be sure we don't inadvertently shove our friends along with our enemies, we will choose to make the spell affect enemies only, raising the casting DC by another 5. The total for the spell is now 15, still quite manageable.

Range is not needed for a spell of this type – the chaos mage *wants* the burst radius to be centred on himself. Personal seems like a good range element to use for this, but because the spell will be affecting others, we'll use the Touch range element instead. To activate this spell, the wizard will now have to touch the ground at his feet, and the spell will radiate out from the point touched. This does not impact the casting DC at all, leaving us with a still low casting DC of 15.

Likewise, we have no use for a duration, and will not be adjusting the saving throws or spell resistance of our targets, so the casting DC remains at 15. This leaves us with a handy spell that will throw back enemies that attempt to get too close to the chaos mage, unless they make their Will save...



THE PRICE OF CHAOS

Chaos mages suffer for their art; the very act of channelling chaos into magic is both painful and dangerous. But there is a greater danger awaiting those that do not practice temperance when wielding their power. Careless or over-zealous use of this energy can lead to dire consequences for chaos mages, experts and rank novices alike – these are the dangers that hang over the heads of all practitioners every day of their lives. The agonies of chaotic mutation are only touched on below. These are some of the more common paths to damnation, but there are many others. Wild sorcery is, after all, pure chaos and such a thing as the mark of chaos is not limited by imagination. Indeed, the agonies inflicted by a chaotic backlash are not even subject to the laws of time and space!

THE BACKLASH

Whenever a chaos mage rolls a 1 for a Casting check or fails an arcane spell failure roll, a backlash has occurred.

When a backlash occurs for the very first time, the Games Master selects a Path of Chaos for the character, as detailed in Choosing a Path below. The character automatically receives the first step on that Path. When subsequent backlashes occur, 1d20 is rolled. If the result is equal to or less than the number of steps a character has taken on his Path of Chaos, another step is taken.

The effects listed under each step are applied immediately, potentially causing great suffering for the chaos mage. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are permanent and any that reduce his ability scores to 0 or less will cause the chaos mage to be automatically slain by the chaos powers flooding through his body. It is possible for a chaos mage to take a step ‘back’ along his Path, though this is normally a difficult and expensive process (see p17 for more details). If this is achieved, however, the chaos mage loses all penalties and bonuses associated with the step he has just removed.

As will quickly be seen, chaos mages just starting out on their careers will suffer from backlashes but will advance relatively slowly along their Path of Chaos. However, as they progress further, the

advancement will rapidly speed up as they continue to use their powers, with potentially deadly consequences.

PATHS OF CHAOS

Chaos mages toy with the powers of creation at their own peril. The forces they coerce into service are capable of altering the fabric of reality in strange and alien ways, and those who have frequent contact with them are bound to be altered, subtly or otherwise, by the experience. The Paths of Chaos detail the changes that are wrought in the bodies, minds, and souls of chaos mages.

When a chaos mage experiences a backlash for the very first time, the Games Master should roll on the table below to randomly determine which Path of Chaos the character will follow. Once a Path has been selected, a chaos mage cannot under any circumstances move to another – his destiny is now fixed for all time.

1d8	Path of Chaos
1	Path of Berserk Growth
2	Path of Bloody Rage
3	Path of Rapid Regression
4	Path of Shrieking Pain
5	Path of Screaming Shadows
6	Path of Writhing Serpents
7	Path of Tortured Stone
8	Path of Whispering Madness

However, Games Masters are also welcome to create their own Paths of Chaos to reflect the character and nature of the chaos mage concerned. Paths of Chaos work very well as a form of poetic justice or, alternatively, an extension of the character’s personality. For example, a chaos mage that revels in launching one damage-oriented spell after another may be prone to following the Path of Bloody Rage, whilst an elf with ties to the land and nature may find himself travelling down the Path of Berserk Growth. Using the eight Paths of Chaos detailed below, the Games Master should have little trouble in tailoring a new Path for a character and is encouraged to work out each individual step of the Path with his player.

Regardless of the method used to choose a Path of Chaos, when a character takes his first step on it, his future is set. Each additional step taken will be along the same path, travelling all the way up until they reach the final step and become utterly lost in the boiling seas of primal chaos. Though it is

possible for a chaos mage to purge themselves of many steps along their Path, they may never remove the first step under any circumstances, and so are doomed to follow the Path throughout their dabbling with chaos.

Of course, no chaos mage ever has to take more than the initial step along the Path. If the price becomes too much to bear, he can choose not to travel any further down the Path – all the chaos mage has to do is never practice wild sorcery again. Few have the strength of will to give up their incredible powers, but the option is always there.

THE PATH OF BERSERK GROWTH

This is the way of the wilderness, where the powers of chaos exert their energies to promote growth both natural and alien. Seeping chaos magic fuses with the mage, causing his body to explode into screaming verdant growth as strange vegetation grows from his flesh causing both permanent disfigurement and exquisite yet alien pain. As the mage makes his way along the path, the growths become stranger and more prolific, slowly robbing the mage of any pretence of humanity in return for vegetable fecundity. In the end, the powers of chaos sunder the practitioner's mind, body and soul leaving only a gibbering grove of chaotic vegetation.

Step 1 - Blades of Chaos

The chaos mage's hair shifts colour, giving way to myriad shades of green. It changes texture too, becoming wide and flat like blades of grass hanging from the head and body in an unruly mass. Movement causes the character to rustle like a tree in the wind and a faint miasma of the swamp hangs about him like a cloud. Though clothing and headgear can disguise most of the changes, it is impossible to remove the blades permanently – they will grow almost instantly if cut. A cut blade will also exude a combination of blood and sap with a stench like stinkweed.

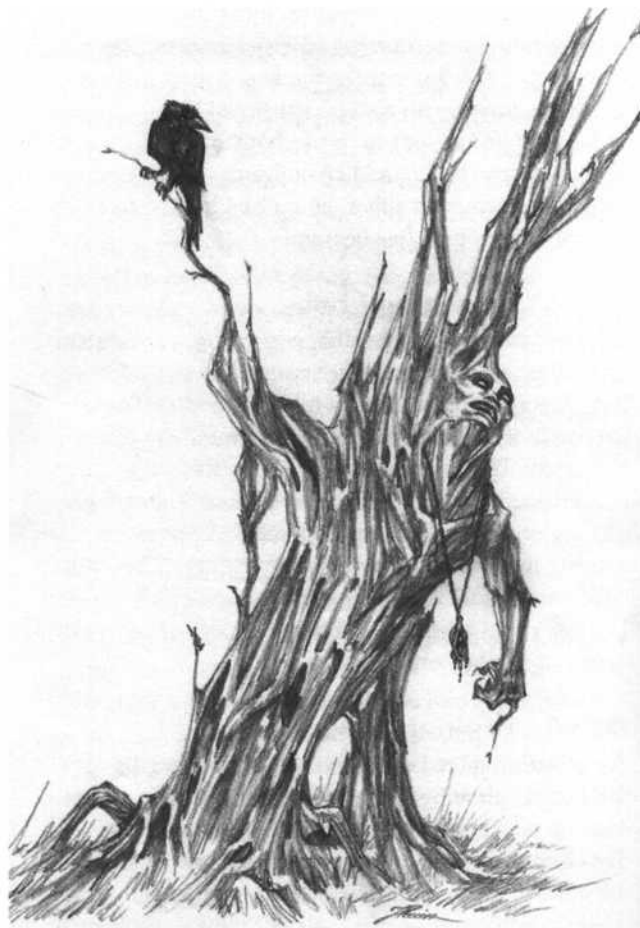
Step 2 - Startling Growth

Strange, toadstool-shaped growths erupt from the flesh of the chaos mage, pocking his skin with coin-sized patches of unnatural fungus. The fungus continually grows and sloughs off in patches, eventually appearing on every portion of the character's flesh, catching in his clothing and

littering any area where he rests with choking dust spores. Hiding the growths is possible, but periodic appearances on the face and neck will require a mask to cover. The fungus also reacts badly with what was once hair, causing it to slough off in foul smelling heaps of vegetation that look like rotting seaweed.

Step 3 - Supple Stalks

The chaos mage suffers an explosion of itching, straw-like stalks from his flesh; the thin, brittle spines cover the character from head to toe, pushing their way through clothing with ease. The stalks itch horribly, making it difficult for the chaos mage to pay attention to anything but the constant torment plaguing his skin. The chaos mage's Casting checks suffer a permanent -2 penalty due to the maddening presence of the stalks and it is no longer possible to hide the mark of chaos with anything short of a full suit of armour.



Step 4 - Green Resilience

On this step on the Path, the chaos mage's skin becomes hard and brown, transforming into a substance more like the bark of a tree than the skin of a mammal. While the surface of the wooden crust is strangely appealing in and of itself, the stalks, blades and fungal lesions from the earlier stages of chaos are still present causing the character to resemble a tree near death covered with verdant parasitic growth. This thickening of the skin provides a +1 natural armour bonus to the chaos mage's Armour Class.

Step 5 - Chaotic Flowering

A crown of richly coloured alien flowers sprouts from the skull of the character, none of which appear natural. The flowers are permanent – if plucked out, they weep blood before growing back in a few short hours. The chaos mage can hide this through the use of hats or helmets, but the flowers are permanent. The character now bears little real resemblance to anything natural and appears to be some kind of tree spirit – albeit a completely unwholesome one. To his benefit, the alien fronds release soothing chemicals into the chaos mage's system, increasing his ability to focus his attention and providing a permanent +1d3 enhancement bonus to all Casting checks the chaos mage makes. These chemicals can also be harvested by alchemists and mages to create both strong soporifics and highly addictive drugs. Should the character encounter either, he will be hunted like the natural resource he has become.

Step 6 - Sprouting Limbs

Slender wooden branches begin growing beneath the chaos mage's skin, creating strange humps and bulges across the surface of his body and stiffening his joints with thick tangles of unnatural wood. More painful than the worst arthritis, the practitioner can only find relief by standing or lying completely still. His time as a motile creature is coming to an end, lost with his humanity. The chaos mage suffers a permanent loss of 1d3 Dexterity, but gains an additional +1 natural armour bonus to his Armour Class.

Step 7 - Fruiting Flesh

An irritating juice begins to drip from the gills of the fungus growing on the chaos mage's skin, causing a fiery, itching rash wherever it touches. This juice will also effect others even more than it does the mage with an effect far more damaging

than the worst case of poison ivy. The burning and irritation from contact with the character make any human contact virtually impossible. The caress of a lover and even the basic pleasure of human company is now denied him leaving him totally alone in green misery. The constant pain and distraction makes it difficult for the chaos mage to focus on anything else, permanently reducing his Wisdom by 1d3.

Step 8 - Skin of Spring's Blossom

Exotic foliage blooms from the character's flesh and thick vines uncoil from his joints and down his spine. The transformations completely alter the character's appearance, leaving him changed into something . . . else. Any resemblance to his original appearance is now completely destroyed. By now, misery, loneliness and despair are permanent companions. Strangely, birds begin to find the character attractive and will often try to both roost on the mage, and feed off his growths. With human companionship traded for avian, some practitioners go completely mad at this stage striking out at humans who eat birds, destroying scarecrows and possibly even going to such extremes as murder if birds are harmed. The character permanently loses another 1d3 Dexterity due to the cumbersome tangle of growths.

Step 9 - Absurd Fecundity

The character's entire body has become a shifting mass of vegetation – his bones have become green saplings with motile roots, his muscles are coiled bundles of vines and densely packed lichens. Flowers and patches of bark have taken the place of skin and the body itself is dangerously unstable. Even more so than before, the only relief the mage has is remaining as still as possible. Yet if the mage remains still for too long he may begin to take root and truly become a plant. Some practitioners, their minds essentially gone or changed to something no longer human, will give up wild sorcery and become something of a true forest spirit allying with local druids and, while never regaining anything like humanity, at least avoid the ultimate fate of more hateful and determined sorcerers. If still mobile, every morning, one randomly selected ability score suffers a 1d3 point decrease. This penalty lasts until the next morning.

Step 10 - Grove of Chaos

At this point on the Path of Berserk Growth, the chaos mage is lost to the world. What little is left of

his mind and body tears itself apart in an explosion of botanical frenzy as the forces of chaos run riot. The character fuses with his environment on a fundamental level, transforming into a small grove of shifting alien trees and bizarre plant life that is devoid of all rational sentience. The grove may still possess some startling and haunting reminder of the original man – whether a love of birds, a hatred of a specific race or group or some fondness for a peculiar item or person. The change is permanent and the character is forevermore a creature of chaos.

THE PATH OF BLOODY RAGE

For some chaos mages, the flow of power in their body fills them with strange visions and feelings of immortality. For others, it leads to a tortured existence with dreams of blood and violence. The power of chaos often unlocks base instincts in those who tap its flows; those who stumble onto this Path will find their darkest thoughts given corporeal life by the forces they believed they commanded as rage becomes a living thing. First it is a constant companion, a constant flavour to the world which becomes more and more tinged with hatred. First it is a spice, then a rich taste, and finally a burning all consuming passion which devours mind, body and soul as one.

Step 1 - Chaotic Anger

The practitioner is always on the edge for no particular reason. Tiny problems become inflammatory difficulties and his anger rises near out of control. Frequently, this is not commonly noticed as a mark of chaos – the mage who takes this path was likely of a fiery nature any way. Those watching closely will be able to note the lack of true control and the slight hint of madness in his eyes – even as the mage himself vehemently denies it. When confronted with a trying situation that is not going as the chaos mage expected, he is prone to fits of petulant anger. Any time a setback occurs, the chaos mage must make a Will save at DC 10 or give in to his anger. While these fits do not usually lead to violence, the character will lose any ability to be polite and becomes increasingly irritated until the situation is resolved.

Step 2 - Venomous Tongue

Irritation grows. Every remark is a slight, every whisper a quiet slander, each action a call for immediate and caustic response. The chaos mage

finds himself unable to be civil to those around him, even when failure to do so would lead to trouble. Any time the mage finds himself in a situation where holding his tongue or being polite would prove helpful, he must make a Will save at DC 15. If he succeeds, he can act as normal, but failure indicates he cannot control his venomous tongue and makes an inappropriate or sarcastic remark.

Step 3 - Howling Epithets

The mage's anointment of chaos anger now begins to be apparent to all but the practitioner himself. Anger and irritation have now given way to out and out verbal rage! Anytime the mage fails an action (whether through dice rolls or role-playing), he spends one move equivalent action barking curses at all around him. The chaos mage believes that others are conspiring to make him fail, and no amount of evidence to the contrary will convince him otherwise. Unable to be civil for longer than a few minutes at a time, the chaos mage's condition is obvious to observers who will fast grow to dislike his quick temper. As a side effect, the chaos mage gains a +2 circumstance bonus to any Intimidation checks.

Step 4 - Barbed Speech

At this point along the Path, the chaos mage is consumed with seething anger at all times. Frequently this is accompanied by crawling paranoia and suspicion. Everyone is against him. The world is out to get him and he must strike back. Burning passions of barely restrained violence are clearly present at all times, frightening calmer individuals. Anyone who opposes the mage, even so much as disagreeing with him, is subjected to 1d4 rounds of verbal abuse from him. Enemies who physically assault the mage will also be abused and he will receive a +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls as he vents his anger upon them. This mindless rage permanently decreases the chaos mage's Wisdom ability score by 1 point.

Step 5 - Anger's Hand

Any kind of control of temper or passion is now completely lacking as venom and vitriol consume the mage's chaos-tainted mind. His soul begins to blacken from unrestrained hatred. Anyone who crosses the mage's path is in danger of a sudden attack. The chaos mage is so filled with hatred that he must make a Will save at DC 10 to avoid assaulting anyone that angers or opposes him in any way. If the save is successful, the mage must still spend a full round venting his rage and disparaging



the target of his outburst, possibly violently. The irrational rage of the chaos mage permanently increases his Strength by 1d3 points.

Step 6 - Lash of Rage

At this point along the path, the practitioner is truly mad. Anger and hatred have consumed him and cold relentless malice now occupies mind and soul when burning rage does not. The mage can channel this fury to serve his spellcasting. The chaos mage gains a +2 circumstance bonus to any Casting checks for casting chaos magic with a damage effect element as his rage focuses his ability to channel chaos into a destructive form. However, he also receives a -2 circumstance penalty to any Concentration check.

Step 7 - Face of Hate

Boiling currents of chaos force changes in the mage's appearance, bending his features to reflect the hatred burning within. This takes many forms, some quite overt and others more subtle. They can range from eyes that burn like coals to other features that may cause others to think the character either planetouched or possessed. Even if there are no overt physical changes, hatred and fury is now the character's sole focus. Hygiene suffers as bathing becomes a thing of the past and defecation is merely another way of venting ire and rancour upon the world. The character suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to any Charisma-based skills except Intimidation and Casting checks for damage effect spells. He is unable to be civil for more than a few moments at a time, and must make a Will save at DC 15 to not snap at anyone after more than one minute of conversation.

Step 8 - Dire Provocation

The character is so consumed with rage to the point he is no longer able to discern friend from foe. The world is a place of torment and despicable acts. The mage will do unto all before they do unto him! Anyone who opposes the mage may become a target for attack, and even a simple disagreement is grounds for a savage tongue-lashing. The character must make a Will save at DC 15 any time he is confronted - failure indicates a full-out assault upon the individual who provoked the saving throw. If the chaos mage succeeds, he may choose not to attack, but will still spend 1d3 rounds shouting at the target.

Step 9 - Thirst for Blood

At this stage of the path, the chaos mage becomes a

berserk killer. He has 'realised' that the answer to the 'problem' is extreme violence. The 'problem' can be almost anything - the character relishes destruction and murder. His wrath can take many forms, from cold-blooded stalking and silent painful murder to a frenzied orgy of violence and death. The practitioner must kill at least one sentient creature every day or suffer from horrible fits of rage that leave him incapacitated for hours. If the character fails to kill a sentient being during any one day, he must make a Will save at DC 20. Failure results in a descent into a berserk rage and he will spend the next 1d12 hours ranting and raving at the entire world. If any oppose the character, or argues with him during this time, the mage immediately attacks with murderous intent.

Step 10 - Spirit of Anger

As the mage pushes his luck one final time too far, the forces of chaos mix with his inhuman hatred. Screaming his rage, the chaos mage suffers a cataclysmic physical and mental breakdown. Black flames ignite within his body, turning his flesh into gritty ash within seconds. The mage's chaos-tainted aura takes up residence in the immediate area and any who pass by will find themselves filled with thoughts of rage, violence and murder.

THE PATH OF RAPID REGRESSION

Chaos is birth and death - beginning and ending. Mages who follow this path find themselves sinking into a bestial state, their flesh and psyche slowly transforming to something feral and wild. The beast stalks them - both physically and mentally, invading their very thoughts, deeds and soul, leaving only the most bestial elements behind as humanity fades to monstrosity and intelligence to howling madness and hunger. Those who walk this Path eventually devolve into bubbling protoplasm, reduced to their primal elements by the chaos they sought to wield.

Step 1 - Eyes of the Wild

Accompanied by a low moan of pain, the chaos mage's eyes slowly migrate to the edges of his face within 1d6 days, the pupils splitting into hour-glass or other bestial shapes. The mage may resemble a fish, bear, or deer and this change is frequently accompanied by strange character quirks that the practitioner himself usually will not notice. He may start like a stag if surprised, grunt strangely without realising it or otherwise exhibit slightly animalistic

behaviour which shows the mark of chaos is on more than just his face.

Step 2 - Primal Musk

The cloying scent of the beast will exude from the one so marked, a strong, unpleasant aroma rising from the mage's skin, clinging to his clothes and other belongings. The nature of this scent is variable but frequently connected to the exhibited chaotic appearance of the Eyes of the Wild. Again, the character begins to show minor bestial personality traits as his humanity fades. He may begin to eschew forks to use his hands or simply dip his face into a bowl rather than lifting it to drink from, become fearful of fire or other bestial traits.

Step 3 - Bestial Pelt

With a tormented scream the practitioner falls to the ground, his flesh rippling horribly. Thick, matted fur grows from the mage's skin, covering him from head to toe. The mage may also see some other animalistic characteristics such as the beginnings of a stunted snout, pointed ears or vestigial horns. Some may mistake the mage for a lycanthrope. Greasy and coarse, the pelt provides a +1 natural armour bonus to his Armour Class.

Step 4 - Animal Reflexes

The mage goes into an excruciating fit resembling animalistic epilepsy. While little or no outward change is apparent, the practitioner's nerve endings and sensory organs are altering. The sensory impact is quite different and while the mage will eventually adapt to the new stimuli his responses become even more instinctive and bestial as they are triggered by new sensory input. As the character's body changes, his senses become far more acute and his muscles faster to react. The character gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all Reflex saves. A side effect of this change is a very 'animalistic' view of the world and, frequently, the loss of full colour vision.

Step 5 - Primal Mind

Unlike prior alterations Primal Mind is not generally associated with the painful screeches and howls that accompany physical change. Instead, the entire world seems more distant and difficult to grasp. Advanced concepts such as reading, philosophy and debate become foreign as the character begins to have difficulty thinking for extended periods. He loses focus rapidly if he is not engaged in some sort of activity, becomes very forgetful and has a hard time comprehending the basics of sentient existence.

The practitioner may be found emitting mournful whines when confronted by concepts he once had mastery of and now cannot understand. The character's Intelligence is permanently reduced by 1d3 points.

Step 6 - Guttural Voice

The high pitched shriek of change is the last even remotely human sound the practitioner will ever utter. At this stage on the Path, the character loses his ability to speak more than a few words as his throat and mouth transform into more bestial configurations. He grows a definitive snout, and may only utter a dozen sounds that are just barely intelligible as having once been words before lapsing into barks or howls. The character will have a very difficult time even making basic needs understood without resorting at least occasionally to gestures, although the chaos magic strangely preserves his ability to work magic.

Step 7 - Beast Soul

The character begins tearing at his own limbs as he undergoes more serious physical changes. He shreds the flesh from his legs as they become shorter and breaks the bones in his own arms as they grow longer. While healing from the changes is rapid, the character will rise, soaked in blood and chaos-tainted flesh and howling his rage at the world. The changes begun in the previous step become more pronounced as the character's face grows more vulpine and his ears elongate and slide toward the top of his head. The character's mental state deteriorates drastically at this point. Even the most basic tasks such as opening and closing doors becomes mentally challenging as instincts war with intellect and come out victorious. Intelligence is permanently reduced by a further 1d3 points.

Step 8 - Chaotic Regression

Primal energies flood through the chaos mage's body, resulting in a dangerous deterioration of mind and body. The chaos taint is so strong and the damage so severe that it is no longer met with pain. Instead the wild sorcery courses through the nervous system bringing on throes of addictive ecstasy as the character's body shifts uncontrollably. The character's hair/fur falls out and his skin gains a moist sheen as he plummets further down the evolutionary ladder. Lupine features are lost in exchange for a look that seems a cross between a fish and a foetus. The radical changes disrupt the character's health, permanently reducing his Constitution by 1d4 points.



Step 9 - Back to the Sea

Shuddering in ecstasy, more changes assault the character's shattered anatomy. The moist flesh of the chaos mage turns pale and thin. Vestigial scales show in some places where in others internal organs are visible through the flesh. This primordial flesh requires regular application of water to avoid drying out and flaking off. The character must pour at least a litre of water over his body every hour or suffer 1d8 points of damage from the cracking and peeling of his flesh.

Step 10 - Primordial Ooze

The final overload of chaotic forces break down the chaos mage's last pretences of being sentient. The resulting *thing* weeps in rapture as wild sorcery reduces its body into a greasy puddle of disparate amoebas. The character's essence is dispersed, destroying him permanently.

THE PATH OF SHRIEKING PAIN

Pain can be a constant companion for some chaos mages. Those who tread this path come to experience inhuman torture in horrific ways. Those who walk the Path of Pain suffer greater harm with each step as the primal energy of chaos flays flesh from bone, shreds skin and tears apart the nervous system inflicting wounds that should slay the mage over and over again but never do. The Path culminates with the chaos mage entering an endless cycle of torture, locked away in a pocket plane from which he can never escape.

Step 1 - Flesh of the Martyr

The power of raw chaos infuses the outer tissues of the practitioner while stimulating the production of vital fluids. The character's skin becomes more delicate than the finest paper and tears with the slightest movement. Sensation is heightened and any touch is enhanced a thousandfold. Standing becomes enduring pain, sitting or lying on anything but silk or satin is pure torment. He bleeds constantly, thick streams of blood periodically gush from tiny tears in the chaos mage's skin. His body is stained with deep crimson lines as the smallest of movement opens minuscule rents in the epidermis.

Step 2 - Scabs of Decay

The increasing influence of raw chaos damages the character's immune system. Any wound the chaos mage suffers heals improperly, leaving behind a

decaying scab that clings to the chaos mage for weeks. Even slight scratches or bruises result in nasty-looking scabs that leak pus and other stinking fluids which never properly mends.

Step 3 - Unwholesome Vitality

The power of chaos rips through the character's nervous system, enhancing every sensation while infusing him with incredible will and unnatural pain thresholds. This gives him the ability to sustain more damage than before, by allowing him to suffer greater amounts of pain before succumbing. The chaos mage permanently gains 1d4 hit points and a +1 circumstance bonus to all Fortitude saves.

Step 4 - Seeping Boils

Festering sores filled with squirming, alien parasites form on the chaos mage's flesh, periodically bursting and forming anew on what few healthy patches of skin remain. Horrid symbiotes take up residence in the character's body cavities emitting foul fluids which leak from any orifice and spawning strange young. The chaos mage permanently loses 1 point of Constitution as his bodily fluids are drained away through the stinking boils.

Step 5 - Agonised Healing

Increasing damage and nervous hypersensitivity finally catch up with and overwhelm the practitioner's strange vitality. The chaos mage requires three more hours for full rest than normal as he cannot sleep soundly due to constant physical suffering and terrifying nightmares of relentless torment. While his will has been ground down, however, his body is now a thing partially of chaos magic and if he receives the additional sleep necessary, his body can make use of that force. Provided he receives full rest with the increased requirements, the chaos mage heals much faster than others, regaining 1d4 hit points per character level each day. Failure to receive the needed sleep prevents the chaos mage from healing at all, and results in a -1 circumstance penalty to all rolls made during the following day.

Step 6 - Unhealing Wounds

The tiny tears of the Flesh of the Martyr now become gaping rents. These unnatural wounds appear in the flesh of the chaos mage and quickly become home to more foul parasites which writhe visibly in the wounds and under the skin. These wounds heal quickly, but new ones open just as fast, leaving the chaos mage in a constant state of

suffering. The loss of blood and pain permanently reduces the chaos mage's hit point total by 1d6.

Step 7 - Spectral Flensing

The forces of chaos are now such a part of the character's body that they gather invisibly around him after casting and strip the flesh from his bones, ripping great chunks of muscle and skin away to reveal naked bone. Completion of each spell leads to shrieking torment that would kill any normal person but simply adds to the practitioner's suffering. The chaos mage's total hit points are permanently reduced by 1d12 but he also gains a virtual immunity to any kind of physical torment as nothing natural can compare with the torments of chaos.

Step 8 - Chaotic Bleeding

The character's fluid system goes into hyperactivity as cellular mutations caused by raw wild sorcery force it into frenzied and constant activity. The character's fluid system is so overcharged that any time the chaos mage suffers real damage, his body spurts unnatural amounts of blood. The character suffers an additional 1d4 points of damage every time he sustains a wound, but will also spray foul, polluted, parasite ridden bodily fluids over any such attacker.

Step 9 - Razor Bones

Every bone in the chaos mage's body gains a blade-sharp edge that saws away at surrounding tissues and occasionally slices through the surface of his skin. Even the furious activity of his unwholesome constitution is insufficient to completely keep up and the chaos mage suffers a permanent loss of 1d6 points of Constitution as his body slowly cuts itself to pieces.

Step 10 - Ceaseless Torture

With a scream said to be able to drive a solid man instantly mad, black energies tear a hole in the universe. The chaos mage is sucked within and enters an endless loop of death and rebirth in a pocket plane crafted from his own chaos-fuelled agonies. The mage is beyond saving, lost to his own pain, shrieking in indescribable agony until the end of the universe and beyond.

THE PATH OF SCREAMING SHADOWS

Named for the practitioner's inevitable fate, the Path of Screaming Shadows is one of the more subtle and – some twisted individuals might say – appealing of the Paths of Chaos. Certainly it is the least physically painful, but it is also the most seductive. As the strength of the chaos mage's will increases, his physical power decreases dramatically. The further along the path he progresses, the less able the mage is to affect the world in any way *except* through magic. When the final transformation takes place, the character becomes trapped in his own shadow forever, his mind tied permanently to the tormentor's rack of wild sorcery. All that is left is a nearly mindless hateful shadow, a wailing spectre mourning its physical loss.

Step 1 - Mask of Shadows

Chaos gathers the night about the character, forever marking him as unnatural in the bright light of day. No matter how the light falls, the mage's face is always cast in flickering shadow. Even beneath the noonday sun, the chaos mage attracts shadows to his face, leaving him cloaked in an unnerving dimness.



Step 2 - Tenebrous Will

Benefiting from the power of chaos, the mage's willpower surges even as his physical strength fades. Simple activities become tiring and more difficult and even walking across the room is a noticeable physical drain. Shadows tend to gather more deeply where the chaos mage walks, pooling around him like a tattered cloak and this selfsame mystic force empowers his aura and sheer determination. The chaos mage's Strength is permanently decreased by 1 point, whilst his Charisma is increased by 1.

Step 3 - Shadowed Strength

More shadows cling to the chaos mage, darkening his appearance and leaving no doubt as to his supernatural nature. They seem to feed on his strength, sapping his physical energy further and leaving him even more exhausted from the simplest things. The mage finds himself unable to accomplish once-simple tasks, and any burden leaves him breathless from effort. His Strength is permanently reduced by 1d3 points.

Step 4 - Spectral Exchange

Shadows cling like cobwebs to the mage's hands and he seems insubstantial when exposed to bright light. His terrifying personal presence is enhanced yet again causing others to view him with both awe and fear. Charisma is increased by 1d3 points.

Step 5 - Clinging Gloom

More darkness gathers about the practitioner. Anything the mage touches seems to fade and darken as if swathed in gloomy shadows, an effect which can remain for sometime after he sets the object down. Where the mage stands, shadows grow unnaturally deep, providing a +4 circumstance bonus to any Hide checks he is required to make and those moving nearby can detect a noticeable chill if they approach too close. While the mage feels empowered and forceful his connection to the physical world is eroding rapidly. He has already become a creature of magic.

Step 6 - Touch of Twilight

In gathering darkness, the chaos mage perseveres. As his body continues to fail, his willpower increases. Others can clearly see the commanding presence of the mage, cloaked in pitch shadows, and his physical weakness is equally apparent. The mage permanently loses 1d3 points of Strength and gains 1d3 points of Charisma.

Step 7 - Feeble Grasp

Chaos surges through the mage's body, transforming gradually more and more of it into living shadow. The change leaves the character weaker than ever as 1d4 points of Strength are permanently lost. The character's skin becomes translucent and smoky - in bright light it is possible to see through the character's extremities. At this point the power of chaos begins to work upon the mind of the character. He becomes more and more monomaniacal and dominating, using his magic in ever increasing displays of force. Many become convinced that they have become gods or demigods and begin to act accordingly.

Step 8 - Blood of Shadows

The chaos mage loses even more of his physical presence, as 1d12 hit points are permanently lost. When the character suffers injury, his wounds do not bleed but vent flickering plumes of shadow that hiss eerily as they leave his body. The chaos mage also begins to emanate an even more noticeable chill which fills rooms with frigid air and can cause liquid too near the mage to slowly develop a skin of ice. A benefit from this is that the mage is now effectively immune to natural cold and takes only half damage from cold attacks. Heat will also not much bother him and close exposure to the chill of his insubstantial form can cause naturally burning materials to drop below flash point and go out. The chaos mage only takes half damage from any fire-based attacks.

Step 9 - Ghostly Flesh

Chaos increases the insubstantial nature of the chaos mage's body, giving his flesh a ghostly appearance - he has almost literally become a shadow of his former self. Normal weapons find it difficult to harm him, doing only half damage, and he is complete immune to even supernatural cold. If he had a grip it would be like ice but any grasp is now more the chill of an icy wind. The immunities contribute to the character's feeling of immortality and, indeed, if he could remain at this level he would not age, as he is no longer truly alive. Food is no longer necessary, although water still is in smaller amounts. Feelings of demi-godhood continue to increase as the mage tends towards complete megalomania. The character can wear no more than ten pounds of clothing and gear, and can hold no more than five pounds in each of his hands. If these weight limits are exceeded, such items will slip through his insubstantial flesh and fall to the ground.

Step 10 - Cathedral of Shade

Shadows rise around the mage and finally consume him, leaving only his own shadow, its mind wracked by the torturous writhing of primal chaos. The instant the character takes this final step, his body dissolves into a cloud of shadows and spreads itself across all nearby surfaces. A low moaning fills the air, rising and fading as accompaniment to the writhing of the shadows that will remain here forever. The character is forever lost to the tides of chaos – a screaming shade with no power save to terrify and grant nightmares to the unwary.

THE PATH OF WRITHING SERPENTS

With their periodic moulting and inscrutable natures, serpents are often regarded as agents of change. Those who bear the mark of the serpent are subjected to untold suffering as their bodies writhe into the path and form of the snake. Those who walk this path find themselves learning more about both the mind and body of a snake than they may desire, eventually becoming chaotic serpents swimming within the Sea of Quiddity.

Step 1 - Ophidian Skin

Beginning with a terrible itching, the flesh around the chaos mage's eyes and mouth and across the back of his hands begins to slough off in sheets of pale dead skin as though he had suffered extreme exposure to the sun. Beneath a fine dusting of shimmering scales appears. These can be disguised with a heavy coating of make-up, which must be re-applied daily as the scales slough off to reveal a new layer as the chaos mage sleeps.

Step 2 - Viper's Tongue

Coppery blood fills the chaos mage's mouth as his tongue grows long and slender, then splits at the tip to resemble that of a snake's. The chaos mage has no difficulty hiding the tongue, but when he speaks he will have a tendency to add extra sibilants to his words. After the change, the mage will be able to taste with much greater precision, however his tastes will begin to become subtly altered toward the reptilian. Live food will taste better and cooked food will seem unappetising, while fruits and vegetables taste rancid and stale.

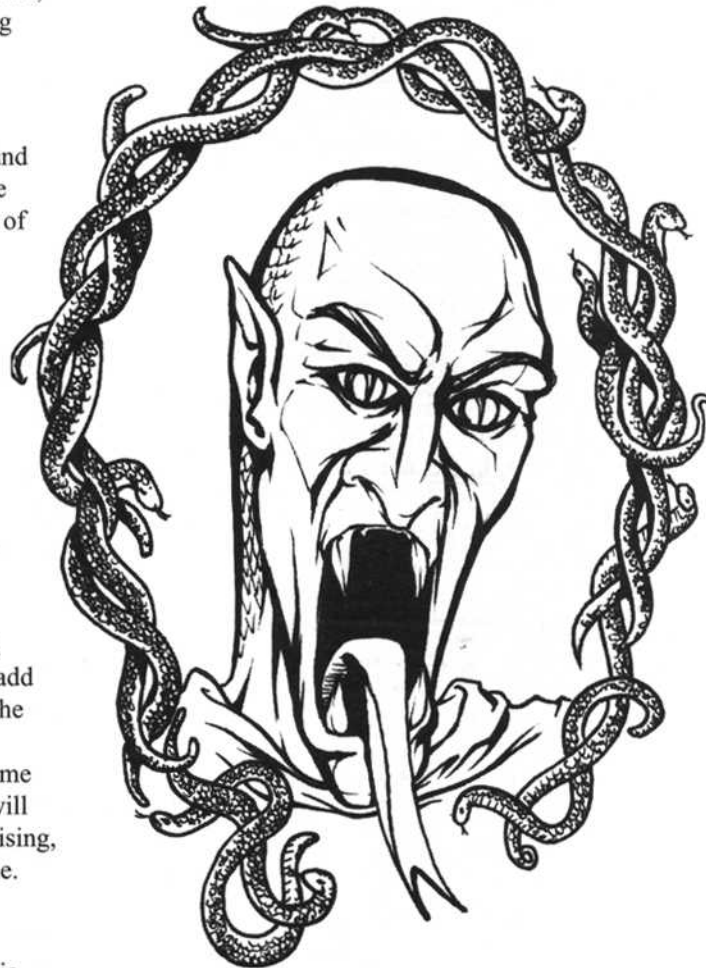
Step 3 - Sidewinder Reflexes

Wracked by torment emanating directly from his

own central nervous system, the mage's nervous system restructures itself under the lash of wild sorcery. After the change, the chaos mage finds himself moving with a more fluid step, and his reflexes are much quicker than they were ever before. The character gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Reflex saves but will find some of those reflexes betraying his new reptilian nature. He may find himself plucking insects from the air and devouring them without even realising what he is doing.

Step 4 - Venomous Resistance

Terrible stomach aches and cramps accompany this alteration as the practitioner's internal organs grow and change. Poison is no longer as dangerous to the chaos mage as the changes to his body allow him to become more attuned to venom building within it. The chaos mage receives a +4 circumstance bonus to any save required by exposure to poison. At this stage along the Path, the venom sacs begin to develop within his sinus cavity reducing his ability to receive olfactory stimuli in a conventional



'human' manner. His ability to pick up scents with his tongue makes up for this lack, but requires him to continually flick out his forked tongue in the manner of a serpent.

Step 5 - Fangs of the Cobra

Piercing, migraine-like headaches and painful mouth tissues and teeth presage the full onset of this change as sharp fangs slide down from the chaos mage's gums, dripping with venom. The fangs displace the character's own canine teeth which will be painfully uprooted and forced out to make room for the new fangs. The chaos mage himself is immune to his own venom, and he may make unarmed attacks that inject his enemies with poison. This poison is potent; Injury DC 13, Initial Damage of 1 Con, Secondary Damage 1d3 Con. The chaos mage can inject poison in this manner up to three times per day.

Step 6 - Serpent Bones

In an excruciating episode similar to the worst attacks of acute arthritis, the chaos mage loses strength as his bones become more supple and less rigid. When the transformation is complete, the character's motions are unnaturally smooth and precise, but the chaos mage permanently loses 1d3 points of Strength.

Step 7 - Limb Regression

While asleep, the chaos mage's legs start to grow together, the flesh above the knee fuses into a single column. Existing flesh sloughs off leaving a shell of old skin as when a snake moults. The night of change is not restful and the character suffers from terrible, reptilian dreams of hunting, eating and slow torpidous movement. The chaos mage suffers a loss of 1d4 points of Dexterity and his base speed is reduced by 10 feet due to his limited ability to move his legs. Internal changes also become apparent at this stage as the mage now finds human food not only unappetising but almost completely indigestible and most subsist on a diet of raw meat and live insects or small mammals.

Step 8 - Sheath of Scales

The mage moults again, painlessly this time as the fine scales that formed on the chaos mage earlier on this Path become more prevalent, and grow down over the torso and upper arms. The inflexible coating of scales prevents the chaos mage from a full-range of motion with his arms, causing a -3 circumstance penalty on any rolls made for actions

that require the use of arms, but also granting a +2 natural armour bonus to Armour Class.

Step 9 - Ophidian Body

The backlash of wild sorcery causes the mage to lose consciousness. While in his stupor, the practitioner's body becomes covered in a thick layer of opaque scales, completely immobilising him for 1d3 hours. At the end of this time, the scales fall away, revealing the chaos mage's new body - an armless, legless serpent mounted with the chaos mage's head. Internal changes are now complete and the character not only has no choice about his reptilian diet but has no desire to eat anything else. His mind is also affected as his motivations become alien. He acquires inhuman patience and his thoughts move ponderously, interrupted by fascinating moments of manic speed. The chaos mage can still cast spells and speak, but his movement is reduced by half as he is forced to slither slowly along the ground. Any actions that would require arms are now impossible for the chaos mage.

Step 10 - Chaotic Serpent

With a howl of agony, the chaos mage completes his transformation into a chaotic serpent. Currents of wild sorcery will attempt to take him directly to the proto-Plane of Chaos, but he may well strike and attack in attempt to bring along one final meal as he goes. Regardless, he spends the rest of his unnatural and eternal life swimming through the seas of change, his former self lost for all time.

THE PATH OF TORTURED STONE

Those who find themselves travelling this Path tend to have a strong connection to the earth, whether due to racial orientation, such as dwarves, or a former profession, masons, sculptors or metallurgists, for example. The forces of chaos seize upon this element of their life and distort it, hardening both body and soul, slowly turning the chaos mage into a form of living, agonised stone.

Step 1 - Tears of Stone

The character's eyes burn and itch before beginning to weep small, oily pebbles slightly larger than normal teardrops. These fall constantly from his eyes in a slow but never ending stream revealing him as marked by chaos to any who look. In addition, unless great care is taken, the mage leaves

behind a noticeable and easily followed trail of tiny pebbles that are as much a part of him as his own blood.

Step 2 - Face of Marble

A chilly hardening sensation accompanies this change as thick, marble-like striations appear across the chaos mage's skin. His eyes gain a flat, lifeless look and his facial muscles lose their expressiveness as the flesh begins to harden. Changes now begin in his soul as well, as his emotions begin to be suppressed. Not only does the character look uncaring and stolid – this begins to become the case.

Step 3 - Scabs of Earth

Thick streams of sludge are exuded from the chaos mage's flesh, solidifying into brittle plates on the surface of his skin. This is accompanied by a horrid feeling as though he was constantly defecating through his pores. The scabs and sludge are also exuded from the character's hands, staining anything he touches and making fine motor control nearly impossible as well as interfering with grip. The material flakes off easily, but the incessantly weeping flesh is coated once more in but a few moments, making it effectively impossible to remove. This effect causes the permanent loss of 1d3 points of Dexterity, but also a +1 natural armour bonus to Armour Class.

Step 4 - Stone Limbs

Icy chills run deep inside as threads of chaos solidify into crystalline structures within the arms and legs of the chaos mage, emerging in strangely coloured protrusions from his skin. The chaotic structures provide a further +2 natural armour bonus to the character's Armour Class, and allow the chaos mage to inflict an additional point of damage with every unarmed attack. Internal changes also continue both to body and soul. The mage finds movement more and more foreign and will often sit or

stand immobile for hours on end so that some may suspect that he is a victim of a petrification attack. His thoughts, too, grow colder and more still. Passions fade, joy and ecstasy dwindling in direct proportion to anger and hatred as the whole world slowly turns meaningless and grey.

Step 5 - Eyes of Stone

Stone tears are now joined by a crystalline layer of chaotic material which forms over the mage's eyes and must be wiped away on a regular basis. The crumbling grit is obvious if the chaos mage's eyes are not covered and the detritus leaves vivid stains on the character's face. The incessant distraction of having to constantly clear his eyes forms the basis of a growing insanity and permanently reduces the chaos mage's Wisdom by 1 point.

Step 6 - Calcified Flesh

Shards of stone begin forming just below the surface of the character's skin. These provide some protection, but at the cost of mobility. The mage gains another +3 natural armour bonus to his Armour Class, but also loses 1d3 points of Dexterity. In addition, the calcification of flesh inhibits tactile sensation. The touch of a lover can no longer be felt, burrs and thistles are no longer noticed and even small injuries do not register. The



practitioner retreats even further from the world with the loss of most of his sense of touch.

Step 7 - Earth-Locked Joints

Internal agony is not escaped so easily as the external. The natural armour gained in the previous step of this Path grows thicker and more obtrusive, crippling the chaos mage in all his actions with agonising pain, making each movement torture. The chaos mage suffers a permanent loss of 1d3 points of Strength .

Step 8 - Chaotic Spires

Shrieking howls emanate from the character's nearly still stony face as the stone laced throughout the chaos mage's body grows out of control, erupting from the character's body in a frightening array. Crystalline spines ranging in size from a few inches to a foot or more run through his body, forming open conduits for the currents of chaos. Again, internal changes are also apparent as the transformation destroys what is left of his nervous system leaving his last memory of feelings to be that one final, horrific, rending pain. This radical change to the chaos mage results in a loss of 1d4 points of Dexterity and makes it impossible for the character to wear any sort of clothing beyond loose robes.

Step 9 - Flowing Stone

Chaotic backlash causes the stone lancing the character's body to liquefy and flow into strange shapes under the twitching hand of primal chaos. All sensation deserts him as his last nerves are destroyed in the change. Sight becomes dim and hearing nigh impossible, both still functioning only through an indirect application of the character's will upon the forces of chaos. Emotions have faded to nearly nothing and the practitioner suffers under a dreadful apathy which all of his willpower is needed to overcome. The chaos mage suffers a permanent loss of 1d4 points of Strength as his body is no longer stable enough to allow him to co-ordinate what little remains of his shifting muscles.

Step 10 - Pillar of Chaos

Wild sorcery completes its distortion of the chaos mage, shredding his sanity and reducing his body to an immobile pillar of living stone. The character is no longer sentient in any way a normal mortal would comprehend it and his body periodically merges with the earth, only to reappear in a new location at some random time. This change is permanent, and the character is lost to chaos, his immobile form both monument and warning.

THE PATH OF WHISPERING MADNESS

Those who fall onto this Path suffer radical changes to the mind, rather than the flesh. The price is no less, however, as threads of chaos weave themselves into the chaos mage's perception of reality. Chaos-fuelled delusions grow in strength and number, eventually overpowering the mage and dragging him off to the insane hell of his own imagination.

Step 1 - Whispers of Chaos

The chaos mage begins to hear mumbling voices at odd times. He may find himself unconsciously mumbling responses to voices only he can hear, or turning his head from side to side in an attempt to hear what is being said.

Step 2 - Chaotic Focus

Chaos mages at this step on the Path no longer hear the voices, but they now begin to fear that they have missed something important in their madness. The character begins to pay much closer attention to his immediate surroundings, often to the exclusion of anything else. Planning becomes difficult and the mage is easily distracted by a passing butterfly or tiny shrub.

Step 3 - Night Messages

The voices now return to haunt the chaos mage's nights, bringing with them whispers of past misdeeds and vile acts. The chaos mage is assaulted in his sleep by poisonous words that cast doubts upon his own actions and disrupt his sleep. The character must rest two hours longer each night in order to make up for this interrupted sleep pattern in order to benefit from the effects of full rest. In addition, he becomes irritable and strangely alert during the days, continuing to watch the tiny and large events around him with disturbing focus and strange attention.

Step 4 - Paranoid Awareness

The character becomes confused and hyperattentive. He begins to believe the voices he has heard are coming for him and will soon end his life, or that they have told him of plots against him by friends or enemies. While his attention is at its peak, the paranoia may lead to disastrous decisions. He becomes twitchy and fears to sleep for when he is asleep 'they' will come for him. The character permanently gains 1 point of Wisdom, but suffers a 1 point loss from Intelligence.

Step 5 - Mark of Madness

Any character reaching this point on the Path is descending rapidly into madness. He carries on strange conversations and makes terrifyingly horrid predictions. Much sentience is gone and living anything like a 'normal' life is now impossible. The character is marked by tics and twitches, and reacts poorly to surprise – some chaos mages become afflicted with verbal outbursts when surprised, but all are clearly disturbed individuals by the time they reach this point of the path. Whenever surprised by an enemy, the chaos mage will be unable to act in the surprise round, or the round after.

Step 6 - Bleak Consciousness

The character is certain his death is imminent and spends an inordinate amount of time watching for real or perceived threats. He may disappear for days or weeks at a time without explanation, reappearing just as mysteriously as he tries to hide from 'them'. Conversation with the character becomes difficult at best and impossible at worst. The character receives a +1 bonus to Wisdom, but suffers a -1 penalty to Intelligence.

Step 7 - Chaotic Ravings

Chaos mages now respond to their own hallucinations, often shouting obscenities or speaking in gibberish. An obsession with the voices often leads to the character ignoring basic tasks such as hygiene and eating, further adding to his aura of insanity. As madness robs the mage of his ability to think clearly, he loses 1d4 points of Intelligence.

Step 8 - Preternatural Senses

Reality holds little interest for the chaos mage - most of his time is spent conversing with, or listening to, the echoes of chaos continually running through his mind. Oddly, as the character withdraws from reality, his awareness becomes more acute, even though his intellect is eroding. This change is permanent, adding 1d3 points to the chaos mage's Wisdom whilst deducting 1d3 points from his Intelligence.

Step 9 - Splintered Mind

Whatever sanity the character may have held onto crumbles away once this step on the Path of Whispering Madness is taken. The forces of chaos fracture his mind and infuse each portion of his consciousness with a life of its own. The character's memories and skills remain, but his personality and capabilities constantly change, depending on which

shard of his personality is ascendant. During this step, the character loses 1d3 points from a randomly determined attribute each morning, but also gains 1d3 points to another randomly determined attribute. Such changes are permanent.

Step 10 - Hellpocket

The final misfire of wild sorcery opens the character's eyes to sanity and lucidity for one last time. His sudden blast of awareness shreds away the last of his sentience and chaos flows around and through the mage, carrying him away to a hell devised by his own imagination. The character is irretrievably lost, left to eternally drift on the tides of primal chaos.

THE FINAL FATE

If a chaos mage ever reaches the last step of any Path of Chaos, he is lost – irretrievably, irrevocably, permanently lost. There are ample opportunities for any chaos mage to save himself from this fate, but those who push too far should suffer the ultimate punishment and become a manifestation of rampant chaos. Wandering adventurers may encounter 'lost' chaos mages roaming the wilderness, each serving as a reminder to others of the price that may be paid.

Due to the explosive interaction between static and chaos magic, there are no spells, not a *resurrection*, *reincarnation*, or *wish* that can bring a lost mage back from the shores of the sea of primal chaos – *resurrection*, *reincarnation* and *wish* spells may not be used to save a character who reaches the last step on their Path to Chaos. However, a *wish* spell may be used to bring a character back one step along the Path of Chaos before he reaches the ultimate end.

CHEATING FATE

Chaos mages faced with a painful and irredeemable death may decide it is in their best interest to end their lives naturally and pray that a *raise dead*, *resurrection* or *reincarnation* spell can be used to restore them to life – and also reset the chaotic clock that is ticking within their bodies.

Unfortunately for those who attempt to cheat fate in this way, the Paths of Chaos do not relinquish their victims so easily and any character with even a single step on a Path who dies and is brought back from the grave, will retain any such steps gained before death. The power of chaos recognises those that share its taint, and will seek them far beyond the grave.



FEATS OF CHAOS

Over the aeons, chaos mages and wantons have devised techniques to harness chaotic energies, binding them utterly to their impregnable wills. Some of the better known disciplines are designed to provide greater safety for those willing to channel primal chaos, whilst others provide greater power in specialised areas. Only wanton or chaos magic users who meet the listed prerequisites of each feat may select them.

Casting Focus (Chaos)

You have disciplined yourself to the demands of chaos, and can readily shape the raw essence of the most destructive of energies to your whim.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast chaos magic spells.

Benefit: You receive a +2 circumstance bonus to any Casting checks made while casting chaos magic spells.

Specialised Focus (Chaos)

You have concentrated your will to channel chaos energies into specific paths, allowing you to cast some spells with the greatest of ease.

Prerequisites: Casting Focus, caster level 8+

Benefit: Choose one effect element, such as damage or materialisation, as described on p19. You are especially good at wielding spells of this nature and will receive a +5 circumstance bonus to any Casting checks made whilst casting chaos magic spells with this effect element. This feat does not stack with Casting Focus.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new effect element.

Blood of Chaos (Chaos)

Your body has become almost completely attuned to the streams of chaos that forever shroud it, allowing you to suffer far less when wielding magic.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast chaos magic spells or use a wanton talent.

Benefit: You suffer one less point of damage every time you cast a chaos magic spell or suffer a backlash.

Chaotic Healing (Chaos)

The tides of chaos play havoc with your body, boosting its capabilities one day, whilst leaving you feeling drained and slow the next.

Prerequisites: Blood of Chaos

Benefit: You heal erratically whilst resting. Instead of using normal healing rules, the powers of chaos restore 1d6-2 hit points per character level to you after each day of full rest. The minimum damage healed is 1 hit point – it is impossible to suffer damage through the use of this feat.

Immutable Will

You have an iron resolve that refuses to bow down before the coursing, implacable forces of chaos. Whilst other chaos mages before you have succumbed to the art, you stubbornly refuse to be dragged down by the very power you wield.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast chaos magic spells, Iron Will, caster level 7+.

Benefit: You pay only half of the normal experience cost necessary to use the Purge Chaos class feature, as described on p17.

Attune Other

Chaos is a fickle mistress and when bound to corporeal objects, may only be controlled by the mage who created such artifacts. You, however, have learnt to craft items for others, tapping into their residual ties with chaos to attune them to the items you can now create.

Prerequisites: The ability to craft chaos magic items

Benefit: You may now create chaos magic items for other users, attuning them to your creations. The process for doing so is the same as noted on p58 but the item's intended user, rather than the chaos mage, must suffer the ability reduction to use the item.

When it starts to burn, you've probably gone too far. Of course, now that you've gone too far, there's no point in not going a bit further, is there?

Excerpt from the unfinished lecture series, 'Thwarting Backlash, a Practical Guide.'

SERVANTS OF CHAOS

Static mages transform existing creatures into loyal servitors, imbuing them with a magical bond that enhances natural abilities and intelligence. Chaos mages, on the other hand, filter chaotic power through their own soul to create their familiars, manufacturing the new creature from a combination of primal energy and their own personality. As a result, chaotic familiars are stronger and more tightly connected to their masters, but their loss is a grievous injury to their creator.

CRAFTING THE FAMILIAR

At fourth level, or any point thereafter, the chaos mage may choose to create a chaotic familiar. No equipment is required to do this, but the chaos mage must be completely undisturbed for 24 hours. If the chaos mage is disturbed, the attempted creation of the familiar is a failure, and he must wait seven days before he can attempt to create a familiar again.

Most chaos mages create their familiars by spending long hours in isolation, meditating on their essential nature and communing with the forces of chaos. Others flagellate themselves, seeking to free a portion of their psyche to breathe life into a familiar whilst some drink themselves into a mindless stupor, letting their unconscious mind call forth a suitable familiar.

The actual appearance of familiars is left to the discretion of the player and Games Master. All chaotic familiars appear distinctly supernatural and are of a roughly humanoid shape, but the specifics are dictated by the personality and nature of the chaos mage. Glittering skin, horns, and burning eyes are all seen in chaos familiars, but there are an infinite variety of other effects that may be chosen. Every chaos familiar is a reflection of its master and thus, all are different. The following rules will allow players to determine the exact nature of their chaos familiar.

Base Abilities

The chaos familiar is an extension and reflection of its creator. Its initial Strength, Dexterity and Constitution scores are equal to one half of those its creator's ability scores, rounding down, while its Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma are equal to those of its creator.

Skills

Chaos familiars have 30 skill points to distribute amongst the skills below. No one skill may have more than 15 points assigned to it at the time of familiar's creation.

Balance
Climb
Hide
Listen
Move Silently
Spot
Any one skill known by the chaos mage

Feats

A chaos familiar has one feat at the time of its creation, chosen from the list below;

Alertness
Blind-Fight
Combat Reflexes
Improved Initiative
Lightning Reflexes
Toughness
Weapon Focus (natural weaponry)

Special Abilities

Chaotic familiars have any two of the following special abilities, chosen at the time of their creation;

Bolster Will

By partially fusing its mind with that of its creator, the chaotic familiar can assist with the casting of chaos magic. As long as the familiar is in physical contact with the chaos mage, he gains a +2 enhancement bonus to all Casting checks. However, any damage caused by casting the spell is applied to both caster and familiar whilst Bolster Will is being used. Triggering this ability requires one round of concentration on the part of the familiar.

Brainburn Poison

Three times a day, the chaos familiar can inject a dose of brainburn poison into an enemy when it deals damage in melee combat. This poison causes



1d2 points of Intelligence damage initially, and another 1d2 points of Intelligence damage as secondary damage. A Fortitude save at DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the chaos mage's level is required to resist the poison.

Breath Weapon

The chaotic familiar is able to breathe a cone of damaging chaos once per day. The cone is 15 ft. long and causes 1d4 points of damage per two levels of the chaos mage. This damage may be halved if a victim succeeds at a Reflex save made at DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the chaos mage's level.

Damage Division

When within 10 ft. of its creator, the familiar can absorb damage that would otherwise harm the chaos mage. The chaos mage may do this as often as he likes, simply by deducting any lost hit points from the familiar instead of himself. This ability can be used to absorb either subdual or real damage.

Resistance

If within 20 ft. of its creator, the familiar can voluntarily lower its own saving throws to increase those of its creator as a free action. For every two points by which the familiar lowers one of its saving throws, it raises the same saving throw for its creator by one point, for a period of one round. This ability may be used as often as the familiar wishes every day.

Spell Conduit

By building a strong bond between themselves and their familiar, chaos mages are able to project their powers over far greater distances than normal. When in possession of a familiar with this ability, the practitioner may cast a chaos spell through the familiar – in terms of range, touch attacks and area of effect, the familiar effectively becomes the caster of these spells, though all other variables of the spell, such as caster level, remain as the chaos mage's. The familiar must be within 60 feet of the chaos mage in order to use Spell Conduit.

Movement Type

A chaotic familiar has one of the following movement types;

Walk, base speed 30 ft.

Fly (average), base speed 20 ft. – the familiar may also walk with base speed 10 ft.

Swim, base speed 20 ft. - the familiar may also walk with base speed 10 ft.

Burrow, base speed 25 ft. - the familiar may also walk with base speed 15 ft.

Other Features

All chaos familiars share the following features;

† Familiars begin life as Tiny size, and increase to Small size after their creator gains another five levels. This growth increases the familiar's Strength by +4, as well as forcing the usual adjustments between size (see *Core Rulebook I* for details).

† Each familiar has a number of Hit Dice equal to one half the level of the chaos mage.

† The familiar has exactly one-half the original hit points of its creator, rounded down.

† A familiar has a single attack (be it claws, horns, a bite, stinger, or other, more exotic weapon) with a Base Attack Bonus equal to that of its creator. The attack causes 1d4 points of damage, which increases to 1d6 when it increases in size to Small.

† The familiar and its creator are able to communicate telepathically with one another, to a maximum range of one mile, plus one further mile per level of the chaos mage. The familiar is willing and able to understand communications it receives from its creator, and will do its best to fulfil tasks given to it.

† Familiars have +2 modifiers to all saving throws.

† The chaos mage's class level determines the Armour Class of the familiar. Chaos familiars have a natural armour bonus equal to the chaos mage's class level – 3.

† When a chaos mage is eligible to receive a new feat, his familiar may choose to either gain a new feat or another special ability from those listed above.

† Whenever a chaos mage is eligible to add a permanent point to his ability scores, the chaos familiar also raises an ability score. The chaos

mage determines on which ability score the bonus point is applied.

The Pain of Loss

A chaos familiar is a very real extension of the mage who created it. The two of them are bonded at a fundamental level, and the death of one will almost surely slay the other. If the chaos mage perishes, the familiar is instantly destroyed – the bond that held it together is shattered and the primal chaos is released to return from whence it came.

If the familiar dies, the chaos mage is immediately reduced to -1 hit points. If he receives healing and survives, the chaos mage will never be as strong as he once was and suffers a permanent 1d8 hit point reduction. If the chaos mage has started along a Path of Chaos, he immediately suffers an additional step on the Path as the sudden chaotic rupture drives him further toward the brink. However, he can create another chaos familiar after a week has elapsed since the death of his original.



Fenlir raised her voice, her throat raw and aching from hours of singing. The wind tugged at her hair, pulling it across her eyes and tickling her nose. Her knees were weak and her biceps burned from the constant exertion of playing the harp. She felt none of it, not even the blood trickling down her fingers from where the strings bit into them. The blood dripped down to her elbows where it gathered in thick, ruby beads before falling to the earth.

Something stirred within her, a growing vortex of primal chaos spinning toward life. Strange sensations whirled through her head as if her thoughts were gaining forms all of their own. With an exultant cry, Fenlir threw back her head and flung the harp away from her bloody hands. The power roared out the tips of her fingers, a spinning vortex of blood and crackling energy. For a long moment, Fenlir felt herself sliding away, a jagged split shooting through the fringe of her soul.

Then the moment was lost, and the wind spluttered to a halt, releasing fat droplets of her blood to the earth. Fenlir crumpled to her knees, massaging the numbness from her cramped hands. ‘Nothing.’ She croaked the word through parched lips. ‘All that, and nothing.’

The voice behind her was startlingly pitched, a weird, crackling sound at the edge of her hearing. ‘For a master, you are a weakling.’ The tiny familiar scampered up onto her shoulder from behind, crouching next to her cheek. ‘C’mon, we must have work to do. . .’

WILD SPECIALISTS

Though chaos mages do not fall into the cliquish specialisation paths of the static mages, they do occasionally form their own unique ideological groupings that have developed over time into small organisations and secret fraternities with their own rituals and methods magical. Each of the prestige classes detailed below represents one of the philosophies or organisations of chaos magic culture.

Prestige Classes

Chaos mages may pursue any prestige class for which they fulfil the requirements, so long as that prestige class does not grant static magic of any type. Chaos mages are unable to ever learn this type of magic and cannot get around this penalty by taking such a prestige class. Chaos mages are free to gain the ability to cast divine spells as a result of pursuing a prestige class.

BLOODCARVER

To learn the ways of the bloodcarver is to accept pain and suffering as your daily lot. Where others of our kind struggle to focus chaos through force of will, we have learned the easiest way to direct the flow of a mighty river is to cut a channel into its bank. The deeper the channel carved into the earth, the swifter and surer the river flows, and so it is with our flesh and the writhing streams of primal chaos.

In days long past, chaos mages were few in number and scattered far and wide. They were unable to trade stories or techniques and learned their art only through hard, often hazardous, practice. As time passed, most chaos mages learned to harness the powers through force of will and the raw strength of their personality. But some discovered their bodies could be used to control the flow of chaos, not by resisting its wild surges, but by providing a smooth channel through which magic could flow.

This was not without cost, however, as chaos flows most easily in blood, forcing these primitive spell

casters to injure themselves to release the power within their body. The deeper the cut made, the more control the chaos mage had over his power. It is a path fraught with the danger of self-destruction and permanent injury but, for some, the lure of quick power is too strong to resist. After all, what is a little pain, a little bloodshed, in the face of controlling primal chaos?

When casting spells, a bloodcarver injures himself, using pain and blood to focus the power of chaos in a specific direction. While all chaos mages guide chaotic power in through their own body, only the bloodcarver goes about its release in so direct, and bloody, a fashion. Not for the weak of heart, the path of the bloodcarver holds strange powers available to no other.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a bloodcarver, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Concentration: 12 ranks.

Spellcasting: The ability to cast chaos magic spells.

Class Skills

The bloodcarver's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Spellcraft (Int), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bloodcarver prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Bloodcarvers gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble.

Bloodletting: At 1st level, the bloodcarver learns how to release chaotic energies by spilling his own blood. Providing a quick route for the chaos to leave makes it easier for the chaos mage to fashion his spells, but the damage caused to his body can be quite horrific. Using Bloodletting, every 2 hit points

The Bloodcarver

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bloodletting
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Ignore Pain
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Damage Reduction
4	+2	+4	+1	+4	Armour of Scars
5	+3	+4	+2	+4	Bloodcarving

of damage the bloodcarver causes to himself whilst casting a spell allows a +1 circumstance bonus to the Casting check. Bloodletting allows the chaos

mage to carefully control how much damage he causes himself - there is no danger of inadvertently causing more or less damage than desired when using this ability.



Ignore Pain: Bloodcarvers learn to distance themselves from their pain to protect themselves from the horrors they inflict upon their own bodies. At 2nd level, the bloodcarver is so resistant to pain that he is able to maintain his concentration even if he suffers damage from an attack. This ability grants the bloodcarver the Combat Casting feat. If he already possesses this feat, he doubles the bonus gained from it.

Damage Reduction: Bloodcarvers are good at controlling their pain, and as such, they are able to ignore a portion of the damage they suffer from attacks. At 3rd level, the bloodcarver suffers one hit point less of any damage he is dealt.

Armour of Scars: Bloodcarvers soon end up hacking their flesh with a great degree of regularity. By 4th level, the damage done to the chaos mage has left its mark in the form of a criss-cross pattern of thick scar tissue covering most of the mage's available skin. The scarring is so severe the character gains protection from the thickened flesh - the bloodcarver receives a +1 natural armour bonus to his Armour Class.

Bloodcarving: At 5th level, the chaos mage has perfected the art of releasing chaos through pain and blood. This ability allows the chaos mage to carve his flesh more precisely, so less damage need be dealt to himself to achieve the desired result. Using Bloodcarving, for every point of damage the bloodcarver causes to himself whilst casting a spell, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to his Casting check. Bloodcarving allows the chaos mage to carefully control how much damage he causes himself - there is no danger of

inadvertently causing more or less damage than desired when using this ability.

DOOMRINGER

There is only pain, a blinding series of agonies that burn through me like flaming screws. I never believed the stories, never understood the danger my choices would put me in. For so long, they were nothing to me, just scum I hunted, tried, and executed. I should have listened, should have known that there was more to their evil ways than simple witchcraft. And now, now there is nothing but the pain, and the bells, the ringing of those damnable bells . . .

Chaos mages are not known to be sticklers for lawful deeds, but most have a healthy understanding of the differences between good and evil. Their use of power may be harmful or destructive in the extreme, but it is still just magic – a tool neither good, nor evil. Unfortunately, there are those that seek to turn every tool to their advantage, who seek to pervert the primal forces of chaos for their own benefit. These are the doomringers, a modern cult of evil that works to reap the benefits of chaotic magic without paying the price it extracts.

The Doomringer's Cult was founded after study within both necromantic and chaos magic fields revealed the possibility of forging a bond between the living and the dead and, furthermore, that the bond could be used to shift the lash of chaos from one to the other.

The name of the cult comes from the unique transfer mechanism the doomringers use to deflect the damage caused by channelling chaos. Tiny enchanted copper bells are attached to the flesh of the dead and the living, forging a connection between the two. When spellcasting or backlash damage would affect the doomringer, his bells begin to toll and are echoed by the corpse that holds their twins. Damage is then transferred between the two, sparing the chaos mage and degrading the corpse.

More horrifying than the use of the dead is the effect the bonding has on the spirit of the deceased – in order for the doomringer to make the connection with the dead, they must be recently dead when the bells are attached. The process used imprisons the spirit of the newly dead within its corpse, subjecting it to torture as the damage is transferred to the dead body from the chaos mage. The spirit is destroyed

along with the body, utterly annihilating the unfortunate victim chosen by the doomringer. The Doomringer Cult does not teach its secrets lightly and anyone becoming a member should be wary. Cult leaders reserve the right to call upon members for aid at any time should the need arise and cultists may find themselves dispatched to destroy an enemy of the cult itself, leading them down the path of murder and mayhem. Doomringer's are also required to maintain absolute secrecy with regards to their organisation - any breach of this calls for death, and having the prospect of a pack of bloodthirsty doomringer's on one's trail is enough to deter most from making such an error.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a doomringer, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Concentration: 12 ranks.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Spellcasting: The ability to cast chaos magic spells.

Class Skills

The doomringer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (coppersmith) (Int), Knowledge (necrology) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the doomringer prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Doomringers gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble.

Corpse Pact: Upon taking the first level of the doomringer prestige class, the character learns the secret of making a Corpse Pact. This requires enchanting a pair of copper bells with the mixed blood of the doomringer and the corpse, then infusing both bells with a rush of raw chaos in a

ritual that lasts for 1d4 hours. The ritual forms a chaotic link between the doomringer and the corpse, which allows the doomringer to avoid much of the damage that would normally be caused by manipulating chaos magic. Only one corpse may be bonded in this way at any one time.

At any time the doomringer would suffer damage from either a casting attempt or backlash, one-half of the hit point damage is transferred to the corpse instead. The bonded corpse has a number of hit points equal to 1d4 times the level of the doomringer at the time the bond was created. If the doomringer gains a level after bonding with the corpse, it does not gain new hit points. Once a corpse's hit points are depleted, it is destroyed – the powers of chaos have demolished the corpse and the spirit it contained, leaving nothing behind but foul-smelling slime. If a doomringer is forced to take a step on one of the Paths of Chaos, the corpse is immediately destroyed, but the doomringer himself does not advance on the Path.

The bells both the doomringer and the corpse wear will emit a spectral ringing that lasts for 1 round for every five points of damage, or part of, suffered by the corpse. If the corpse is destroyed because the doomringer is forced along a step on the Paths of Chaos, the ringing will sound for a full 5 rounds. The bell can be heard by anyone within 50 feet and cannot be silenced or muffled in anyway.

Once a corpse has been demolished by the force of chaos, the doomringer suffers double damage from any chaotic backlash or spellcasting strain until a new corpse has been bonded. The power of the Corpse Pact becomes a crutch, and without it, the doomringer is in grave danger.

Preserve Corpse: At 2nd level, the doomringer has learned enough about the dead to repair the damage dealt to his bonded corpse. Once per day, the chaos mage can restore 1d6 points of damage to the corpse

by infusing a fraction of his life essence back into the dead body.

Blood Shunt: The ability to bond with corpses is more powerful at the 3rd level, allowing the doomringer to transfer not only damage from chaos magic to the corpse, but also the effects of any injury he suffers. The rate of transfer is not fast, but it can be enough to spare the mage's life in extreme circumstances. Doomringers with this ability can transfer one hit point of damage to the corpse for every four hit points they suffer from an attack or other source. The doomringer must decide immediately upon suffering an attack whether or not to transfer any damage to the bonded corpse. Doomringers do not suffer double damage from such sources if their corpse is destroyed – this applies only to damage from chaos spell casting or backlashes.

Walking Death: By 4th level the doomringer can forestall his own death by drawing upon the spirit within his bonded corpse. If a doomringer falls below zero hit points, but has not yet reached –10 hit points, the imprisoned spirit can allow him to remain conscious (though weak). Every round the character remains at negative hit points, his corpse suffers 1d4 points of damage - if the corpse is destroyed while being used in this manner, the doomringer immediately dies.

While using this ability, the doomringer is limited to taking partial actions. The will to live is present, but there is little left for other activities.

Avatar of Death: Mastery of the doomringer bond occurs at this level, allowing the doomringer to more efficiently channel damage done to him through his chaotic bond. All damage dealt to the doomringer from either chaotic spell casting or backlashes may be transferred in its entirety to the corpse. In addition, one-half of any other damage can be transferred if the doomringer so wishes.

The Doomringer

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	0	+2	Corpse Pact
2	+1	+0	0	+3	Preserve Corpse
3	+1	+1	1	+3	Blood Shunt
4	+2	+1	1	+4	Walking Death
5	+2	+2	2	+4	Avatar of Death



BOTTLED LIGHTNING

Where one finds spellcasters, one is bound to find magical artifacts of some kind. They allow wizards to bypass the normal restrictions on how many spells may be cast, sorcerers to bottle their powers for consumption by others – and they permit chaos mages to cram powerful, unpredictable effects into portable containers.

Unlike arcane spell casters who rely on complex formulae and ancient rituals to create their magical items, chaos mages craft each object as an individual work of art. While a wizard can fashion a dozen magical longswords, all useable by any warrior able to obtain them, every weapon enchanted by a chaos mage is uniquely attuned to but a single wielder, usually himself.

Like chaos magic itself, there is a price to be paid when handling these objects of power. For one, they are not as stable as items created with static magic and their abilities may fluctuate over time. The longer primal chaos is chained into a consistent form, the more unstable it becomes as the power struggles to free itself from the constraints placed upon it. As it begins to break free from the object, the chaos energy grows in power and becomes much more likely to harm the user when it finally erupts in a flash of wild power.

The second drawback inherent in handling objects of chaotic power is the strain that proximity to harnessed chaos can place on the wielder. In order to use a chaotic item, the wielder must be attuned to the object, melding his personal energies with its inherent power. This helps to stabilise a chaotic item, but results in increased stress on the body and mind of the wielder.

Primal chaos can be used in many different ways, but the wielder must always be willing to pay the price.

FORGING CHAOS

Creating items imbued with the power of chaos is a difficult process, fraught with peril. Weak or inexperienced chaos mages will find themselves in

danger of bodily harm at every turn, not to mention the loss of expensive materials should an attempt fail. Whilst free of many of the restrictions static practitioners face in creating magical items, chaos mages must face a series of difficult steps in order to infuse an object with the essence of wild sorcery. A chaos mage is required to complete each step once it has begun, but can stop the process between steps, if desired, without ruining work already completed.

SUMMARY

The rules for creating chaos magic items may seem a little daunting with a first reading. Presented here is a summary to guide players as to the principles required in creating chaos magic items within their games.

Chaos magic items are extremely flexible and are created through a number of steps during which a player may fine-tune his creation. The steps involved in creating a chaos magic item are listed below;

1. Select Infusion

All chaos magic items bestow a benefit to the character who wields them. The infusion type selects precisely what this benefit will be.

2. Gather Materials

Potent energies are involved with the infusing of mundane objects with the raw power of wild sorcery and so any vessel intended to be transformed into a chaos magic item must be of the highest quality.

3. Create Tempering Solution

Every chaos mage has their own formula for the solution required to prepare an object for the infusion of chaos power. Such solutions are expensive but absolutely necessary for the creation of a chaos magic item.

4. Temper Item

The solution is applied to the object in order to prepare it to receive the raw force of wild sorcery.

5. Complete Infusion

The object is impregnated with chaos energy. If all the previous steps have been followed faithfully, the mage is now in possession of a potent chaos magic item.

SELECT INFUSION

In order to create an item of chaotic power, the chaos mage must infuse it with primal chaos. Though there are many different varieties of infusion, all those contained within a single item must be of the same type. Chaos magic is difficult enough to force into any static form and attempts to create exotic infusion mixtures inevitably fail.

Augmentation infusions are the most common type, and the one most immediately useful to the average adventurer. An augmentation infusion adds an enhancement bonus to one of the following:

- Damage rolls
- Attack rolls
- Armour Class
- One ability score

The chaos mage must select one of the above to receive the object's augmentation infusion - whilst a single object may contain more than one augmentation infusion (see p59), each must have a different effect.

Insight infusions provide an insight bonus to a single skill. The skill that will receive the insight bonus must be specified at the time the infusion is created and cannot be altered thereafter.

Resistance infusions are applied to a character's saving throws, enabling them to resist specific attacks far more easily. Such chaos magic items grant a resistance bonus to one of the following attack types; acid, cold, fire, lightning, or sonic.

Augmentation, Insight, and Resistance infusions are able to provide a maximum bonus of +1 for every two caster levels of their creator.

Storage infusions hold a raw, primal chaos for later use by the chaos mage. Having this energy on tap allows the chaos mage to cast more powerful spells than he would normally be capable of, while decreasing the chances he will suffer a backlash.

Any chaos mage attuned to an item with this type of infusion can use the energy it contains to lower the DC of any Casting check they make while casting a chaos magic spell. A chaos

mage can draw up to three points of chaos energy per caster level from a storage infusion for use during the casting of a spell. Each point used grants a +1 enhancement bonus to the Casting check required to cast the spell, as the chaos energy is more easily shaped from a crafted object than if drawn from the heart of primal chaos itself.

Luck infusions are the most unpredictable. They attempt to bend the forces of chaos in favour of the character wielding it, increasing the odds of success at certain tasks, while decreasing their chances at others. For every point of luck placed in an object, the wielder may add +1 to any die roll once each day. Up to three points of luck may be used on any one die roll, providing a maximum +3 circumstance bonus. However, each time a point of luck is used, the Games Master will give the character a -1 circumstance penalty on any other roll the character makes within the next twenty-four hours, as he desires. If no roll is made during the period of time in which a circumstance penalty could come into play, the Games Master should feel free to visit bad



luck upon the character – perhaps they lose a pouch, a water skin springs an unnoticed leak, or an old enemy learns of their whereabouts.

GATHER MATERIALS

Putting together precisely the right mixture of materials can be challenging, requiring attention to detail and an eye for quality ingredients. The chaos mage must first select the base item – if not listed here, prices may be found within *Core Rulebook I*.

Only masterworked items may be infused with chaotic energies. Attempts to infuse lesser items result in a bright flare of light and an explosion as the object ruptures under the strain, causing 3d8 points of damage to every character within 10 ft., and half that damage to anyone within 20 ft. A Reflex save at DC 15 will halve this damage.

Masterworked items, unless specified in *Core Rulebook I*, will cost 50 times more than their mundane counterparts. The Games Master is the final adjudicator as to what items may be masterworked, and their final value.

Items once enchanted with static magic are no longer suitable for use as chaos magic items, and vice versa, even if the item no longer holds magical power. The power of static and chaos magicks irrevocably alter the structure of an infused or enchanted object, rendering it useless for opposing sorcery.

CREATE TEMPERING SOLUTION

Once an item has been selected to accept the infusion, the chaos mage must brew the tempering solution. This potent fluid will be massaged into the chosen item to prepare it to accept the flows of chaos. There is no ‘true’ recipe for creating the tempering solution, as each chaos mage picks and chooses which ingredients to include based upon his own experience and the instinctual sense that comes from exposure to primal chaos. The key element common to all tempering solutions is their reliance on rare and expensive components. Common wisdom amongst the more experienced chaos mages is that the more value mortals place upon an object, the greater flow of chaos unleashed when the item is broken down into its component elements.

Gemstones, fragrant oils, and rare herbs are the most common reagents used in the creation of tempering solutions, but powdered metals, body parts from exotic creatures, and blood also find their way into the alchemical mixtures. Each chaos mage develops a unique style for crafting chaos items and what works for one rarely works well for another.

The cost for the tempering solution is based on the infusion the mage plans on embedding within the object, as shown below;

† For an augmentation infusion, the cost of the reagents is equal to 500 gp per point of enhancement, up to 2,500 gp for a +5 enhancement bonus.

† The reagents used to provide an insight infusion cost 250 gp per point of insight to be gained, up to 1,250 gp for a +5 insight bonus.

† Resistance infusions require ingredients worth 200 gp per point of bonus, up to 1,000 gp for a +5 resistance bonus.

† For each point of luck to be imbedded in an object, 150 gp worth of ingredients are required.

† For every point of chaos energy to be stored in an object, 50 gp of ingredients are required.

Once the chaos mage has all the ingredients ready, he spends 1 day per 500 gp value of the reagents in brewing the solution. This requires a heat source (even a fireplace will do for this) and a cauldron, but no other special equipment is needed.

The ingredients are brewed together in the cauldron for the duration. During each day, the chaos mage is assumed to spend at least 8 hours actively working on the infusion, and is allowed to take short breaks during the process as long as a total of 8 hours are spent tending to it. The chaos mage is not allowed to take a day off, however – once started, the process must continue straight on through to its completion. If the caster is disturbed during his work time, or spends less than 8 hours working each day, the infusion is ruined.

Once the required time has been spent working on the infusion, the chaos mage makes an Alchemy check at DC 10 + 1 per 500 gp value of the ingredients used. If successful, the tempering

solution has been created; failure results in the loss of all ingredients and time spent in preparation.

Tempering solutions retain their potency for up to three days per level of the chaos mage that creates them. If the chaos mage pauses the infusing process following this step, the process can begin anew at any time before the tempering solution loses its potency. Note that a tempering solution created for one object cannot be used to create another magic item – each solution is tailored to the specific magic item it is designed to prepare for infusion.

If I had known the thrill of primal chaos earlier, I would have chewed off my own hands as an apprentice and skipped years of wondering.

The last diary entry of Rivong Szcorca following the awakening of his chaotic talents

TEMPER ITEM

With both the object and tempering solution ready, the chaos mage is ready to begin the infusion. This is the critical part of the process – failure in this step will cost the chaos mage both the base object and his tempering solution. Tempering the item requires 1 day for every 500 gp in the combined cost of the tempering solution and the base item. During this time, the chaos mage must spend at least 8 hours each day actively preparing the item. The caster may take breaks during this time, but if he is disturbed during his work, or he works less than 8 hours each day, the process is ruined and the item and tempering solution are destroyed. The chaos mage also requires eight hours of restful sleep during each day of the tempering to restore their internal energies and give the item a chance to adjust to its new powers.

After the required working time has elapsed, the chaos mage must make another Alchemy check at DC 10 + 1 per 500 gp, or part of, the combined value of the tempering agent and the object to be enchanted. Failure here results in the destruction of the object and the loss of the tempering solution. The chaos mage has misjudged the ingredients needed and the solution corrodes the object rather than enhancing it. Within hours after the last of the solution has been absorbed, the object will be completely useless and the process must begin again with a new base object.

A success during the tempering process, however, visibly changes the item to be enchanted. Sparks of primal chaos swirl across its surface and subtle lights seem to shift within the object. Metal becomes translucent, shot through with swirling colours. Cloth and leather acquire a glossy sheen and become impossibly supple and smooth. Regardless of the material, it takes on a distinctly alien appearance. The item is now ready to receive the infusion of the chaos mage.

COMPLETE INFUSION

His preparations complete, the chaos mage now begins the last stage of the infusion process. The chaos mage opens himself up to the flows of primal chaos and directs the power through his body and into the tempered object. This gruelling process takes hours to complete, during which the chaos mage must maintain his concentration and pray his body endures the strain. The danger of this stage lies in the possibility that the caster will lose control over the power he is trying to harness and suffer a great deal of damage as it bursts free of his body.

This stage lasts for 1 hour per 500 gp in the combined value of the item to be enchanted and the tempering solution. This process must take place in a calm, quiet place and, unlike previous steps, the chaos mage must remain completely undisturbed for the entire time – if he ceases working or is interrupted for any reason, the infusion process fails and the item being infused is destroyed. The waves of chaos will erupt in a display of vivid pyrotechnics, causing 1d8 points of damage per hour of work so far undertaken. A Fortitude save at DC 15 may be made to reduce this damage by half.

At the end of the required time, the chaos mage must make a successful Will save at DC 10 + 1 per hour after the first in order to maintain control over the fluctuating waves of chaos. If the chaos mage fails, he must immediately make a Fort Save at the same Difficulty Class or suffer 1d8 points of damage for every hour the ritual has been in progress, a successful save reducing this damage by half. In either case, the object is destroyed by the explosive liberation of the chaos gathered for the infusion and the chaos mage must begin a new infusion process on another object.

It should be noted that an item tempered by one chaos mage may not be enchanted by another, as the solution used by one chaos mage will not be compatible with the chaotic methods used by others.



This difference in styles and attitudes also prevents chaos mages from working together on an enchantment or ritual spell – the life of a chaos mage can be lonely for the individuals who progress along its difficult road.

Properties of Chaos Magic Items

Chaos magic items emit a magical aura in the same fashion as other, static, magic items. They will only provide benefit to a wielder who has been attuned to them and then only if he keeps them on his person – they may be worn, carried or wielded in battle if a weapon. In all other circumstances, chaos magic items are treated in the same way as any other type of magic item.

THE COST OF ATTUNEMENT

Once an object is made, it must be attuned to its user. In most cases, only the chaos mage who created the magic item will be able to successfully complete the attunement process by bonding the item to himself. A chaos mage other than the creator may attempt to attune the item to himself, but the process is much more difficult and likely to fail.

To attune the item, the chaos mage must spend a day in an isolated location, free from distraction and the corrupting energies of others. During this time, the chaos mage weaves flows of power between the item and himself, binding their essences together. The process cannot fail, but when it is complete, the mage is left slightly weakened as a portion of his personal energy is used to contain the chaotic power he now wields. A chaos magic item must be attuned to a wielder in order to provide any benefit.

For each infusion a character has attuned to them, he will suffer a –1 penalty to either his Strength, Dexterity or Constitution ability scores, chosen by the chaos mage. Note that it is not possible to suffer a reduction to an ability score that is directly affected by the item (a ring that increases the wearer's Strength cannot simultaneously reduce it) or one that is tied to a directly affected skill (for example, an amulet that provides an insight bonus to tumbling cannot also reduce Dexterity). This penalty to ability scores is not permanent, though may only be healed once the chaos magic item has suffered explosive decay (see p59).

CHAOTIC DECAY

Items that have been enchanted with chaotic power are under constant attack by the energies they contain. Holding chaos within a solid form for any length of time is difficult, and any objects used to do so begin deteriorating almost as soon as their infusion is complete. The attunement of a user helps to forestall this corrosive force, but it cannot halt it completely.

The hardness score of an item determines how long it can contain the power of chaos within its bounds, with stronger items able to resist the corrosion of chaos for greater periods of time. More important than the hardness of the item, however, is the strength of the user's Will. Wielders with great willpower can prolong the life of their chaotic magical items, holding the flux of chaos in check by raw desire.

If an object is attuned, its wielder must make a Will save every full week at the DC shown on the table below, or the object will lose one point of hardness. This loss is permanent and impossible to repair as the power of chaos is eating away at the internal structure of the object, worming through the object's essence as it seeks a way out of its static prison.

Objects that have no attuned user suffer an accelerated rate of decay - without the willpower of a wielder to fight off the devastating power of chaos, the object automatically loses one point of hardness every other day.

Regardless of whether an item has a wielder or not, the corrosive effects of chaos can be seen once an item has lost more than one half of its original hardness, rounding down. At this point, the item begins to show discoloured streaks, and the base material begins to shed thick flakes that glitter with freed energies. Wielders are immediately aware of the moment an item has passed this point as a sharp, stabbing pain lances through the core of their being. This is the only warning an attuned character will get and it is one they should note carefully.

RESISTING THE INEVITABLE

An item's hardness is eroded by chaos over time, leading to the inevitable destruction of the object. Only the willpower of a wielder can slow, or temporarily halt, the process. The table below

shows the DC for the Will save a wielder of a chaotic magic item must make every week to prevent the loss of one point of Hardness.

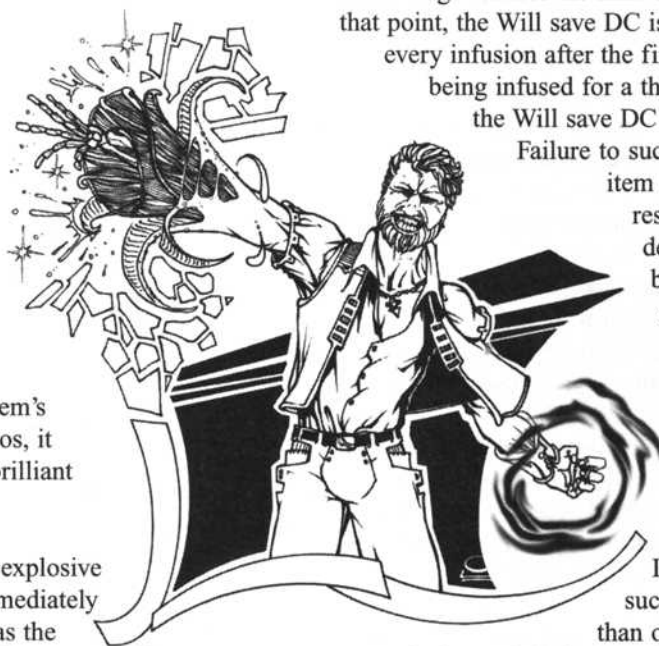
Infusion Type	Will save DC
Enhancement Bonus	10 + 1 per point of enhancement
Insight Bonus	10 + 1 per 2 points of bonus
Resistance Bonus	10 + 1 per 2 points of bonus
Special Ability	10 + Ability modifier (see below)
Storage	10 + 1 per 10 points of stored energy or fraction thereof
Luck	10 + 1 per point of luck.

The Games Master should use the hardness system found within *Core Rulebook I* as the basis to determine the hardness of any object a mage infuses with chaos magic. If a chaos magic item is ever broken or shattered, it immediately suffers explosive decay, just as if it had been eroded naturally.

EXPLOSIVE DECAY

When the last point of an item's hardness is corroded by chaos, it will violently unravel in a brilliant pyrotechnic explosion.

When an item succumbs to explosive decay, the wielder must immediately make a Fort save at DC 15 as the chaotic bonds between the character and item suddenly explode with liberated energy. If successful, he suffers only one-half damage. Otherwise, he will absorb the full brunt of the chaotic surge. For every +1 enhancement, insight, resistance, or luck bonus the item was enchanted with, or for every 5 points of chaos energy currently stored within, 1d12 damage is inflicted upon the wielder, regardless of whether it is still on his person or not. In addition to the damage transferred down the attunement to the wielder, the weapon explodes, showering a burst radius of 10 ft. around the



character with shards of flying detritus and strands of burning energy. This deals 3d6 damage to all within range, though a Reflex save at DC 15 will cause only half damage to be inflicted upon those caught within the blast.

MULTIPLE INFUSIONS

It is possible to infuse an item more than once, but subsequent infusions will increase the rate of chaotic decay. If an attuned item has more than one infusion, the wielder must make a Will save for each infusion as noted under Chaotic Decay above. Items with no wielder lose one point of Hardness every other day per infusion, leading to their rapid deterioration and explosive destruction.

If an item is already infused, it still must be tempered to add another infusion. The cost and difficulty for the process remains the same as if an entirely new object were being created, until the chaos mage reaches the final stage of infusion. At that point, the Will save DC is increased by 5 for every infusion after the first. If the object is being infused for a third time, for example, the Will save DC is raised by +10.

Failure to successfully infuse an item always has the same result – the explosive destruction of the item being infused. The damage caused is noted above under Complete Infusion, but additional infusions raise the damage caused by 3d8 each.

If an item is successfully infused more than once, it must be attuned after each infusion, with the same reduction in ability scores as detailed under The Cost of Attunement.

Items with multiple infusions that suffer explosive decay multiply the damage done by the number of infusions contained within the object. The risks of heavily infusing an object may not be readily apparent at the time the object is created, but make quite an impression when the item goes up in a maelstrom of fire and destruction. Wise chaos mages limit the power of their items and get rid of them before they can blow up in their faces.

HELP FOR GAMES MASTERS

Chaos magic is both flexible and powerful. It can be a boon to creative players who would like to use a magic system that is not static and unyielding to their wishes but is also somewhat more complicated than the rules presented in *Core Rulebook I* and open to potential abuse by players. As Games Master, you must always be tough but fair.

There will always be players who look for ways to get the most out of their character in any given situation. Give them a new tool, and they will start thinking of all sorts of diabolical plans in which it plays a key part. As a Games Master, it is not your job to thwart players when they do this - you should make their use of creative tactics so the game is more fun for everyone involved. Remember, everyone is playing to have a good time, and no one will have the chance if you let yourself fall into the trap of competing with your players.

To make your job easier, keep in mind the chaos magic system was designed with a built-in limiting factor that will force the chaos mage to carefully choose how and when his magic is used. Though it may seem that he is an endless fountain of damage-causing spells, the cost is his own health. No matter how powerful a chaos mage may appear, he is only able to cast spells while he is conscious. A chaos mage can cast more spells in a given day than a static mage, but he will often be limited as to the number of spells he can cast within a short amount of time. Every spell he casts will inflict subdual damage and, while this heals quickly, a chaos mage that starts hurling bolts of chaos in rapid succession will find himself on his knees before long. Against individual targets, the chaos mage is very strong, but against multiple attackers or in situations where the ability to unload a lot of spells very quickly is important, he is at a disadvantage.

Peer pressure is also a very real limit the player of a chaos mage character will have to contend with. A chaos mage that overreaches himself will need to rest frequently in order to recover from the vast

amounts of subdual damage he suffers. However, the players of other characters in the party may not *want* to wait for the chaos mage to recover. Clerics, too, may become disgusted with the constant need to heal the damage a chaos mage does to himself, further limiting the number of spells he can comfortably cast.

With forethought and a little careful calculation, most players will be able to adopt a casting style that will keep their character teetering on the edge of danger while still allowing them to cast a wide variety of spells. The system is balanced, and with a little effort, adds a different feel to a campaign than run-of-the-mill static magic. As Games Master or a player, enjoy the diversity and learn to work with chaos magic, rather than against it.

CHAOS MAGIC IN THE CAMPAIGN

In many campaigns, chaos magic is an oddity, a strange form of eldritch power poorly understood and even feared by most. It is not the prime form of magic, and this supplement takes that view by default. Chaos mages exist but they are not as common or as well-organized as static mages (with the possible exception of a Doomringer cult . . .) and often spend their days living on the edges of civilization where they can pursue their path in peace.

Commoners often fear chaos mages because they are demonstrably different, especially as they progress along the Paths of Chaos. Depending on where in a campaign world they are, heavily mutated chaos mages may discover they are reviled and hated by the locals, forcing them to hide their nature to survive. Rural or primitive areas are especially prone to this sort of xenophobia, as are regions with very strict religions or where the local religious regime has a grudge against arcane magic in general.

In some campaigns it may be possible for chaos magic to be the primary form of magic, but Games Masters should be careful when adopting this option. Chaos mages do not make as many, or as useful, magic items as static mages, which will put character classes dependent on such equipment (particularly fighters) at a disadvantage in many encounters. This is mainly a concern when designing encounters using the Challenge Rating of

monsters – this score takes into account the presence of appropriate magical gear that will likely not exist in a campaign where chaos mages are the main spell casters. Damage resistance and creatures immune to non-magical weapons need to be looked at closely in campaigns with scant static magic, as characters are unlikely to have the tools they need to effectively combat these challenges.

CHAOS MAGIC VS. STATIC MAGIC

When comparing the two types of magic, chaos magic takes the lead in the sheer number of spells available and ability to tailor each to any given situation. Static magic is still more directly powerful, especially at higher levels, and has more general utility spells, such as divinations, that the chaos mage simply cannot draw upon. When designing adventures for the chaos mage, remember he will need more time to rest than a static mage but will be able to keep casting spells throughout the day if given the opportunity to remain at ease for a while.

If confronted with a static magic opponent, chaos mages will have a very definite advantage once they gain their countermagic ability at eighth level. Static mages should have a good shield of fighters and rogues to tie up the chaos mage in a confrontation or else be prepared to have their spell casting ability shut down by his countermagic ability. By the same token, a single chaos mage can wreak havoc in the back ranks of an enemy's forces by preventing clerics from augmenting and healing the front-line fighters.

By using the differences in chaos magic and static magic, clever Games Masters can build a wide variety of scenarios to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each form of magic whilst creating exciting encounters.

USING CHAOS MAGES AS FOES

Chaos magic makes an excellent tool for non-player character enemies. It is unpredictable and strange, with the added bonus that your players will not know everything about it. There is a definite advantage to throwing something unexpected at your group, rather than having them quote chapter and verse on the latest dragon's abilities. After a

tangle with a chaos mage, the players will not know what to expect, and their characters will be a lot more leery about what they *really* know about the world in which they live.

When designing enemy chaos mages or wantons, keep in mind their solitary nature. A chaos mage may have a few companions or servitors, but there will almost certainly not be more than one chaos mage within any given group. Even Doomrangers rarely work together directly, though many may coordinate their activities through the cult. Chaos mages simply do not trust one another and are wary of the effects that may occur should more than one of them start making the trip down the Paths of Chaos at the same time.

Enemy chaos mages should also be given treasure the party can eventually use themselves, often in the form of raw gold or captured static magic items as almost all magical items a chaos mage has crafted himself are of no use to anyone but him. This gives the Games Master more freedom to tool the chaos mage up, since there is no danger of the items falling into the hands of the players, but care should be taken to ensure there is appropriate treasure for the taking if the chaos mage is defeated, in order to properly reward the party.

When combating a group of characters, chaos mages will tend to rely on hit-and-run guerilla tactics to protect themselves. A chaos mage stands a better chance of survival if he surprises the characters, unleashes a quick, powerful spell, and then regroup to allow the resulting subdual damage to heal. If cornered, a lone chaos mage is in great danger as every use of his magic will reduce his hit points. Chaos mages will therefore use movement spells to get away from combat situations as quickly as possible.

They are lazy and uncouth, relying almost as much on the strength of their bodies as the strength of their minds. Yet their power is undeniable and their arcane knowledge impossible to measure. This is why we fear them – because they are at once different and so much like ourselves.

The Morals and Ethics of the Arcane - Ypresliva



DESIGNER'S NOTES

When the Mongoose tossed me the bare-bones concept for this book, I have to admit, I was a little daunted. An entirely new magic system was proposed for the d20 system and it needed to be very different from anything else around at the time. That is where this all started and, looking at it from this end of the writing process, it looks like we succeeded. I say we, because this could not have been done without the excellent feedback from Matthew Sprange and the Mongoose Playtesters – my thanks, folks.

I knew from the start I wanted to do a system that would encourage player creativity without making the Games Master scream in pain every time it came into play. It was important that it be fast to use with plenty of wide guidelines for everyone to play around in, because there is nothing more frustrating than for a system to be too narrow or too complex to use. At the same time, I did not want everything to be set in stone, because most of the fun in playing with *Chaos Magic* is that you never really know what to expect.

The air of uncertainty around the use of this kind of wild sorcery forced me to take some pretty drastic steps in balancing. Chaos mages do not run out of spell slots and need to rest if pushed too hard - they pass out or die, often explosively. When I was putting the system together I envisioned a type of magic that was wide open for all kinds of uses, but which exacted a terrible price from those who abused it. A nicely balancing mechanic took shape, and the idea of more difficult spells causing greater amounts of subdual damage became an important pillar of the whole system.

I was still concerned that the system would get flogged by those who ran the math and figured out how many times a day they could afford to fail without dying and base their play strategies off that analysis. There is nothing wrong with that, but the book is called *Chaos Magic* for a good reason, so I needed to add an unpredictable wild card that would keep danger present for all chaos mage characters. This is where the concept for the Paths of Chaos came in – it is a way to balance the chaos mage's long-term survivability against the short-term

probability of damage. The steps keep on coming at fairly regular intervals, and the more magic cast, the more likely they will build up to fatal levels.

The Paths were originally permanent – there was not any way for a chaos mage to back off from the precipice if he got too carried away. For obvious reasons, that idea did not stick around for too long. Now, chaos mages can always reverse their course along the Paths of Chaos, but only if they are willing to part with some of their hard-earned experience points. It is a system that requires caution and strategy on the part of the player, because the longer you avoid purging chaos from the character, the more rapidly future steps on the path will build up. Chaos magic is a slippery slope and only the cautious can avoid skidding into the abyss.

The fine-tuning of the system revolved around the risk versus reward issue that plagues every game designer. Make the new abilities too weak, or their costs too great, and no one wants to have anything to do with them. Make them too strong, or the penalties for their use too minor, and they can bring a campaign to its knees. In the end, we arrived at a balance that would allow a chaos mage to cast a *lot* of spells but only if they keep an eye on their declining health whilst doing so.

From my own playtest experience, I am happy to say that this book lives up to my expectations and I hope it meets yours, as well. *Chaos Magic* adds a sense of wonder and mystery back into the magical arts, giving players and Games Masters alike the chance to let their imaginations run wild. Why just throw a fireball when you can hand-craft a spell perfect for the situation at hand? For players, it is a great boon in flexibility and freedom; for the Games Master, it provides a new tool to keep players on their toes. It has been a fun book to write, and I cannot wait to hear stories of how it is used in campaigns.

Sam Witt

The smoke turned the noon sky to deepest dusk as the screaming midday progressed. Thousands of corpses bloated in the heat and leaked foul fluids that stained the moat of Belhart castle with oily blue-green slicks. On the killing fields, their still-living companions trod more bodies into the churned dirt. The strange other-planar creatures howled as they drew siege engines forward under a storm of clothyard shafts from the walls above.

'It does not go well, your grace,' Sir Heighardt worried.

'I can see that,' Duke Alaric ducked as an oddly barbed arrow dropped, spent, near his feet. He picked it up gingerly by the shaft and gazed briefly at the turquoise crystals of hardened poison coating the point before handing it carefully to an archer who knocked it to bowstring to return it. Arrows were now in short supply.

'They'll be at the north wall again soon, your grace.'

'I know!' Alaric roared. 'Dammit, Heighardt, do you think me blind as well as wretched? What would you have me do? Every man, woman and child is already atop the walls and fighting. My god, man, the only thing left is -' He paused, realizing what the knight commander had been alluding to. 'You can't be serious!'

'Look around, your grace. To be sure it is an act of utter desperation but I think we passed desperate quite some time ago.'

The steel clad duke looked down from the tower for the thousandth time that day and was forced to agree with his liegeman. Legions of alien troops blackened the fighting grounds all around Belhart castle as far as the eye could see. Their strange golden armor could be seen glittering in the woods where troops cut more trees to be built into engines of war to replace those Heighardt had so cleverly and repeatedly destroyed. Their curiously-shaped rhomboid tents sprouted like lesions on what used to be the common and the village was surrounded by the impaled bodies of the few who hadn't been quick enough to escape. They did not parley, they did not offer terms, they did not flee. They simply came on in waves to kill or be killed and had filled the moat with their own bodies so that siege towers could cross. Alaric sighed deeply, weariness and despair showing in equal amounts.

'Very well,' he finally said. 'Send for Wulfgar.'

Only a few minutes passed before the knight returned with the wild mage. All the way up the steps to the tower, the duke could hear the blistering rant of the spellcaster, castigating poor Heighardt for all the ills of the world. Everything from the colour choices of the tapestries, the quality of the food, down to the lack of respect the invaders had for a man trying to get a good night's sleep were somehow the fault of the knight, the duke or others. Alaric winced. Finally the two arrived at the top of the tower, Wulfgar's eyes blazing red with supernatural light as he screamed and shouted. An arrow pierced the sleeve of his robe and he turned in mid diatribe to hurl invectives at the enemy below.

Finally he wound down; the angry red glow of his eyes fading as sanity crept in at the edges. 'I suppose you brought me up here to do something about *this*,' he took in the invading army with a wave of his arm, the arrow clacking against the parapet. The two nobles nodded soberly, sorrow marking their features.

'Well then what are you *waiting* for! Get the hell out of here, you're in my way.'

Alaric swallowed. 'We thought we might stay. Help keep them off you if they attack.'

'You parsimonious excuse for a blue blood! When I want help from your pathetically limp sword arm, I'll ask for it! And as for you, Heighardt, you're nothing but an iron-clad windbag! To think I'm saddled with the two of *you* - the most miserable excuses for limp manhood I've ever seen. Go! Get off my tower!'

The verbal onslaught practically drove the two warriors to the stairway entrance, the men at arms having already fled the presence of the mad mage. Alaric hesitated one last second at the door and watched as his oldest friend suppressed the rage with an obvious act of will. 'Go, my sword-brother,' Wulfgar whispered, maintaining the most tenuous hold on his sanity for his last few moments as a man. 'I know what I do. I understand the price I will pay. Go.'

Duke Alaric fled the tower as shrieks of hatred and abuse conjured unnamed colours of otherworldly energy from the wind and smoke to smite the besiegers below.



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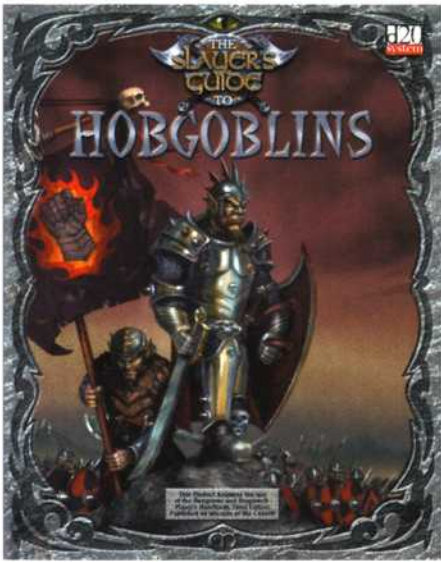
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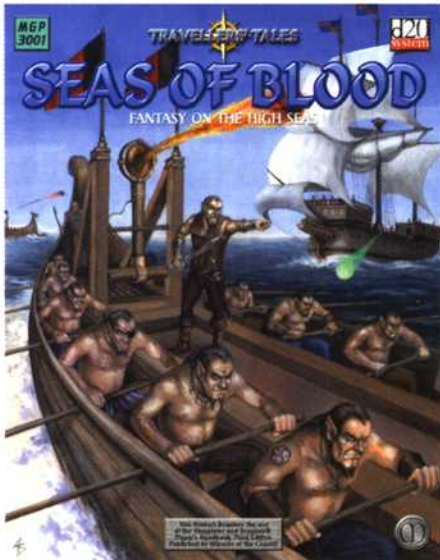
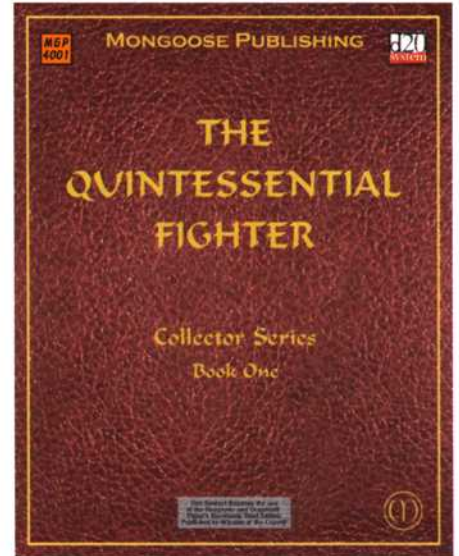
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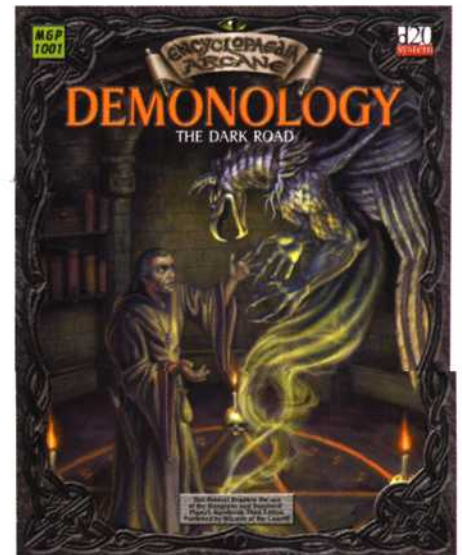
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Mighty ships cresting waves in the midst of a great storm, Hobgoblin pirates pursuing slow merchantmen, Navigator-Wizards sailing their vessels far beyond the limits of the known world, awesome Battleships, loaded with weaponry, ploughing through the sea with their magically charged rams - these things are as much a part of fantasy as dragons, elves and wizards. Seas of Blood - Fantasy on the High Seas, does far more than introduce a set of rules covering nautical adventures in the d20 system.



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ENCYCLOPAEDIA
ARCANE

CHAOS MAGIC

WILD SORcery

The Power of Creation

Chaos magic is not for the faint hearted - those unwilling or unable to maintain the daring or force of will necessary to harness great, unwieldy energies will find themselves destroyed by the very power they sought. The true unfortunates will end their days locked into forms never meant for mortal eyes, let alone mortal flesh. Many are the failed practitioners of this art, and their wildly deformed bodies and warped minds serve as living testament to the dangers inherent in tampering with the basic forces of the universe. Yet there is no shortage of those willing to throw themselves into the teeth of the storm, hoping against hope they will be the one legends speak of, the master of wild forces, a true Chaos Mage.

This volume of the Encyclopaedia Arcane series gives players and Games Masters alike the information they need to begin using chaos magic within their campaign. You will find chapters devoted to those who dare to tap into this primal energy, the methods used to channel primal chaos and information about the marvels and horrors of the Paths of Chaos. New feats, magic items and character types are also introduced to aid and hinder the neophyte chaos mage and his static magic counterparts.

FOR GAMES MASTERS AND PLAYERS ALIKE

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ISBN 1-903980-10-0



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