

RITUAL AND RITE MAGIC

Rituals are the most powerful forms of magic in the game system. Arcane Rituals tap directly into the tides of mana that flow about the world. Divine Rituals beseech the Gods for powerful effects. Divine Rites make the will of the Gods manifest. Rituals are used to empower skills, enchant locations or individuals, perform divinations, summon unearthly beings, and many other magical effects. Rites are used by Ascended, to further enforce the will of their God.

ARCANE AND DIVINE RITUALS

Arcane and Divine Rituals ("Rituals") require playing the Game of Fate, where the magical or divine energies are focused through a ritual deck made up of tarot cards. While any ritualist with the appropriate skill can attempt these powerful magics, it is a potentially dangerous undertaking. Many novice ritualists have been injured or even died attempting to cast a ritual over their head.

REQUIREMENTS

Before casting a Ritual, a character must meet the following requirements:

1. The character must possess The Game of Fate skill.
 1. If casting a Divine Ritual, the character must be initiated to the god that the Ritual beseeches.
2. The character must have access to the ritual they want to cast. This will take the form of either a tome or scroll of the ritual (see **The Ritual Sheet** below).
3. A ritual deck, which is a modified Tarot deck. The ritual deck contains Ace through Ten of each of the four suits, and ten major arcana. The major arcana included in the ritual deck are The Lovers (VI), The Chariot (VII), Strength (VIII), Justice (XI), Death (XIII), The Devil (XV), The Tower (XVI), The Moon (XVIII), The Sun (XIX), and Judgment (XX).
4. A board or piece of cloth on which to place the cards when casting the ritual (see **The Ritual Board** below).
5. The character must have an available preparation slot (see **Preparation Slots** below).
 1. If the character does not have an available preparation slot, they may choose to expend one Essence to cast it once. When done this way, a Critical Success cannot be reached.
6. The character must have the proper amount and type of korba. The required korba varies with each ritual, and is specified on the ritual scroll. The instant the ritual is begun all korba is consumed. The korba is used up whether the ritual succeeds, fails, or is interrupted.
7. An arbiter (any staff member) must be present during the ritual casting. This will usually be an In-Game NPC, so please note arbitration is an Out of Game action and the personality or bias of the NPC will not impact the success or failure of the ritual, only the Game of Fate.

PREPARATION SLOTS

A ritual that has filled a preparation slot may be cast as many times as you like, as long as the criteria (such as components) for the ritual are met each time. While a Ritualist may have as many rituals in their possession as they please, they may only have up to five total (depending on skill purchases) that can be "prepared" per game. When a Ritualist performs the Game of Fate, the target ritual fills a preparation slot. Once a preparation slot has been filled, it may not change during the event. Preparation slots reset between games.

- For example, you have the rituals: Barkskin, Elemental Resistance, Fury of the Wind, and Lesser Arcane Might. You have the base three preparation slots. Friday, you cast Barkskin. You can now cast this off your prepared list for the weekend. Saturday, you cast Elemental Resistance, followed

by Fury of the Wind. All available slots are now filled. You may spend the event casting these three rituals.

Ritualists are encouraged to develop their own way to mark prepared rituals, such as a book that only actively prepared rituals are stored in.

The player may choose to use an Essence to perform The Game of Fate on a ritual they do not have prepared. This does not become a prepared ritual, and any additional casting of that ritual requires additional Essence. A ritual done this way cannot reach Critical Success.

- For example, you have already filled your three preparation slots. However, on Sunday, you want to cast Destroy Grandmaster Barrier. You have one Essence left. You may cast the ritual, and expend the Essence. Even if you have the components to cast it again, you may not, as you are out of Essence.

PERFORMING THE RITUAL

In order to cast the ritual, the character must play the Game of Fate (see **The Game of Fate** below).

During the casting of a Ritual, the ritualist cannot travel more than 10 paces from the center of the ritual while they are drawing their cards. The ritualist must concentrate on the ritual for the duration of casting and cannot engage in anything more strenuous than brief conversation (including the use of any skills, drinking a potion, or defending one's self from harm).

Each ritualist is encouraged to develop their own style when role playing the ritual casting as long as the conditions of the ritual are not compromised.

If a ritualist is disturbed while casting a ritual, the ritual may be interrupted. A quick exchange of words may not be enough to interrupt a ritual, but engaging in combat certainly is. It is the ultimate decision of the arbiter if the ritual has been interrupted. Once the ritual is interrupted, the arbiter will begin timing the interruption. At the end of each minute of interruption the arbiter may alter the course of the ritual. This may include removing a card from play, or discarding a card off the top of the deck. If the ritualist dies during the casting, goes further than 10 paces from their ritual board, or the ritualist's draw pile is depleted (has no more cards to be drawn) the ritual ends, and success or failure is determined by the cards currently in play.

Once a ritual is successfully completed, its effect will manifest. The effect will remain until the duration has ended, or until removed by another ritual effect (such as Magical Dissipation). Some rituals may be cast on people. Ritual effects upon a person will generally end if they lose a Gift, regardless of the intended duration.

THE RITUAL BOARD

A ritual board is an in-game item designed for playing the Game of Fate. It typically has appropriately sized and labeled spaces to place cards upon, including:

- A space for the Draw Pile – this space will hold the stack of cards from which the ritualist can draw to cast the ritual.
- Up to three columns for the Pillars of Fate –these should be sized to hold up to 5 cards stacked on top of each other and spread to be identifiable. One will be an Arcana, and the others up to a maximum of 4

- If there are at least 2 cards of the same suit in a pillar, it qualifies as a Half Pillar.
- If there are 4 cards of the same suit in the pillar, it qualifies as a Full Pillar.
- An area for the Discard Pile – this area should allow some space for spreading out the discarded cards, since the ritualist may wish to review them frequently.
- A space for the Remaining Cards Pile – this space will hold the stack of remaining cards, which are generally not accessible to the ritualist after the ritual's preparation.

A ritual board can be made from any material, and may be as simplistic or elaborate as the caster wishes. A ritual board is only a prop requirement, and does not need an item tag. A ritual board can be changed as you improve your skill, for instance adding Pillars.

THE RITUAL SHEET

The Ritual Sheet contains all of the relevant information that is needed for a character to perform a ritual.

Tier: This ranking provides a guideline to the difficulty of the ritual. A ritualist may attempt to cast any ritual, but will find higher tiers much more challenging to successfully complete. Common ranks are Novice, Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, and Grandmaster, but higher tiers have been encountered.

Components: The amount of korba or other items needed to begin the ritual. Unless specified otherwise, these will be consumed when the ritual is started.

Duration: The duration of the completed ritual (typically Instant, Permanent, One Cycle, One Day, One Year). Regardless of Duration, unless otherwise specified in the ritual, the ritual effect is removed when the target loses a Gift.

Ritual Effect: The intended effects of the ritual. This includes flavor text that explains how the ritual works in game, as well as describes the game mechanics of the ritual effects.

Criteria: This lists the requirements for a ritual's success, identifying the number and suits of cards that must be in play. Note that to be considered in play, a card must be played in one of the Pillars of Fate, it cannot be in the Discard Pile.

Hazard Mitigation: This is a particular condition that must be met to avoid a mishap at the ritual's completion, usually specifying a number of Half or Full Pillars that must be in play. Not meeting the hazard mitigation but succeeding will result in a flawed success, while failing will result in a critical failure (with often unpleasant results).

Critical Success: This is a particular condition that can be met to gain additional power or effect from the ritual, described here. Usually this identifies specific cards that must be in play, i.e. in one of the Pillars, and potentially cards that may not be in play.

Flawed Success: Description of the modified effect of a successful ritual in case the Hazard Mitigation was not met.

Failure: Some rituals will have a risk associated with casting them even beyond the cost of components. If failing the ritual will result in any special effects, they will be listed here.

Critical Failure: The effects of a critical failure (when neither Criteria nor Hazard Mitigation are met) will be listed here.

As an example, see the Tier One ritual below:

Name: Barkskin

Tier: One

Components: 1 earth korba, 1 light korba

Duration: One Hour

Effect: This ritual grants the target one point of Armor that does not count against their wearable maximum. This armor is in effect even if the target is wearing no physical armor, and can be repaired during a rest like any other armor.

Criteria: 2 Swords or 2 Pentacles

Hazard Mitigation: 1 Half Pillar

Critical Success: The ritual will last for 4 Hours.

Have any of the following cards in play: The Lovers, Ace of Swords, Ace of Pentacles

Flawed Success: The target cannot run while this ritual is active.

Critical Failure: The target is immediately hit with an Ambient Destroy Armor by Arcane effect.

THE GAME OF FATE

In order to cast a ritual, you must first prepare your ritual board and card deck. Then you must play the Game of Fate by laying out the ritual spread, drawing cards one at a time and playing or discarding them. You may end the Game instead of drawing another card. You must end it when you run out of cards to draw. After ending the Game the cards in play are examined to determine the ritual's success or failure.

PREPARATION:

- Begin by laying out your ritual board, and placing the components of the ritual and the ritual sheet in plain view.
- Mark the Pillars of Fate you have available, based on your Ritual Pillars skill level. The other Pillars on the ritual board are not available to place cards into play.
- Shuffle your complete 50-card deck. The arbiter may also ask to shuffle the deck.
- You start the ritual by taking as many cards as appropriate to your Draw Cards skill level from the shuffled deck, not looking at them, and placing them face down into the Draw Pile. Also at this time, the components are consumed.
- If you have any Arcana Start skill, draw cards, one at a time, and place them face up into the Discard Pile. If and when you draw any Arcana, you must place the Arcana face down on top of the Draw Pile. You stop drawing cards when the number of Arcana found has reached your Arcana Start skill level.
- Place the rest of the cards face down on the space for the Remaining Cards Pile, they will not be used further in this ritual.
- The act of shuffling and drawing your deck may not be manipulated via any out of game skill the ritualist may possess. Stacking the deck, false shuffling, or palming cards will be treated as Cheating.

PLAY THE GAME OF FATE:

- Draw cards one at a time from the Draw Pile.
- If you have the Multiple Card Draw skill, you may choose to draw more than one card at the same time, up to your skill level. All drawn cards must be played, but you have the choice in which order to play them.
- Card play depends on whether it is an Arcana or Suit card, as follows:
- If the drawn card is an Arcana, it must be played in one of the following ways:
 - **Place the Arcana** down in an empty available Pillar of Fate slot. This starts a new Pillar.
 - **Exchange the Arcana** with any Suit card from the Discard Pile. The Suit card must immediately be played to a Pillar with only an Arcana in it, or with cards of the same Suit in it. If the Suit card cannot be played, you cannot exchange for it.
 - **Remove one Pillar** of cards to the Discard Pile, including its starting Arcana and any Suit cards, and place the new Arcana in the now empty slot, starting the Pillar anew.
- If the drawn card is a **Suit card**, it must be played in one of the following ways:
 - **Add the Suit card** to a started Pillar, either with only an Arcana, or with cards of the same Suit. If there are at least 2 cards of the same Suit in the Pillar, it is considered a Half Pillar. If there are 4 cards of the same Suit in the Pillar, it is a Full Pillar. No more than 4 Suit cards may be placed in one Pillar.
 - **Discard the Suit card** to the Discard Pile.
- You may choose to end the ritual at any time after playing any drawn cards. If the Draw Pile is empty, the ritual ends after play of the last card. The arbiter of the ritual will then determine if the ritual has succeeded or failed, and the effects will occur.

RESULTS:

Critical Success:

If you have met the ritual's Criteria, and have met the Hazard Mitigation, and have met the Critical Success, the ritual is a critical success, with effects as described in the ritual sheet.

Success:

If you have met the ritual's Criteria, and have met the Hazard Mitigation, the ritual is successful, and its effect is applied.

Flawed Success:

If you have met the ritual's Criteria, but have not met the Hazard Mitigation, the ritual is a flawed success, with effects as described in the ritual sheet.

Failure:

If you have not met the ritual's Criteria, but have met the Hazard Mitigation, the ritual is a simple failure, with no effect unless specified otherwise on the ritual sheet.

Critical Failure:

If you have not met the ritual's Criteria, and have also not met the Hazard Mitigation, the ritual is a critical failure, with effects as described in the ritual sheet.

COOPERATIVE RITUAL CASTING

Ritualists may cooperate to increase their chances of success and reduce the chances of a flaw. Additionally, when cooperating on a ritual, only ONE ritualist needs to have the target ritual **prepared** or have an open **preparation slot**.

In order to cooperate:

1. All participating ritualists must have the Cooperative Casting skill at the appropriate level.

2. At least one participant must have the target ritual prepared, or have an open preparation slot.
 1. Essence **cannot** be expended to bypass the need for a preparation slot when cooperative casting.
3. Each participating ritualist prepares their own ritual board and card piles as normal.
4. Starting with the ritualist with the most number of cards in their Draw pile after setup, the participating ritualists alternate drawing (and playing) cards. In case of a tie, the draw order can be chosen by the ritualists. Once the order is chosen, it remains the same throughout that ritual.
5. If one ritualist runs out of cards, but others still have cards in their Draw pile, the ritual may continue, skipping that ritualist.
6. Once all ritualists have drawn all their cards, or have jointly decided to stop the ritual, the ritual's results are determined as follows:
 1. The Criteria for success are increased by 1 for the first type of card required. *For example, a requirement of 2 Pentacles and 2 Swords would change to 3 Pentacles and 2 Swords.*
 2. The Hazard Mitigation requirement is increased by 1 Half Pillar if only Half Pillars are required, or by 1 Full Pillar if any Full Pillars are required. *For example, a requirement of 1 Half Pillar and 1 Full Pillar would change to 1 Half Pillar and 2 Full Pillars.*
 3. The Critical Success requirement is increased to having two cards in play of the listed choices. Identical cards do count. *For example, if the ritual lists the Tower in its critical success criteria, and two ritualists have the Tower in play, it counts as the 2 cards towards the Critical Success requirement.*
 4. The cards required for success criteria, hazard mitigation, or critical success are considered in total across all ritual boards. Thus, one ritualist may have some of the cards in play, while others have the rest in play.

DIVINE RITES

Divine Rites can be performed by Ascended only, and must meet certain conditions. These may include the Rite taking place on the High Holy Day of the deity, or a certain number of initiates may need to be present. If the conditions of the rite are met, then the deity responds by causing the intended effect.

Divine Rites do not require the use of Karma, and as long as the criteria for the rite are met, do not depend on the power level of the caster. Divine Rites do not require the Game of Fate.

There are five known Divine Rites within the world of Creation, as these five Rites not only draw power from the Gods but they also enforce the will of the God. The Divine Rites are: **Initiation, Anointing, Ascension, Consecration, and Divestment**. Beyond these, the celebration of a High Holy Day may include a Divine Rite which may have mechanical effects.

Ascended have the ability to perform these innately, gaining the insight on how to perform them at Ascension.

Before casting a Divine Rite, a character must meet the following requirements:

1. The character must be an Ascended of a God.
 1. The player will be given the instructions on how to cast these Rites once they have Ascended In-Game.
2. The caster must have the proper amount of korba. The amount of korba required varies with each Rite, but is specified on the Rite instructions. The instant the Rite is begun all korba is consumed. The korba is used up if the Rite succeeds, fails, or is interrupted.
3. An arbiter (any staff member) must be informed before a Rite is cast. Rites cast without informing staff will be considered null. This will usually be an In-Game NPC, so please note arbitration is an Out of Game action and the personality or bias of the NPC will not impact the success or failure of the Rite.