



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pact magic, also referred to as binding, is a method of sealing agreements with ghost-like spirits. A pact mage (or binder) summons a spirit by scribing a geometric sign and performing a ceremony unique to that spirit. The mage and spirit bargain; in exchange for granting the spirit a measure of life and company, the spirit grants the mage a small, thematic set of supernatural abilities for the day. The harder the spirit is to bind, the more awesome the power it grants. It departs when the day is done. The next day, the binder can seal a pact with the same spirit or a different one. Often times, conflict follows in magic's wake. For every wise binder there is a foolish or monstrous villain who embraces fear, vanity, hate or other motivation.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This book is a supplement to *Secrets of Pact Magic* (abbreviated *SoPM*). You will find sufficient material in this book to use it on its own; however, you will encounter references to *SoPM*, which is a trove of all things related to the sealing of pacts with spirits. Here is a description of what you will find in each chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction—Includes a chapter-by-chapter overview plus advice for game masters and players.

Chapter 2: Classes—Introduces the exorcist, muse, ravaged soul and templar. All four classes are useful as villains and as player characters.

Typically, an exorcist is a pact mage's worst nightmare; he can expel spirits, thereby reducing a powerful binder hero to an empty shell in mere moments. A small group of exorcists might be sent to capture or slay a party of wayward pactmakers. Alternatively, a player might seek an exorcist in order to expel a spirit she is tired of using. A friendly exorcist makes a useful aid to an adventuring party. He brings divine spells and can help his partymates quickly swap spirits as circumstances change.

A ravaged soul embraces one anima spirit above all other spirits. Without her spirit, she is weak, perhaps blind or crippled. With her spirit, she is power incarnate. In addition to her spirit's granted abilities, she influences others, shrugs off damage with ease, and rejuvenates by defeating foes. A ravaged soul makes a unkillable villain or a resilient ally.

The muse embraces Primal Chaos. She rides calamity, tempts heroes to fated quests, and seeks to shatter reality. She blends arcane spellcasting and pact magic throughout the day with subtle and wondrous ease. For her, all boundaries of magic are illusory. Her hallmark spells and abilities allow her to deflect and mimic magic, grant creatures supernatural abilities through dreams, and torment through nightmares.

A templar is a stealthy divine agent. He can exorcise spirits, sneak, and wield a sword with modest ease. Templars also serve a singular role: uphold Divine Law. This is the system of the multiverse that defines the everlasting relations between mortals, gods, and the afterlife. Pactmakers disrupt this order. Thus, templars hound binders. Sometimes, however, templars and binders work together to repulse a shared foe.

Chapter 3: Spirits—Overviews rules for sealing pacts and describes twenty-seven spirits from Coralene, the Sovereign of Silver, to The Malebolge Moors, Thirteen Traitors of Hell. Each description includes the spirit's legend, summoning rules, granted abilities, side-effects, tactical options, an inspired companion (if any), and role-play text. A game master may wish to grant these spirits to binder characters as rewards.

Chapter 4: Feats, Flaws, and Anima—Includes options to customize characters and three familiar-like companions (the spirit brute, spirit steed, and spirit wraith). You will also find the medium NPC class, the talisman binder prestige class, and rules for using paper talismen. Easy-to-add tactical templates allow you to spice-up characters without the hassle of fiddle bits. Finally, two-dozen anima spirits bring diversity to a binder's daily options.

Chapter 5: Spells—Details over fifty new spells. Binders will find spells for creating new spirits and managing tomes. Clerics, exorcists, muses and templars gain access to spells that trap, trick, and torment binders.

Chapter 6: Agents of Purity—Introduces purifiers, a religious sect that embraces self-mutilation and torture as necessary to cleanse one's soul and ascend to life as a serene supernatural being. Purifiers lay traps, hunt, and subdue pactmakers. Captured binders are stolen away to extradimensional pockets called enclaves where they weigh a terrible choice: repent and join the purifiers, or resist and become hounds, twisted slaves that further the hunt against more binders.

Chapter 7: Nightfang Cults—Introduces the lurking inhabitants of the Nightfang Weald, a shadowy forest realm of toppled palaces and petrified glades where the gods stow unrepentent fey for eternal punishment. The Weald is the sum of all blighted, burned, and cut forests. Its twisted creatures were once haughty nymphs, trickster satyrs, and pactmage pixies. The Mother of Dreams calls binder adventurers into the Weald in search of pact lore. They find fates worse than death.

Chapter 8: Imperious Atlans—Explores history's most notorious pactmaking force, the Atlan Empire. In their time, all atlans bound spirits from the infernal to the sublime. They crafted wondrous devices such as elemental monoliths and cast terrible spells that perverted their enemies into subservient idiot savants. Ultimately, the gods expunged the atlans from history. Yet remnants linger. Characters may delve ruins. An atlan might

appear along a party's path, thrown from the stream of time. Adventurers might even find a route between moonrises to visit atlans in their magnificent cities, still untouched.

Chapter 9: Lords of Darkness—At the fringes of the multiverse lies the Outer Darkness, a cold foreboding void hostile to all souls, from mortals to gods. Divine Law does not penetrate here. Yet life persists. Ancient and terrible constructs called cyclopes cruise the void amid swarms of ghostly vivillors and other oddities. Like their creators, the atlans, cyclopes are adept with pact magic. The spirits are close in the Outer Darkness, and a warlord cyclopes can swallow mortal kingdoms to further fuel its occult power. Woe to mortals when a cyclopes wends its way to the Material Plane. Traditional casters find their magic fails against these abominations. Warriors' blades have no effect. Only binder characters can save the day.

Chapter 10: Binder Challenges—Provides puzzle portals, traps, terrain zones and rules for conducting stage plays that a game master can insert anywhere in adventures. Binder characters can learn to create many of these on their own. You will also find maps and descriptions of three adventure sites.

Chapter 11: Magic Items—Includes two dozen new magic items, ten treasure tables, and rules for binder novels.

YOUR CAMPIAGN

Here are suggestions to introduce this book into your campaign.

First, the villains reside in secluded places. Purifiers secret themselves in enclaves. Nightfangs haunt the wilds. Atlans flit through the time stream. A cyclopes might visit the Material Plane but its home lies in the Outer Darkness. Thus, you can introduce these villains without altering your campaign world.

You can use villains at any level of play. You can use the base classes to grow your villains over the course of a campaign. Moreover, each of the four villainous races—atlans, cyclopes, nightfangs, and purifiers—come at various levels. For example, there are statistics for cyclopes at CR 2, CR 7, CR 13, CR 19, and CR 26 to challenge heroes over their whole career.

Not every monster is meant to be killed and not every site is a battle stage. Besides overcoming terrain, traps, and puzzle portals, the most heroic act may be one of restraint, especially when a novice binder bumps into a demi-god. Consider letting your heroes taste fear and anger; the reward will be sweet many levels later when they are ready to match their nemesis.

Feel free to make handouts. Every spirit entry has a game-ready layout. When a player discovers a new spirit, you can copy its spread knowing nothing vital lingers on an adjacent page. The pact seals in Chapter 11 make ideal game props.

Finally, here is a secret: pact magic plays relatively quickly at all levels. Feel free to run 15th or 20th level binders against that 52 Hit Die warlord cyclopes. They will relish it or die.

DIVINE LAW VS. PRIMAL CHAOS

Divine Law and Primal Chaos are not the same as lawful and chaotic. The division is deeper than the traditional alignment system. Divine Law is a system for ordering souls, gods, and the afterlife; and it encompasses all nine alignments. In contrast, Primal Chaos is a melange of elemental forces, vestiges of broken souls, genies that twist destiny, and violent entities that seek to rend existence itself. Because spirits represent power outside of Divine Law, exorcists, templars and other divine agents view binders as misguided and villainous fools who play with a fire that can burn all of creation.