

OCCULTIST

He walked over to me, and gently stroked my face. His hands smelled strange. Back then I didn't know the scent of blood, and mixed with that faint, saline smell of brackish water. He whispered to me then, when he thought I was asleep, promised to protect me, to make sure that "it wouldn't get me too." There was a strangled sound to his words; I think he might have been crying.

—MAG 9: "A Father's Love"

You've always been fascinated by exactly the things you knew you should leave alone. The mysterious and inexplicable call to you with a dark, low whisper. Your troubled dreams show you things that most people simply could not handle. You're on a dangerous path that will require you to walk among things no human should even be aware of, let alone understand.


The occult in the world you know is not silly fun with a Ouija board, nor something you'd expect from Harry Potter or Gandalf. It's dark and dangerous. It tears at your mind when you delve too deep.

Individual Role: Occultists are intelligent, well-educated people. They can be mysterious and brooding, their minds on dark topics or shadowed with too much sinister knowledge. In the world of The Magnus Archives, the occult is always a subject of darkness, fear, and the forbidden—it's never pleasant or hopeful.

Group Role: The Occultist is along because they likely know more than the others about what the group is getting involved in. They're probably not a fighter or a people person, but more like an investigator. However, the clues and evidence they find is often of a very different nature.

Societal Role: Occultists likely have spent their lives in a library or at home on the internet, perhaps gathering with others with similar interests occasionally. More extroverted Occultists might work as stage (or street) magicians, or as scam artists and thieves. A poor few might even have ended up as fiction writers or game designers.

Advanced Occultists: Higher-tier Occultists use their knowledge of the supernatural to greater and greater benefit, and become quite resilient against occult attacks.

Supernatural Occultists: Occultists might be the characters most likely to develop paranormal abilities. Such abilities are marked with . They can even start the game with one or more such powers, unlike other characters. They also have the widest variety of supernatural abilities to choose from.

Occultists in The Magnus Archives might not have any "real" powers at all, but might just be steeped in the lore and background of the supernatural.

OCCULTIST STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	7
Speed	9
Intellect	12

The player has 6 additional points to assign to the stat Pools as they wish.

FIRST-TIER OCCULTIST

First-tier Occultists have the following abilities:

Effort: Your Effort is 1.

Fit: You have a Speed Edge of 0, a Might Edge of 0, and an Intellect Edge of 1.

Knowledge Skills: You are trained in occultism and one other knowledge skill in which you are not already trained, such as astronomy, biology, geography, history, mathematics, philosophy, physics, psychology, or researching. Enabler.



Cypher Use: You can have three cyphers at a time.





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Weapons: You're practiced with light and medium **weapons** and suffer no penalty when using them. You have an inability when using heavy weapons. Enabler.


Occult Abilities: Your knowledge of the occult is matched only by your knowledge of people (and in particular, fooling them). Choose two of the abilities listed below. You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise.

 **Already Tainted:** You begin the game with access to abilities considered supernatural. Such abilities are marked with . Check with the GM to make certain that this is appropriate for the campaign. Enabler.

 **Artefact Affinity:** Any tasks in which you identify or use an artefact are eased. Enabler.


 **Esoteric Skills:** Your background has led you down many strange rabbit holes. Choose two of the following skills in which


you are not already trained: biology, history, identifying, philosophy, physics, publishing, religion, or researching. You become trained in these two skills. Enabler.


 **Intuition (2 Intellect points):** You get a weird feeling when something is not quite right. You don't choose when this ability works—the GM does, telling you to spend the Intellect points and giving you a clue as to what feels wrong. The GM might tell you that something feels bad about opening the door at the end of the hallway, that the man in the hat reminds you of a terrible dream you had, or that the child you're looking for is no longer nearby.


The GM does not have to trigger this ability, and in fact it should be a surprising but occasional insight rather than an always-available ability you can rely on.


If you don't have the points to spend to activate this ability, it doesn't work. Enabler.



 **Sensitive (1 Intellect point):** For the next ten minutes, your tasks to perceive abnormal presences or influences are eased (including those that are usually imperceptible to regular people or animals). Action to initiate.

 **Slightly Sinister Skills:** You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two of the following: deception, disguise, intimidation, pickpocketing, or stealth. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose two different skills. Enabler.

 **Supernatural Comprehension (2 Intellect points):** You identify the parameters of an unnatural effect within an immediate distance, like a curse, the presence of something inhuman, or a spell. This typically requires at least a minute of study and reflection. Action to initiate.


 **Understanding (1 Intellect point):** You observe or study a creature or object. Your next interaction with that creature or object gains one asset. Action.


 **Ventriloquism (1 Intellect point):** For one round, you make it seem as though your voice is coming from somewhere of your choosing within an immediate distance. Action.


  **Mesmerism (1 Intellect point and 1 Stress):** You transfix a person within an immediate distance. The target loses their next action and is unaware of anything that happens during the round unless they are attacked or otherwise shaken out of it. In the following round, they are disoriented and all their actions are hindered. Action.


SECOND-TIER OCCULTIST


Choose two of the occult abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.


 **Cold Reading (2 Intellect points):** When you spend at least five minutes talking to a person, you can ask the GM one question about that person and get an answer. Alternatively, you can forgo the question and simply ease all tasks involving interaction with the person for 24 hours. You cannot use this more than one time per person per 24 hours. Action to initiate; five minutes to complete.

 **Hoax (2 Intellect points):** With at least ten minutes of preparation, you can use common materials to perpetrate a brief but surprisingly believable fake event. The event lasts only about one round and should be very simple and mostly visual. A frightening shadow lurks in the doorway, a figure runs off into the night, you chop off your finger with a knife, and so on. Typically, if the person you're trying to fool is far away (but can still see your hoax), the task is eased. Action to initiate.



 **Practiced With Medium Weapons:** You can use light and medium weapons without penalty. If you wield a heavy weapon, attacks with it are hindered. Enabler.

 **Seen Some . . . Stuff:** You reduce the Stress you suffer from mental shock or despair by 1. You still suffer Stress from physical injury normally. Enabler.



 **Skill With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are not already trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are trained in defense tasks of that type. Enabler.

 **Spout Nonsense (2+ Intellect points):**

You can fast-talk your way through any conversation involving the occult or the paranormal, using confusing terms and strange synchronistic logic loops that confound even others with knowledge of the subject. The person that you are speaking to stands bewildered and befuddled, unable to take an action for one round. For each additional Intellect point you spend, you can attempt to affect another person with the same gibberish, but they must all be within an immediate distance of you. Action.

  **Premonition (2 Intellect points):**

You learn one random fact about a creature, object, or location that is pertinent to a topic you designate. Alternatively, you can choose to learn a creature's level; however, if you do so, you cannot learn anything else about it later with this ability. Action.

  **Send Thoughts (2+ Intellect points and 2 Stress):**


You mentally transmit a message to someone you know well. The message can be up to ten words or it can be an image of your devising. The recipient must be within 1 mile (1.6 km), but for every additional point of Intellect you spend, this distance is increased by another mile. Action.

THIRD-TIER OCCULTIST

Third-tier Occultists have the following abilities:


Adroit Cypher Use: You can have four cyphers at a time.


Occult Abilities: Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.



 **Cooperative Sorcery (4 Intellect points):**

You know a little about magic. If someone stands next to you and uses a supernatural power, you can boost that power by increasing the range by one category, doubling the


number of targets, or easing the task for it to take effect. In addition to the Intellect point cost for activating this ability, if the ability you're helping with causes the user Stress, you suffer the same Stress as them. Action.



 **Embracing the Unknown:** Interaction tasks with supernatural beings are eased. Enabler.

 **Intense Practitioner:** If you apply at least one level of Effort to a task involving the supernatural, you get a free level of Effort on that task. Enabler.


  **Peering Beyond the Veil (3 Intellect points and 3 Stress):**

You become aware of supernatural activity that you couldn't otherwise perceive. You can see invisible creatures or objects and hear inaudible sounds within a short distance for one hour, and you can get a sense of any supernatural activities that have occurred within that area in the last 24 hours. Action.

 **Resistance to the Uncanny:** The ill effects of using artefacts are mitigated somewhat. You gain 1 less point of Stress than normal when using an artefact. Enabler.


  **Shatter (2+ Intellect points and 3 Stress):**


You mystically cause the detonation of an object you choose within long range. The object must be a small, mundane item composed of homogeneous matter (such as a coffee cup, a doorknob, a rock, and so on). The object explodes in an immediate radius, dealing 1 point of damage to all creatures and objects in the area. If you apply Effort to increase the damage, you deal 2 additional points of damage per level of Effort (instead of 3 points); targets in the area take 1 point of damage even if you fail the attack roll. Action.


 **Supernatural Resistance:** Your defense tasks against supernatural effects are eased. Enabler.


FOURTH-TIER OCCULTIST



Choose two of the occult abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.



 **Combating the Uncanny:** All your attacks against supernatural beings are eased. Enabler.

 **Heightened Skills:** You are trained in two tasks of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you instead become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in. Enabler.

 **Shrug It Off:** You ignore the negative effects of your first Stress level. Enabler.

 **Think Your Way Out:** You can use points from your Intellect Pool rather than your Might Pool or Speed Pool on any noncombat action. Enabler.

  **Cypher Manifestation (4 Might points and 3 Stress):** You transform one cypher that you currently have into a small physical object a person could hold in their hand. You can then give that object to another person for them to use. It counts against their cypher limit. Action.


  **Edit Memories (4 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** You reach into the mind of a person within immediate range and edit the last five minutes of their memory. For example, you could make someone on guard forget they ever saw you pass by, misremember a code they just learned, or believe a different person pushed them down than who actually did. Action.


FIFTH-TIER OCCULTIST


Fifth-tier Occultists have the following abilities:



Master Cypher Use: You can have five cyphers at a time.



Occult Abilities: Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **See the Truth:** You see through magical disguises, veils, illusions, and similar obfuscations, with no roll needed. Beware, though: sometimes the truth might be dangerous, with revelations leading to Stress. Enabler.

 **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of attack. Enabler.



 **Stern Stuff:** You no longer suffer Stress from seeing something supernatural. All other stressful events still affect you, including using the supernatural. Enabler.

  **Stressed Mind (4 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** With a touch and a whisper, you give a creature such mind-spinning dread that they suffer 6 points of Stress (6 points of damage for an NPC). Action.

  **Vanish From Sight (5 Intellect points and 4 Stress):** You literally disappear, turning invisible for up to one minute. During this time, you can only move or gently manipulate objects (like open doors). If you do anything else, such as talk or attack, you reveal yourself as you do so. If this occurs, you can regain the remaining invisibility effect by taking an action to hide your position. Action to initiate.



SIXTH-TIER OCCULTIST



Choose two of the occult abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.



  **Craft Artefact:** This ability allows for the creation of a single artefact. You can take this ability more than once to make multiple artefacts. The process is long, difficult, and confounding. You and the GM should work together to determine the particulars because every artefact is different. However, the creation process should involve:



- Plans, recipes, or instructions from a prior Avatar or occultist (or, alternatively, a dream or vision from one or more Entities) that are extremely difficult to obtain.
- Cost in time in terms of months or even years, sometimes working steadily, sometimes with breaks for other activities.
- Cost in money similar to an exorbitant item.
- Cost in mental and/or physical well-being. Very likely 3 points of Stress gained during each day of the process, and a permanent loss of 3 points from your stat Pools.



The finished artefact should create or produce a single effect equal to a sixth-tier ability from any type or focus, and the Stress cost of using it should be 3.

  **Defending Others:** Allies within an immediate distance ease their defenses against supernatural effects. Enabler.

  **Mastery With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are specialized in defense tasks of that type. You can select this ability up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.

  **Meditative Restoration (8 Intellect points):** You rid yourself of 3 points of Stress each minute you do nothing else. Action to initiate.

  **Ghost (6 Intellect points and 5 Stress):** For the next ten minutes, you gain an asset to sneaking tasks. During this time, you can move through solid barriers at a rate of 1 foot (30 cm) per round, and you can perceive while phased within a barrier or object, which allows you to peek through walls. Action to initiate.

  **Psychokinetic Attack (6 Might points and 5 Stress):** You can use this attack in one of two ways. The first is to pick up a heavy object and hurl it at someone within short range. This attack is an Intellect action, and if successful, it deals 6 points of damage to the target and to the hurled object (which could be another foe, although that would require two rolls—one roll to grab the first foe and another roll to hit the second foe with the first). The second way to use this attack is to unleash a shattering burst of power that works only against an inanimate object no larger than half your size. Make an Intellect roll to instantly destroy the object; the task is eased by three steps compared to **breaking it** with brute strength. Action.

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OCCULTIST EXAMPLE

Teri wants to create an Occultist, hoping her extra knowledge about the supernatural will make a difference. She decides for a well-rounded character, so she puts 2 of her 6 additional points into each stat Pool, giving her a Might Pool of 9, a Speed Pool of 11, and an Intellect Pool of 14. Her Occultist is smart and quick. She has an Intellect Edge of 1, a Might Edge of 0, and a Speed Edge of 0. As a first-tier character, her Effort is 1.

She is automatically trained in **occultism** as one of her Knowledge Skills. Given a choice for the second, she selects **astronomy**.

Teri also picks two type abilities. The first is **Intuition**, which could cue her when something strange is happening. The second is **Supernatural Comprehension**, allowing her character to identify aspects of an unnatural effect like a curse, the presence of something inhuman, or a spell.

Her character can have three cyphers. The GM gives her **deathly silent and still**, useful when she needs to hide; **desperate effort**,

which grants extra Effort; and **stare into The Vast**, which returns spent points to her Intellect Pool.

For her **descriptor**, Teri chooses **Pretentious**, which adds 2 points to her Intellect Pool, bringing it to 16. She also gains training in Intellect defense rolls. She begins developing a backstory about how her character used to go around debunking paranormal claims made by scammers and psychics—until one day, she couldn't.

For her **focus**, she chooses **Leads**. This gives her **Natural Charisma**, which grants training in all social interactions. At first tier, Teri also gains **Good Advice**, which means when she helps another character, the other character has an additional asset to their task.

For her **character arc**, Teri chooses **Aid a Friend**. She decides that when her character was young, she had a mentor who introduced her to the paranormal. That mentor has since gone missing. She'd like to find and help them if she can, or at least gain closure if the worst has happened.

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