



Heart of the Rose

Playtest Version
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a role playing game by Emily Care Boss
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original version, Iron Game Chef 2007
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Heart of the Rose

final playtest draft

Welcome to Heart of the Rose!

This is a role playing game in its final stage of development. These rules are written to help you run a session of play for people interested in trying out the game and putting it through its paces. Your feedback and input will help polish this game into its final form. Thank you for trying it out!

Please let me know that you played, so I can thank you personally and include your name in the published game as a playtester.

Email me at keirgreeneyes@yahoo.com.

There are some specific questions about the game that I'd love your input on. They can be found at the following google form:

Heart of the Rose Playtest Feedback

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10-DRRvtXrMauI-SHfZJKANgoCeJ7pvOhr74T1-eUD3g/viewform>

Elevator Pitch: *A short-form role playing game of magic and intrigue for 3-5 people. A gmless, rules-lite fantasy game inspired by fairy tales and heroic quests. Plays in one sitting, in four to five hours.*

Description: In Heart of the Rose, you enter a fantasy world where magic is real, and fae, spirits and magical creatures are alive. Within this world are communities where people love, laugh and live their lives. But now, the veil between the mundane and magical worlds has grown thin, and a threat faces one such community. Heroes investigate, seek out allies and try to avoid the corrupting touch of a mysterious adversary. The heroes are normal people who discover sides of themselves they thought lost or had never known.

Heart of the Rose is a collaborative, diceless game where players each have a unique role in running the game. Uses a custom token deck to resolve conflicts. Can be played in approximately 4-5 hours, including set-up and world creation.

Example stories similar to Heart of the Rose: Beauty and the Beast (Traditional), Snow White (Traditional), The Snow Queen (Traditional), The Dark Crystal (Henson Studios film), Winter Rose (by Patricia McKillip), The Blue Sword (by Robin McKinley), Brave (Pixar film), The Black Company (by Glen Cook), Here Comes the Flood by Peter Gabriel (song), The Queen and the Soldier by Suzanne Vega (song).

Getting Started: To get started, one person should read through the rules thoroughly, then gather the others. This person is the Facilitator. Pass out the Setup and Reference Sheets. Summarize or read out loud each of the Setup and Play sections. These will walk you through learning to play and tell you what to do later on. You'll later read the Character Changes Section, and Ending the Game at the appropriate times. The game builds on itself, so relax & enjoy!

OVERVIEW OF THE GAME

The World

Heart of the Rose is about the collision between the mundane world and a magical realm. It is set in a land somewhat like our own world's past, but one where magic is real, and elements of fairy tales are normal parts of life. Wizards, dragons, fairies, giants may walk the Earth—though they are not common and people may not believe they are real. However, magic enters their lives during play, and is needed to bring peace to the people's lives.

The Characters

Each player creates a character that is a unique Power in the world. One is the Shadow, the threat they all face. The others are: the Rose, a young hero; the Thorn, a committed partisan; the Hidden, whose magical nature is unknown at the start; and the Shorn, a powerful teacher who has lost much.

Shadow = Hidden Threat, Corrupting Power

Rose = New Hope, Strong Magic

Thorn = Fomenting Rebellion, Strong Mundane Allies

Hidden = Unknown Nature, Growing in Magical Power

Shorn = Great Knowledge, Shields Others from Corruption

The Story

The characters unravel a mystery about what is causing strife in their lives, discovering their own path to magic and power, as well as doorways to other worlds close to their own. The Powers must work together uncover the reasons for the threat in their world and push back its tide. But each faces a personal threat to become overwhelmed by the Shadow. And if the Rose character falls too deeply into corruption, all is lost.

Playing the Game

Play takes place in turns, each focusing on one of the Power characters. The players help set the scene, each contributing their part, and then those with characters in the scene say what their characters do and say. The player of the Shadow helps the others feel the grip of the Shadow's influence on the world. The others work together with other helpers to make change.

Each role gives the player a distinct role in helping the game be played, called Gifts. The players form a team, each with a complimentary role that keep the game on an even keel and moving at full sail toward adventure.

Rose Gifts: The player of the Rose leads the narrative by leading the group in picking each scene to be played out.

Thorn Gifts: The Thorn chooses the cast for each scene, and moves things along by ending scenes.

Hidden Gifts: The Hidden brings people's attention to the details of the world around the characters.

Shorn Gifts: The Shorn helps the group learn more about the background and history of the world.

Shadow Gifts: The Shadow is given many ways to provide adversity to the group, including being the

sole director of all play that happens within the Shadow character's magical Realm.

Ending the Game

The game comes to a close when either 1) the Shadow runs out of numbered Tokens, 2) the Rose is corrupted by the Shadow, or 3) another Power rises up to take the Shadow's place. The events of play may end in a happy resolution of these difficult times, or may lead to a new reign of fear, in the grip of another terrifying and mysterious Power.

What you need to play:

Heart of the Rose game book.

Power Character Sheets (one for each of the five)

Play Reference Sheets

Deck of Tokens (X III Tokens, X II Tokens, X I Tokens and five blank Tokens – tokens may be cut out from the pages with tokens provided)

A stack of blank index cards or small note/sticky paper

A large sheet of paper (standard letter, A4 or larger if desired) for the Map

Pens or Pencils

Optional: colored pencils or markers for mapping or drawing Characters, Locations and Objects

Number of Players:

Heart of the Rose is best played with five players. Each takes one of the Powers roles: Shadow, Rose, Thorn, Hidden, Shorn.

With four players, do not use the Hidden. Reduce the Shadow's starting Tokens to 5 Blank, one III Token and 13 Random Tokens.

With three, do not use the Hidden and also make the Shorn a starting Ally with a III Token and one Random Token. Reduce the Shadow's starting Tokens to 5 Blank, one III Token and 11 Random Tokens.

SETTING UP TO PLAY

The world that the Powers live in is created by the players together as they make their characters. Follow these steps to make the Powers and the World. They are described briefly below, then in more depth in the following section:

Setup Summary:

1. Create Map. Choose Mundane Features from list on page 5. Draw them on the map.
2. Choose Roles. Read short paragraph from the “Character Overviews and Set Up” sheet and pick which Power to play. See number of players for which Roles are available.
3. Create Powers. Players think about and write down a Name and additional pieces of information about their character. Follow directions on the Character Sheets for their creation. Some items are created by player alone, some together with the others:
 - For the Shadow choose their True Name, their Mask, their Realm, a Mundane Location, their Need and the Bane.
 - For the Rose choose their Art, a Group, a Location, Door and effect of Bane.
 - For the Thorn choose their Archetype, an Ally, a Location and effect of Bane.
 - For the Hidden choose their Archetype, a Group, Element, a Location and effect of Bane.
 - For the Shorn choose their Art, Wound, Magical Item, a Location and effect of Bane.
4. Map. Share the character information and Draw Realm, Groups and Locations on the Map. The Shadow and then the Rose each add a Door between the Shadow's Realm and the mundane world.
5. Relationships. Create relationships between the Powers.
6. Starting Corruption. The Shadow gives an initial Corruption Token to the Thorn, Hidden and Shorn. Assign one to each: a blank Token, a I Token and a II Token.
7. Distribute Tokens to everyone. Each gets the number of Starting Tokens indicated on their Power's character sheet.

SET UP IN DETAIL

1) **Create Map.** Each player chooses one landscape feature or structure to draw on the Map. These are all in the mundane world and are normal in nature. They do not need to be named. This creates some basic aspects of the mundane world that the characters inhabit.

Mountain	Field	Hill	Forest	Meadow	Grotto
Lake	River	Swamp	Ruins	Road	Temple
Butte	Ravine	Cave	Sea	Harbor	Island

2) **Choose Roles.** Read the short descriptions of the Powers on the Reference Sheet. Read short paragraph from character sheets and then distribute the Powers, Shadow first. Each player may choose a role, the Facilitator may cast the players, or they can be passed our randomly. Be sure to discuss the role of the Shadow fully, however. This role can be more complicated than the others and it is important to make sure you find a player who will really enjoy bringing adversity and challenging the others.

3) **Creating the Powers.** Distribute the Power Reference Sheets—there is one for each Power. They use a questionnaire format to help walk the players through creating their character, and give examples to help jog the imagination. When you are asked to create an Ally, Location or Object, use the rules on page 25 - 27 to make a card for that Element of the world.

The Powers are each different from one another. A detailed description of how to create each is found below (Pages 5 - 11).

Shadow

The SHADOW is a looming threat confronting the land, a fearful face of unlight, not the restful peace of night or winter. The Shadow rules over a Realm sacred to it. The Realm may be an otherworldly mirror of the mundane world or a dimension hidden but close. The Shadow begins the game with many resources and an overwhelming advantage over the other characters including being able to corrupt and influence them. But this power diminishes over time, and can reveal a very different nature than was once thought.

The person who plays the Shadow is responsible for putting the other players' characters into dangerous situations and endanger what they care about. Their job is to create the dramatic threat that the others will organize against. Also, their job is to act and spread their influence into the world, knowing that they will become weaker as time goes on. When they run out of Tokens, the game ends. Playing the Shadow is not about winning, it is about

This player will also create the Shadow's Realm. The Realm is a secret and magical region, a stronghold of power under the control of the Shadow. It is near and yet unreachable by most other people in this world.

Creating the Shadow

Create alone:

1) Choose the Shadow's TRUE NAME. This is Secret from the Powers and other characters (but known to the other players). It is a descriptive name that describes the source of their power and may refer to their Realm. Examples: The Queen of Night, the Quiet Soul, Ghost of the Broken Promise, Ice King, the Ancient Terror, the Red Sovereign, Demon of Pool Hall, Specter of Forgetting.

2) Choose their MASK. This is a metaphorical mask or identity they assume, not an object. This is identity by which the Shadow is known in the mundane world. They wield power or influence in the mundane world, though there are many avenues to do so. Perhaps they are a mighty Queen, but they could also be a humble Fortune Teller. They may be a wealthy and thought-to-be upright citizen of the capital of the Kingdom, or the head of a Thief's Guild. Or perhaps a village elder.

3) Choose the Shadow's REALM. The Realm is sacred to the Shadow. It lies as a mirror to the mundane world. The Realm is a secret and magical region, a stronghold of power under the control of the Shadow. It is near and yet unreachable by most other people in this world. At the start, only the Rose and the Shadow may cross over from the mundane world to the Realm, but others may do so--or are forced to--later as the walls between worlds break down. This will be located on the map later. Example Realms: The Winter Forest, The Ocean Deeps, The Under City, Behind the Walls, The Sky, Dreams, The Twilight Desert, The Caverns of the Earth, the Deeper Labyrinth.

4) Create a PLACE that borders the Magical Realm that the Shadow inhabits in the Mundane World. This is controlled by the Shadow. It is associated with their Mask identity and may express the influence and power the Shadow has over the mundane world.

Example Places: Castle of the Dolphins, the Great Oasis, Gypsy Wagon, the Temple, the High Mansion, the Oak of the Moot, the Granary, the Gates of the Market.

5) Create a DOOR, this is how the Shadow travels from their mundane abode into the Realm. It will be hidden to the mortal glance, or it may be visible but no one would normally ever think to use it as a portal to another world. This Door is under the sole control of the Shadow at the start of play. Example Doors: The Hole in the Stone, Smoke Trails, a Shining Jewel, the Sleeping Grove, Light on the Water, Paintings, Invisible Doorways, Dreaming, the Well, the Labyrinth.

6) The Shadow also has a NEED. Need is kept secret from the other players. This is what drives them to cause the Bane. DO NOT SHARE the Need when other aspects of the characters are shared. This may become revealed later in the game, or may be revealed after play is done.

The base need is a single word as a motive. These are divided into *Selfish* and *Selfless* Needs. Choose from the following or create another. It's possible that the other players may not learn the Need until the end of the game, but the player of the Shadow informs their actions by this core motivation.

Choose one of the following Needs:

Selfish: Power, Greed, Conquest, Revenge

Selfless: Love, Loss, Fear

Describe how this motive manifests itself, in terms of what the Shadow wants from the world.

Examples:

Power - Sental, a minor cousin of the King, schemes to gain the throne.

Greed - Azimel, the Guild Master will ruin rivals to control the spice trade.

Conquest - Sharina, Queen of Talos, lusts after her neighbor's rich, peaceful land.

Revenge - Korvin plans the death of the house that killed his family.

Love - Karte, Spider of the Court, yearns for the return of a lost sweetheart.

Loss - Delvin, widow of the General Tarn, has been stricken from her soul by his death

Fear – Ohar, lost their village and fears the invasion of neighboring Empire

7) Choose a BANE. This is some curse or terrible price that the people of the Mundane kingdom pay due to the influence of the Shadow. The Shadow's influence is a secret to the characters in the Mundane world.

Example Banes:

Power - Enemies of the Crown are peremptorily banished or killed.

Greed - Bandits harrass and steal from the villages

Conquest – Young people are sent to camps to train for war.

Love - Each year, all new mothers must travel to the Court to beg the blessing of the Crown. Those denied lose their child.

Loss – Women throughout the land suffer from nightmares night after night.

Fear – Spectral terrors haunt the roads after dark.

8) MERCY comes from others. It may be Active or Inactive. Other Powers may grant the Shadow Mercy, particularly if it shows kindness. They invest their Tokens in the hope that the Shadow, too, can be redeemed. (See Page 31 for instructions on how to do this.)

If the Shadow's Need is Selfless, their Mercy is active. If that is the case, at the end of the game if there is a Shadow Switch, the Shadow can use these Tokens to fight the new Shadow (see Shadow Switch Page 40).

If the Shadow's Need is Selfish, their Mercy is not active. In that case these Tokens instead go to a Randomly chosen Power if there is a Shadow Switch. It may be that the New Shadow will gain the Tokens.

Shadow's Gifts:

Adversity - The person who plays the Shadow puts the other players' characters into dangerous situations and endanger what they care about.

Magic - The Shadow has say in all Magic in the world except for that of the Powers. See Page 22.

Bane - They enforce the Bane and make it felt in the world. See Scenes on page 17.

Corruption - May use a Power's Corruption to affect the character's experiences and actions.

Investing – May create Minions, Items and Locations for Free. Start under Shadow Control.

Shadow's Corruption Abilities. Burn this many Tokens to inflict that on another Power:

1 – Dream – Gives a Power a Dream, and controls the Dream world as would Shadow Realm

1 – Vision – Makes a Power see something in the Mundane World

2 – Footsteps – Makes a Power go to a place of the Shadow's choice: Choose location for Power's Focus Scene, may be in Mundane World or Shadow's Realm.

3 – Heart – Direct a Power's feelings – The Power feels this emotion strongly until they act decisively on it or win a Test against the Shadow to throw it off.

Shadow Starting Tokens: 5 blanks, one III, 14 Random

Alternate Starting Tokens:

If there are 4 players, give the Shadow player 5 blank Tokens, one III, and 13 Random Tokens

If there are 3 players, give the Shadow player 5 blank Tokens, one III and 11 Random Tokens

Rose

The ROSE is a seed of hope in this despairing world. The Rose wields magic through an Art. It begins with the strongest power to work for good but may not realize that it has the responsibility to do so. The Rose can transform the Shadow's power by Redeeming those who are Corrupted and gains power by defeating the Shadow and their Minions. The player of the Rose helps choose where scenes begin.

Creating the Rose

Create the first few steps on your own:

1) Choose a commonplace ART for the Rose. This is a type of creative activity that anyone in the world might be able to learn and do, but for the Rose it allows them to do Magic. See page 22 about the Rose's Magic.

Example commonplace Arts: Dance, Writing, Fire-making, Scrubbing Pots, Playing an Instrument, Knitting, Gardening, Drawing, Weaving, Calligraphy, Runes, Falconry, Poetry, Whittling.

2) Create a GROUP who the Rose learned the Art from. These are a mundane group of artists or craftspeople.

3) Create a PLACE in the mundane world where the Group lives. Draw it on the Map later, when everyone shares about their characters.

Once info is Shared:

4) MANIFESTATIONS of the Art and the secret DOOR. The players bestow forms that the magic takes. Each player suggests some way that the Magic has made itself known to the Rose through their art. The Rose goes last, and says how the Door into the Shadow's Realm manifests. The Door enters into the Shadow's Realm and it is controlled by and is known only to the Rose. Add one Random Token to this Door.

Example:

The Rose's Art is Falconry, learned from the folk of the Sultan's aerie.

Thorn: "As a child the Rose spoke to sparrows and they flocked to her."

Hidden: "Her Mother rode to war with a Gyrfalcon, the Gyrfalcon came to the Rose and told her of her Mother's death."

Shorn: "The Rose came to the library of Mages. But she was rejected from studying there because she heard the secrets the Ravens spoke of the Masters, and when she revealed that they turned her away."

Shadow: "The Rose has a secret dream of a gull tossed in a storm at sea, lost from all sight of land."

This nightmare has haunted her since she left home."

Rose: "The Rose let go the Gyrfalcon and it brought down one of the Sultana's shining sunbirds, but the

Rose saved it. When returning the jewel-beautiful bird to the Sultana's garden, the sunbirdbird thanked the Rose and told her of the secret entrance to the true labyrinth at the center of the jasmine hedge maze." A random Token is pulled and added to the Hedge Maze Door.

5) Tell how the Bane affects the Rose and those it has met.

Rose's Gift: The player of the Rose chooses where Scenes will take place and suggests what is going on, or asks for others to suggest these things.

Starting Tokens: one III, 9 Random.

When succeed against the Shadow or a Minion, draw a Random Token.

Corruption: The Rose begins play with no Corruption.

Redeeming Corruption: The Rose may call a test on a character to Redeem them. If the Rose wins, the other loses Corruption Tokens equal to the number the Rose won by. See page 31 about Redemption Tests.

Create Doors: The Rose may create more Doors into Realms by Investing in them as a type of Location or Place. The Rose (and Shadow) may see all Doors, they are invisible to others unless shown by the Shadow or Rose. The Rose may enter all Doors they create, and may enter a Shadow's Door with a successful Test. Doors may be destroyed. Doors to other Realms may be created. See discussion of Doors in rules on page 34.

Thorn

The THORN is a thrust of action against the Shadow. The Thorn may try to protect the Rose, or scheme against the shadow. It is seeking power to fight against the evil in the world, though it can never do magic, except through Corruption and Magic or a Shadow Switch (page 40). The Thorn moves best through the mundane world and may move others to fight beside it. The Thorn creates strong allies in the world. The player of the Thorn casts the characters that appear in each scene.

Creating the Thorn

Create alone:

1) Choose an ARCHETYPE for the Thorn character. Write down a description of how the Archetype manifests in the Thorn. Write down the Bonus and take the appropriate number of Tokens.

Example Archetypes (choose a different one than the Hidden's): Crown, Wand, Sword, Hound, Swan, Salt, Mask, Earth, Corn, Pot, Nail. See full list on page 15 - 16.

2) Create a PLACE in the mundane world where the Thorn and their Ally meet with others to plot rebellion. Draw the Place on the Map later when all information is shared.

Once info is Shared:

3) Create a ALLIES controlled by the Thorn. Each of the players creates an Ally for the Thorn using the rules for Investing in the World on page 25, but with Tokens that come from the Deck. For the Shadow, Rose, Hidden and Shorn, draw one Token from the Deck. For the Thorn's chosen Ally, add a II

Token and a Random Token to it.

- 4) Tell how the Bane affects the Thorn and those they love.

Thorn's Gift: The player of the Thorn chooses which characters will be in the Scene, or asks others to do so.

Starting Tokens: one III, 4 Random

Thorn Allies: When Invest Token in the World, add 1 Random card to Element in addition to standard Token that must be invested. Regain 1 discarded Token if controlled Element fails a Test.

Hidden

The HIDDEN is the unknown strength of the world. The Hidden begins with the least power but has the greatest potential. They are mundane and have no magic at the start. A veil has been thrown over its true nature, but as it learns more about itself so does its magic grows, and a new ally arises to fight the Shadow. The Hidden gains self-knowledge and power.

Creating the Hidden

Create alone:

- 1) This player chooses an ARCHETYPE for the Hidden. Choose a different one than the Thorn. Write down a description of how the Archetype manifests in the Hidden. Write down the Bonus from the Archetype and take the appropriate number of Tokens.

Archetypes (choose different one from Thorn): Crown, Wand, Sword, Hound, Swan, Salt, Mask, Earth, Corn, Pot, Nail. See full list on page 15 - 16.

- 2) Create a GROUP that shelters or accepts the Hidden.

- 3) Create a PLACE in the mundane world where the Group lives. Draw it on the map when appropriate. Add a Random Token to the place's card. This location is controlled by the Hidden.

- 4) Choose an AFFINITY which the Hidden has for some aspect of the world (fire, water, earth, wood, metal, wind, darkness, etc.). Describe how they enjoy or interact with it. For example, they may walk along the beach shore every day (water), they may be the best fire starter in their clan (fire), they may climb a tree on stormy days to feel like they are flying (air).

Create after information has been Shared with others:

- 5) Tell how the Bane affects the Hidden and their home.

Hidden's Gift: The player of the Hidden describes the sights and sounds of the world around the characters or asks others to do so.

Starting Tokens: 2 Random.

Hidden's Nature: Draw 3 additional when they lose a Test to the Shadow or a Minion (must have

another Focus Scene before making another Draw).

First draw: Pick **DOUBT**, some aspect of life or identity that seems untrue. May now use magic using Element, but each use is limited by the Doubt. Shadow Player describes how this manifests.

Second draw: Pick **TRUTH**, a new aspect of the Hidden's life and identity are now revealed. Each use of Magic is freed from limits of Doubt, and enhanced by use of Truth. Hidden player describes how this manifests.

Third draw: Choose new **Realm** associated with Element. Hidden has powers in their Realm as the Shadow does in theirs.

At Shadow Switch: if Shadow's Mercy is *Not Active*, Hidden gains all Mercy invested by Powers during the Game. (If no Hidden is in play, Mercy is distributed to all other Powers as evenly as possible.) If Mercy is *Active*, Shadow gains Mercy Invested as their Magic.

Shorn

The SHORN is the remnant of past power, giving counsel and guidance in the present crisis. The Shorn was once a great power, great as the Shadow or the Rose may yet be, but something took all of that away. The Shorn retains great knowledge and shares this with the others. It can shield them from the Shadow's bite, but at great cost.

The player of the Shorn explains the background of the world around the characters, or asks others to do so. The Shorn also has an Art, though a different one than that of the Rose.

Creating the Shorn

Create the first few steps alone:

1) Chooses an esoteric ART for the Shorn. It must be different one than chosen for the Rose.

Example Arts: foreign writing, dead languages, painting, naming, pyrotechnics, laying labyrinths, starcraft, geomancy, speaking to animals, interpreting dreams, forgecraft, meditation.

2) Create a PLACE where the Shorn practices their art. Draw that Place on the map when the map is being added to.

3) Create an OBJECT that the Shorn knows to be powerfully magical and once was their own. Invest a II and two Random Tokens in the Object. When information is shared in the World phase, the Shadow player chooses a Location where it begins play. May begin the game in the Shadow's Realm or anywhere in the Mundane World. May not be controlled by the Shorn. Can be in the Shadow's possession, but may not be used by the Shadow. It may only be used by the Shorn, though others may see that it is magically strong.

4) Choose a WOUND, a weakness that keeps the Shorn from doing magic to its fullest. It may be a physical or magical wound, it may be an even in the past that lost them their position, power or belief in themselves. Whenever using Magic, bring in the Weakness to limit or obliterate the effects of their Magic. Shorn, Shadow or any player may suggest how the Wound does so.

Create when information is shared:

5) Tell what the Shorn knows of the Bane's past and how it may affect the land in the future. The Shorn may know of the Shadow's True Name identity, but does not know that it is behind the Bane, or about the Shadow's Mask.

Shorn's Gift: The player of the Shorn explains the background of the world that the characters experience, or asks questions of others that help them do so.

Shield: The Shorn may turn other characters' failures into successes by taking their Corruption onto itself instead. The Shadow describes how the Shorn is affected by some aspect of the Shadow's power when doing so. (See Tests section on page 30.)

Starting Tokens: 5, never renewed.

4) World. Share the character and world information, create starting Elements of the World and draw Locations on the Map.

Go around the table, and have each player share what they've chosen for their Power. More information can now be created about the characters, such as how they Bane has affected them all. Create and share this information now as directed on the Power Set Up Sheets.

Add Places to the Map. To do so, each player draws in an icon or small drawing of the location related to their character in a location on the shared Map. Put the new Places in relationship with the Features already on the map. For example, the Shorn's place where they practice their power may be a tower on the top of a Mountain added earlier. You may add more information, such as the name of a river, or where a road leads to. Write this on the map as well.

These form the basis of the world the characters live within. These places may be added to over time. Individuals from the groups will be created. This is the framework within which the characters will play out their stories.

As new locations, and Doors, are created, mark them on the Map. Let the world grow.
Set the Scenes at these Places. Travel among them. Explore the world.

Example: Realm = Ocean, Place = Citadel of Dolphins, by the Azure Sea

The player of the Rose goes next. Create a group from which the Rose learned the Art.
Example: Art = Music, Group = The Bardic Guild

The player of the Thorn creates a Place where it meets people of its Archetype.
Example: Archetype = Sword, Place = The Barracks of the City Guard

The player of the Hidden creates a Group of people who belong to its Archetype.
Example: Archetype = Crown, Group = The Royal Family, the House Marsouin

The player of the Shorn creates a Place where it plies its Art.
Example: Art = Writing, Place = The Royal Library

5) Relationships. Create relationships between the Powers.

The characters begin the game with some relationships between them. Suggested Types of Relationships are listed below. Choose at least Three from these lists, or make up three of your own. Describe more about the relationship and add it to the Power Sheets. At least one character will be connected to two others.

Types of Relationships:

Friends	Lovers	Siblings	Colleagues	Rivals
Parent/Child	Mentor/Student	Master/Servant	Guardian/Ward	Liege/Vassal

6) Starting Corruption. Some of the Powers begin play with the influence of the Shadow upon them already.

The Rose starts free of the touch of the Shadow. The Hidden, Shorn and Thorn receive starting Corruption Tokens. The Shadow player assigns each a face-down Token: one Blank, one I, and one II. The one who receives the blank Token is Free from Corruption.

The one who receives the I Token is Touched by the Shadow.

The one who receives the II Token is Tainted by the Shadow.

The players of these Powers Token may choose to reflect this in their narration about their relationship with the Shadow's Mask identity, a Minion of the Shadow, or by showing some internal alignment of their Power with the Bane. This is not required. The influence may be subtle or background at this point. As the Power gains Corruption, the influence will be shown in specific ways.

This token is kept face downward on the Power's character sheet. Do the same with others which may be gained. Reveal only in Redemption Test, or when Shadow uses Corruption Powers. More may be added later. Only the Shadow or the Power's own player may inspect Corruption Points. They may do so at any time.

7) Starting Tokens. Each player gets a number indicated on their Power's character sheet.
Number of Tokens distributed to each character:

Shadow

If there are Five players: One III, Five Blank, 14 Random

If there are 4 players: One III, Five Blank, 13 Random

If there are 3 players: One III, Five Blank, 11 Random)

Rose

One III Token, 9 Random Tokens

Thorn

One III Token, 4 Random Tokens

Hidden

Two Random Tokens

Shorn

Five Random, One III Token, Object with a II and Two Random Tokens (This object is separated from the Shorn)

Example:

The Shadow is the Ocean Warlock. Her mask is the manipulative Queen of the Citadel of the Dolphins, Aleira. Her Need (kept secret from the other players) is Power, so she wants to steal the power from those able to do Magic in the land. Her Realm is the Starlit Sea, a magical version of the ocean which hums with the power that Aleira has gathered. Aleira has a Door between the Citadel and the Starlit Sea. A pair of twin ivory dolphin statues come alive and bear her beneath the water, to her Realm.

The Hidden, is Cylene, Aleira's heir, the daughter of the Shadow's Late Lamented sister, Annin. She has an affinity for the element Air, and spends much of her time on the Citadel Walls, watching gulls fly.

The Thorn is Parque, the Captain of the Guard, who is also Aleira's lover. He has an Ally, Ramin the Engineer, who maintains and repairs the ramparts of the Citadel.

The Rose is Destrin, a Bard who plays in their Court and travels throughout the kingdom. Destrin's art is Music, with song as her speciality. Magic has manifested in Destrin's life through songs sung by rocks and stones that only Destrin can hear. Through a melody Destrin played that calmed a wild Boar that threatened Destrin and Parque as children. In her dreams, she sometimes hears words of songs of things that come into being. And in a tune played on a harp on a moonless night, which struck terror into her heart and which she can never quite recall. And in a song gathered by Destrin from a foreign land that tells of a land beneath the Sea. When Destrin sang it beside the Citadel, the water parted and showed her steps leading down into the ocean depths.

The Shorn is the Librarian, Gavin, lost and forgotten amongst his books and scrolls. His Art is Translating Dead Languages, through which he can access the wisdom of vanished peoples. But he was Wounded and lost his ability to do great magics when he unleashed a spirit that killed Annin, the former Queen. He foreswore magic and watches over Cylene, Annin's daughter.

Cylene seeks solace from the backstabbing court in the dusty pages of the library. She is friends with the Shorn, Gavin, though she does not know his past.

The Rose, Destrin, grew up with Parque in the village Appleton, which is near the Citadel. She tells him about her travels when it brings her home to Court.

LIST OF ARCHETYPES

How some of the characters fit into the culture and land about them. These are seeds that grow into the unique world you create together. Take them and make them your own. Each has an ability or resource that gives your character additional Tokens. Use this token when you call upon that Resource by involving it in the story.

Crown - Nobility, high-born blood, heir of governance, leaders and protectors, wields power ordained.
Resource: Part of the Royal Family. Enter play with an Ally with II Token.

Wand - Systems and orders of magic; spells, tomes and ancient knowledge; arcane disciplines; apprentice, master.

Resource: Member of a magical order. Enter play with Spell Book (three Spells) with three extra Random Tokens.

Sword - Warrior, fighter, hunter; sure with a weapon; strong of arm; trained to combat; powerful, dangerous.

Resource: Trained fighter. Weapon or Discipline with II Token.

Hound - Searcher, finder; master of the hunt; keeper of the beasts; of the land; powerful servant; relentless; wild.

Resource: Seeker and keeper. Animal Ally or Seeker Trait with II Token.

Swan - Beauty ethereal; dancer, singer, musician, artist; fragile, flowing, tender; graceful, glowing, beloved; self-discipline.

Resource: Artist or Beauty. Art or status with II Token.

Flame - Priest, priestess, housewife, witch; knows old or secret knowledge; bears power of earth, spirit or tradition.

Resource: Spirit Worker. Enter play with Tradition (Ritual, Lore, and Boon) and three extra Random Tokens.

Veil - Two-faced, changeable, unknown; wears a disguise, or keeps true self hidden; veils self by choice and design.

Resource: Mystery. Alter Identity and gain two extra Random Tokens.

Earth - Farmer, peasant, worker with hands; drover, shepherd, hostler, driver; miner; keeper of the field, tender of the flocks.

Resource: Home. Location with Two Random Tokens.

Coin - Miller, merchant traveller, trader; keeper of stocks; tax collector, money changer; rich man, beggar, thief.

Bonus: Money. Two extra Random Tokens. Or Theft with a II Token.

Pot - Baker, butcher, charcuterie; head cook, pastry chef, scullery maid; servant, bondsmaid, valet.
Resource: Trade. Two Random Tokens.

Nail - Builder, carpenter, maker; forge, smithy, toolwright; cabinets, carriages, coffins.
Resource: Trade. Two Random Tokens.

Hat – A performer, actor, busquer, juggler; magician, master of slight of hand or legerdemain; con, grifter.
Resource: The Game. Two Random Tokens.

Jug – An innkeeper, tavernmaster, purveyor of food and spirits; brewer, distiller, moonshiner; bootlegger, smuggler.
Resource: Still or Brewery. Location with Two Random Tokens

PLAYING THE GAME

Framing and Playing Out Scenes

The game takes place in Turns and Scenes. With each player's turn a Scene is played out focused on their Power. As described above, each of the Powers gives a player certain Gifts that come into play in a Scene. Scenes have a certain structure, which will be described below:

1. Set the Scene
 - a) The Rose decides where the Scene will be and what the starting situation is
 - b) The Thorn decides what other characters are present
 - Place Name Cards in the center
 - c) The Hidden may give or ask for Descriptions of the World
 - d) The Shorn may help the Players Learn about the World
 - e) The Shadow may have their Power or controlled Elements present or join the Scene
2. Play Out the Scene
 - a) All with a character they control in the Scene take part
 - b) They speak for and describe the actions of their character or characters
 - c) New Elements may be created by Investing in the World (See page 25)
 - d) The Shadow says how the Bane affects People and other Elements of the World
3. Resolve Tests
 - a) When characters oppose one another, a Test is used to resolve what occurs. See page 30 for a description of how that works.
4. End the Scene
 - a) The Thorn suggests the Scene should end
 - Someone else may ask for it to continue and says when it ends
 - Or the Thorn asks for it to end later, and the Scene ends

In the Shadow's Realm

When Powers, Minions or Allies are in the Shadow's Realm, the Shadow has full discretion and power to create the world around them. The collaboration normal in the mundane world is superseded by the Shadow taking those roles as well. When the characters enter back into the Mundane world, the other Powers' Gifts come back into play. See page 34 for further discussion of Realms.

Scenes in the Shadow's Realm:

- Powers and other Elements of the World enter through a Door with permission of one who controls the Door, or with a Successful magical Test against a Door. See Doors, page 34.
- The Shadow Describes the surroundings in the Shadow Realm
- The Shadow says what other Elements of the World are present
- The Shadow may Invest in new Elements in the Shadow Realm for free, as is their wont
- The Shadow can add their Tokens to Tests against the Powers
- The Shadow may describe the Background of the Shadow Realm elements
- The Shadow must give permission for those who wish to leave, or they must do a Successful Test to open the Door in question, allowing the party to move through.
- The Shadow may do a Test against a Power or Element which to close the Door against it, trapping it in the Realm.

GIFTS AND PLAYER ROLES

Each of the Powers comes with a Gift, which is what the player does to help the game run. They are unique to each of the Powers. The player is responsible for making sure each thing happens, but they may also get help from the others, and ask the others to contribute. Each group can find the set of dynamics that makes them comfortable.

Rose's Gifts

The Gift of the Rose is to set each scene. Each scene focuses in on one of the Powers, in turn. The Rose thinks about where that character might be and what might be going on that either shows us more about who the Power is and what their life is like, or how the events that have occurred already in the story may be followed up on and how they affect the Power in focus.

The Rose's Gift helps bring each character into the spotlight in a rich and meaningful way. To help the players feel how their character fits into this world, as well as to how they contribute to the ongoing struggle that the characters experience.

Setting a Scene

- 1) What Power is in Focus in this scene? Place their Name Card in the center of the table.
- 2) Where are they
- 3) What is happening

The Rose may decide each of these things, ask the player whose Power is in Focus, or ask others for their suggestions. What the Rose decides is final. If the Shadow or their Minions is not present at first, they may join the Scene later, at the Shadow's discretion.

Thorn's Gifts

The Thorn has two Gifts. The first is to Add Characters to a Scene. The second is to End Scenes.

Add Characters to a Scene

- 1) Who else makes sense to be present? Add these characters' Name Cards to the Focus Power in the center of the table.

The Thorn may decide this, ask the player whose Power is in Focus, or ask the others for suggestions. What the Thorn decides is final. The Shadow's character and Minions may not be invited at the start of the scene, but may join the scene later at the Shadow's discretion.

End a Scene

- 1) When the action has wound down, or it is at a high point of tension, this may be a good time to end the scene and move on to another. Ask, "Can we end here?"
- 2) If another player says they want to keep going, the scene continues.
- 3) When the player who asked for the Scene to continue is satisfied, or when the Thorn judges that it is a good time for the scene to end a second time, the Scene comes to a close.

Hidden's Gifts

The Hidden helps the players keep in mind that their characters are in a world full of magic, wonder and down-to-earth matters. The Hidden's Gift allows the players to contribute to making the world one full of texture and flavor. Small details can help shed light on the lives of the characters as well as make real this fantastic landscape. They can also become important to the plot of the game. The Hidden helps the players remember to smell the flowers and be in this other world for a little while.

Describing the World

- 1) When a Scene begins, what is the time of day, the season of the year? How does this affect the beings in the world?
- 2) During a Scene, what are the surroundings like? What are the colors here? What are the smells?
- 3) When a Power, Ally or Minion is introduced, what do they look like? How do they move? What is their demeanor? What clothes do they wear? What are their colors? What does their voice sound like?
- 4) When an Object or Location is introduced, what does it look like? How does it feel to the touch? What sounds do they make? What colors do they have?

Answer just one or two of these questions for each Description.

(With the exception of describing another player's Power,) the Hidden may decide these things, and describe them, or ask the other Powers' players about them.

Powers should always be described first by their player. Others may add descriptions by asking the Power's player if that is so. The Power's player may decide otherwise, but then should add their own description instead.

During the first round of Scenes, there may be many Descriptions since so many characters and locations are introduced. After the first round of Scenes, one to two Descriptions per Scene is a good amount.

Shorn's Gifts

The Shorn has great knowledge about what the world has been, and how it works. The Shorn's player's Gift allows the players to enrich their understanding of the world around the Powers and its past.

Throughout play, the Shorn may answer and ask questions to help the players deepen their knowledge about this fantastic land. The answers may not always be known to the Powers themselves, though they may be. The Shorn may be counted on to know all or most of these things.

Learning About the World

- 1) About Locations in the World: Who lived there long ago? What happened here in the past? How was this place made?
- 2) About Objects: Who was the maker or discoverer of this Object? Is it Magical? What are its qualities and virtues? How may it be best used? Who would know how to make use of it?
- 3) About Beings in the World: What are they known for? Where do they come from? What is a

word to describe their character? How do they figure in the World's history? How has the Shadow affected them?

Ask and answer two to three of these questions in any given Scene.

The Shorn should ask these questions about a given person or thing, of the player who controls the Element. Or ask for permission to ask someone else a question about it, or for the Shorn to answer it.

The other players may also ask the Shorn's player to answer a question about their Element of the World.

The Shorn may decide these things about Elements controlled by the Shadow in the Mundane world, or not under anyone's control, or ask anyone else to answer them. However, the Shadow then gets to say "How the Shadow affects them" afterwards. Only the Shadow gets to answer these questions for Elements within the Shadow's Realm.

The Shadow's Gifts

The Shadow is given wide-ranging gifts to help provide pressure on the other Powers. They have various tools to do so, some of which are quite different from those of the other Powers.

Introducing Adversity

As the Shadow, your job is to keep the other players on their toes and remind them that their characters are in a world that is being tested and changed. You have various tools for doing so, some of which are available to everyone, some of which are unique to your role. All will be discussed below.

- 1) Enforcing the Bane. During Scenes, the Shadow Player looks for ways to make the Bane matter in peoples lives. This may be through foreshadowing what will happen, making the conditions of the Bane take away what characters love, or involving others in the activities of the Bane itself. This, and more, may be done through all of the following avenues.
- 2) Playing the Shadow. The Shadow, in their Mask identity or under their True Name, is a formidable foe with an agenda and a great deal of power. Although they will not willingly appear in the form of their True Name among the other Powers, they can and will be present as their Mask. This character is available for you to speak to the others, drop hints, distract and mislead, or take action on your goals.
- 3) Playing Minions. You have available to you a cast of many other characters to play. Called Minions when you control them, these may be attached to the Shadow or may be others in the community that have no direct connection. They are all under the sway of the Shadow though, and as such you can use them to threaten or tempt the other Powers from undoing the Bane and uncovering the Shadow.
- 4) Investing in the World. At any time, you can create another character, an object or location. If you choose you can place a Token on them to invest it with some of your power. But even if you do not, you control it until it is taken from you by the Powers.
- 5) Tests. The Shadow or Minions may confront the Powers or their Allies and oppose what they

wish to do. If so, use the rules on pages 30 to engage in a Test. You may use your own pool of tokens to back up the Minions, with the exception of when someone is trying to Redeem your Minion. Contests may also be used to take control of Elements of the World. Either new ones that you think the other players may care about, or ones they already control. Exceptions are described in the rules.

- 6) Using Corruption. When the Powers have Corruption points, you may inspect them at any time to find out how many. You may also use them to make that Power see or perhaps do what you want. Corruption points so spent are removed from that character and discarded.
 1. Spend 1 Corruption point to give a Power a vision in the waking world, or to have a dream.
 2. Spend 2 to Frame a Power into a scene at a place and situation of your choosing. Use this at the start of a turn when they are the Focus Character.
 3. Spend 3 to Place an Emotion in a Power's heart, and command them to take one action. (See page 30)
- 6) Visiting your Realm. When other Powers or Allies visit your Realm, the usual Gifts for the Roles that have to do with Scenes do not apply. Instead:
 1. The Shadow's player describes all that the others see, hear, feel etc. in the Shadow's Realm.
 2. The Shadow describes where the Power is in the Realm, and what is happening at the start of the Scene.
 3. The Shadow says who is present. If the Powers entered through a Door controlled by the Shadow, only those the Shadow's player allows to enter may do so freely. All others must succeed in a Contest against the Door to enter. The same is true of those who wish to leave again. Doors controlled by the Rose or others are not under the Shadow's control.
 4. If others ask about the Background of what is seen in the Shadow's Realm, the Shadow's player may answer—or not—as they feel inspired, but the information is only known to the players, none of the characters other than the Shadow would know these things.

USING MAGIC

Magic is alive in this world, it's just that few people know that, much less can use it. You are playing some of the few who may. Using Magic in the game is not something you roll dice over. It is instead a matter of tapping into creativity and wonder--or fear. Within the pathways or limitations that your character can do magic, feel free to bring the wondrous into your fantastic world. Embrace the constraints you are offered, working within a structure maintains the unique nature of magic, rather than making it commonplace.

Whenever anyone other than a Power tries to do something magical, the Shadow player says how it turns out. In this world, many magical channels are controlled by the Shadow. The Powers must change this.

Most of the Powers can do Magic in Heart of the Rose, however their ability to do so varies greatly. Magical effects can be described at any time—within the limitations of what the character can do at a given time. If what you want to do is opposed by someone else, you must use Tokens and win a Test to have your effects come true.

The Shadow is a creature of magic, though it has a mundane persona (their Mask) behind which they hide. The Shadow has wide and far-reaching magical powers that affects everyone around them.

The Rose accesses magic through their Art. They may create magic in the world, but it is always through the use of this mundane world art, which for them is creatively used to invoke magical effects.

The Thorn is non-magical unless they are of the Wand or the Flame Archetypes, or under other special circumstances. Their support and abilities are generally of the mundane world.

The Hidden does not know they are magical at the start of play. They gain the ability, associated with a specific natural aspect of the world and growing knowledge about their own nature.

The Shorn was once powerfully magical, and retains some ability, and their own esoteric Art. However, they are hampered by a Wound from their past that limits their magical strength.

Magic as practiced by these characters is free-flowing and associative in nature. It is rare. These few stand out for being able to practice magic.

Two other types of characters may be able to do magic: those of the Wand or the Flame Archetype. These characters are part of organized magical traditions as appropriate to the Archetype description. Their magic is more limited. It has rules and boundaries. It has spells that may have been written down, which are few in number.

Rose Magic

The Rose has a mundane art which is their pathway to magic. The creative spark that inspires it lights the veins of magic flowing through the world. When the Art is chosen, the other players help give examples of how it leads to magic.

Hidden Magic

The Hidden will learn to be able to do magic over time. Their magical abilities have to do with the

natural element of the world they have an affinity for (fire, water, etc.). Their magic is limited by the Doubt about who they are, and later empowered by the Truth as they learn it.

Shorn Magic

The Shorn has an esoteric Art they still practice. They are hindered by their Wound, and all magic they try to do other than those backed by a Test, should be described as being limited by this Wound.

Shadow Magic

Whenever anyone other than a Power tries to do something magical, the Shadow player says how it turns out. In this world, the magical channels are held by the Shadow. This ends if the Shadow is defeated.

The Shadow controls all that is seen within their Realm, and all (but one at the start) of the Doors to enter there. This is a magical place. Anything can happen there.

The Shadow can use magic through the Minions, Objects and Locations they control. Even if they are not present with them.

The Shadow can affect the other Powers through the Corruption they carry. Giving them dreams, visions, affecting their travel and emotions.

The Shadow, in their Mask form, will not overtly practice magic or allow others to know that they are so deeply magical. They may use magic in Tests against others, however.

Archetype Magic

The character with the Wand Archetype is from a School of Magic. Their player creates three (3) Spells of Consequence. Flame Archetype characters have a Ritual, Lore and Boon that are used like Spells. The Shorn may have been part of a School or Tradition, if they so choose. They are not limited in this way, however, instead they use their esoteric Art.

Write out the Spells of Consequence or Ritual, Lore and Boon on the character's Spell Book or Tradition sheet. A random Token card is dealt to them at the start of play. Each may be used once. To have effect, the player attempts a Test. The card associated with that Spell is offered to the Token or Tokens played for the Test. It may only be used for this.

Spells have two parts - The Name and the Requirement. The Name indicates what it does, the requirement is what that character must have or do to make it happen. Requirements for Spells may be of Word, Gesture or Object.

Example Spells:

Name: Gift of Long Sight, Requirement: A feather from a hawk, eagle or other raptor
Ellenor, the Thorn, is a Mage of the Green School. She is searching for her brother, Marn, the Rose. She casts the Spell the Gift of Long Sight to search the valleys around the Citadel and Village for him. But first she must go to the Citadel's tower where she knows an eagle nests to retrieve a feather.

Rituals also have a Requirement, some activity needed to complete. For Lore, choose an area of

knowledge to which it pertains. Boons are magical gifts from the spirit or godly realms, its Source is the giver of the Boon.

Spell or Tradition Tokens are discarded after use. If multiple sessions are played, you may refresh either at the start of each session.

INVESTING IN THE WORLD

Players may create other characters, places, objects and so on as they will in narration. However, in order for any of them to have mechanical weight in a Conflict, they must be invested in. There are different ways that the various characters may do so.

To Invest in an Element of the World, you create an Object, a Location or a person or being in the world called an Ally if created by a non-Shadow Power's player or a Minion if created by the Shadow's Player. These are controlled by the person who originally Invests in them, or those who take control later on. The Shadow player can Invest for free. Other Powers' players must add one of their Tokens to the Element after Set Up.

During Set Up, the Rose, Thorn, Hidden and Shorn may also create Elements for free, but they do not start in their control. The Shadow may take control by Investing in them for free. The others must Invest a Token.

To Invest in a new Ally or Minion, Place, or Object:

- 1) Write the name of the World Element on an index card
 - 2) Place one or two Tokens on the note card (two Tokens is the maximum). Shadow can create Element with no Tokens, or may place a blank Token on the card.
 - 3) Write down where the Element generally is
 - For a Minion, write a location from the map (may not be in Realm controlled by another)
 - For an Object, write a character that holds or owns it (may be any character)
 - For a Location, write it on the map
 - 4) Write down the name of the Power played by the person who Invested in the Element. For example write "Shadow" on the card, if the Shadow player controls it. Change this when the Element changes hands.
-

To Invest in an existing Ally or Minion, Place or Object with no Tokens on it:

- 1) Choose one of the Tokens from your Power's pool and place it on the Element
 - 2) Take the Card and write your Power's name on it
-

You may control an Object that is in the possession of a character controlled by another player.

Powers other than the Shadow can give Elements to others to control. The other may decline.

Shadow Invests:

At any time, the player of the Shadow can create a Minion or Location or Object in the world. They may opt to invest tokens in it, or not. All they create, they control. However, only those that they invest Tokens in have inimical will. The Shadow player controls this Element of the World, can introduce it into scenes and can have it oppose the Powers. They can use what has been invested in for Tests. The Element may be magical or mundane. Tokens can be added initially or later during your turn. Maximum of two (2) Tokens per Element.

To Invest a Minion, subject Place, or Object:

- 1) Write the name of the World Element on an index card
- 2) May place one or two Tokens on the note card (two Tokens is the maximum). Shadow can create Element with no Tokens. Fine to place a blank Token. All Tokens are face down and only revealed in a Test.
- 3) Write down where the Element generally is
 - For a Minion, write a location from the map (may not be in Realm controlled by another)
 - For an Object, write a character that holds or owns it (may be any character)
 - For a Location, write it on the map
- 4) Write down “Shadow” on the card, the Shadow player controls it

Thorn Invests:

The player of the Thorn may invest points of good will into ALLIES or other elements of the world by Investing Tokens. The Thorn creates them in the same way as the Shadow with the following changes:

- Must add at least one Token to the Element
- Add an additional Random Token to the index card
- Allies and Locations cannot be in any Realm
- At creation, Objects cannot be owned by a character controlled by the Shadow. (If they take it later, that is fine.)
- Thorn may give the Element to another player to control
- When an Element controlled by the Thorn fails a Test and is Overwhelmed, Thorn takes back one of its Token cards.

Others Invests:

Players of non-Shadow Powers can invest in the world using their Tokens. Use the following steps:

To Invest an Ally, subject place, or object:

- 1) Write the name of the World Element on an index card
- 2) Place one or two Tokens on the note card
- 3) Write down where the Element is
 - For an Ally, write a location from the map (any Mundane place, or from Realm you control)
 - For an Object, write a character that holds or owns it (can not be controlled by Shadow)
 - For a Location, write it on the map (any Mundane place, or from Realm you control)
- 4) Write down who created it, they control its actions until it is taken from them. May give to another Power to control, if so write their character's name on it.

Example: The Shadow creates the Horned Monster of Rhinn.

It has two I Tokens and is in the Mouth of the Labyrinth

The card is marked “Shadow”, since they control it.

Playing Minions and Allies

When a Minion, Ally, object or place is created, its information is written down on an index card. The player who creates it may control it, or it may be assigned to another player (if created by one of the non-Shadow Powers).

PLACES or LOCATIONS are areas of power, either mundane or magical. When in a Place a character controls, that character may add value to a Test as another player may Assist in a Test. Tokens can be looked and and Token can be swapped for one put forward by the Power in the Test. However, a Place retains its Tokens, they always come back to it after a Test, even if it is lost. However, if a conflict is

lost when the Place's power was used, the Place is surrendered to the opposing party.

DOORS are special Places that allow entry to the Shadow's Realm. Their Token value determines how hard they are to destroy.

Example Places: the Grotto, the Priestess' vestry, the Tower of Glass, the Tavern on the Docks.

OBJECTS hold strength via Tokens. They add value to their controller's power in the same way Places do, but do not retain their Tokens unless the Test is successful. The character must hold the object. As with Places, if a Test where they are used is lost, the ownership is surrendered to the winner of the Test.

MINIONS are characters created by the Shadow. They are inimical or questionable in motivation. Regardless of whose character sheet they are written on, the Shadow's player controls them. If they are written on a non-Shadow player's character sheet, they may involve themselves in Tests with the character, or help as the Shadow player sees fit.

ALLIES are characters created by non-Shadow players. They are beneficial or stalwart in motivation. They are controlled by one of the allied Power characters. They may be created by any of them, not just the player who eventually controls them.

Allies and Minions fight along side the Powers in magical or fighting conflicts. They may be reduced or redeemed as described in the Test section.

Allies and Minions are reduced by a number of Token points equal to how many they were beat by if they lose a conflict. Objects are reduced by a failed Test. Reduce the Object by the amount their side lost by. If Reduced to 0 Token levels, someone must Invest a Token in it to keep it in play, and the nature of the Object must be changed.

For example: Quinn's Shorn, Tazmil, is confronted by the Shadow, but Tazmil has regained the spiral staff which was her masterwork in the Guild. The Shadow attacks Tazmil for the staff, and the player, Gert, plays a III and a II for the contest. Quinn plays a I and a II, and uses the I power of the spiral staff. Quinn loses the Tokens played, and the staff is reduced by the difference between that played by the Shadow and the Shorn (1 Token level). The sun stone in the staff shatters. This would have taken the staff out of play, but Zerah, playing the Rose who is present, paints a winding starburst on the staff, and her Magic twines star light into the staff where it once drew on the sun. She invests a II Token in it. The Shorn retains the spiral staff, but now must get used to its new nature.

If a Minion is reduced to no Token cards, it leaves play. Explain why it is gone from the story: it dies, it runs away, it becomes quiescent (eg an animated stone tiger turns back into a statue).

An Ally that is reduced to no Tokens may be kept in play by a Power. A player whose Power is with it in the Scene (but need not control it) may Invest a Token or Tokens in it to keep it in play. Describe how it has been changed.

CORRUPTION AND INFLUENCE

Some characters begin play Corrupted by the Shadow. This is represented by a Token given to them during Setup by the Shadow's Player.

Corruption points are also gained when Tests are Failed against the Shadow. If a Power loses against a Shadow or Minion, add Tokens to their Corruption Pool equal to the amount the Power lost the Test by.

For example, Tazmil the Shorn is defeated by the Shadow when the Shadow shatters her Spiral Staff. The Shadow wins by I Token level. Quinn takes this Token and adds it to Tazmil's Corruption Pool.

Players must keep their Corruption Tokens face down and secret from all the other players. The exception to this is the Shadow. The Shadow's player may look at any Power's Corruption Tokens at any Time. They must keep the values secret as well. If at any time, another Power has more Corruption Tokens than the Shadow has remaining Tokens to use, the Shadow Player must announce this. They may then reveal their Need.

The Shadow does not have a Corruption Pool. Instead they have Mercy which others can invest in them in the hopes that there is a sympathetic core to the Shadow.

The Shadow player has special power to Influence characters with Corruption points. The points can be spent by the Shadow to influence what the character sees, does and even feels.

Using Corruption Points (Shadow Only)

The Shadow player may use Corruption points to affect the Power which has them. There is a cost, and the types of actions and their cost in Tokens are described below. Corruption Tokens so use are removed from the Power they were on, and are discarded.

For 1 point (one I Token), the Shadow may give another Power a Dream. The player of the Shadow describes the setting, and events of what a character sees while sleeping. The Power's player describes what their character does in response. The Shadow's player controls the Dream world as in the Shadow Realm, but no Tests are possible. The Shadow dictates all outcomes, but the Power has no ill effects when they awake.

For 1 point (one I Token), the Shadow may give a Power a **Vision** in the real world. The Shadow's player describes a haunting or frightening image that the Power sees during waking hours. No others can see this thing.

For 2 points (a II Token, or two I Tokens), the Shadow may influence another Power's **Footsteps**.

The Shadow's player chooses a path for the other character, and at the start of or during a scene places that Power where the Shadow chooses. This place may be in the Shadow's Realm. The Power may think they chose to come there, or may not remember how they got there. Gifts are used as usual, but a Scene or portion of a Scene must take place before the Power may leave, if they are able to.

For 3 points (a III Token, a I and a II Token, or three III Tokens), the Shadow may influence another Power's **Heart**. The Shadow's player chooses an emotion that the other character now feels about someone or something. Emotions to choose from: HATE, DESIRE, FEAR, ENVY, ANGER. If the ensorcelled Power takes major, detrimental action based on this emotion (as judged by the Shadow), they are then freed from the geas. Otherwise, the targeted Power (or another on their behalf) must successfully best the Shadow in a magical challenge to allow this feeling to pass.

For example: Jean, playing the Shadow (The Queen of the Wood) burns a II Token from Jorge's Rose character, Quetzal, to affect his Heart. In the game world, the Queen of the Wood lays her hand on the King's youngest son, Quetzal. Quetzal, is now dizzyingly enthralled with Desire for the Queen. He longs to be with her, and when he returns to his father's hall, he thinks only of her. In a later scene, maddened by his longing, he rejects the daughter of the Queen of an allied nation, who had been his dear friend and intended spouse. This insult causes the threat of war between their peoples. As he sees what he has done, the magic-induced Desire drops from him, and he crumples to the ground realizing what he has cost himself and so many.

Magic and Corruption Points

Some characters have Magic: the Rose, the Hidden, the Shorn and those of the Archetypes the Wand and the Flame. For the Rose and the Hidden, their magic will increase over time. The Shorn, as well as Wand and Flame characters, may not go beyond a certain initial level.

All characters begin with and may gain corruption points. Corruption points show the level of fell will in the character. At an extreme juncture, these points may be used to do Magic, but doing so changes a character and may alter the world irrevocably.

The Shadow has one pool of points, that are used for Magic and Investing in the world. The Shadow does not gain Corruption, but may use other characters' Corruption points to influence them.

Using Corruption Points as Magic

A character with Magic, whose Corruption outnumbers its Tokens may use its corruption points in a Test. This must be decided before cards are revealed. Once having done so, that character may no longer use its Art or Tradition, if it had one. Its magic now takes a form first described by the Shadow player and then continued by the Power's player when their character does magic.

Also when doing magic, the character must narrate their character acting in a cruel, ruthless, betraying, cold or callous manner to those that it loves, calls friends or that have been gentle to it. If a character is successful in a Test when using Corruption points as Magic, add as many points as it succeeded by to the Shadow's Token pool.

If a character begins using its Corruption for Magic and it has 10 Corruption, it may trigger a Shadow Switch. See page 40.

TESTS

When someone wants to do something and someone else wants to stop them, Tests are used. Tests can be physical or Magical.

Tests can be used for: casting a spell, moving something, capturing someone, stealing, harming, etc. However, Tests cannot be used for: deciding an argument, explaining the world, changing someone's feelings, etc. Also cannot be used for: killing.

Some characters have Magic: the Rose, the Hidden, the Shorn and those of the Flame and the Wand. For the Rose and the Hidden, their magic will increase over time. The Wand and the Shorn are more limited. Magic requires no Test to take effect. However, Powers and Elements of the World may try to resist Magic using Tests.

Tests can be used to gain control of an Element of the World by Redeeming or Corrupting it. This is described below, after the general description of Tests.

Test Steps:

- 1) Opponents square off – two characters only can oppose one another, others players may assist. One taking action is called the “Actor”, one opposing this action is called “Opponent”.
- 2) Actor says what their character tries to do.
- 3) Each side may play one or two Token cards face down -- other may assist by playing a card, but maximum is still 2 Token cards. The additional cards may be used to swap out one of the Tokens already played. If a helping Token is not taken, it goes back to the Power who offered it. If it is taken, it is lost or retained in play as normal—but it would go back to the Power who donated it if the Test is won.
- 4) Cards are revealed and compared
- 5) Passing or Failing a Test:

Card Values are Tallied (total values)

Highest side wins: they Pass the Test and regain highest Token card, May invest Mercy.

Losing side: Fails Test and Discards all cards, may have to take Corruption.

Winning Side says what outcome is, or takes control of Element if something was in question.

Limitations on Outcomes:

Things that cannot be narrated by the winner: how someone else's character feels about events, the nature of injuries or harm taken from an outcome, or followup actions. Others' characters can be harmed—the Winner asks the character's player to describe the nature of the injury.

Powers may be damaged, but cannot be killed or taken out of action, unless their player so chooses.

Elements, when reduced to no Tokens, may be removed from play, or kept in play if another Token is Invested in them, with one exception: Minions go out of play when reduced to zero Token levels.

Mercy:

Investing Mercy allows a player to put Tokens equal to the amount they won by in the Shadow's Mercy pool. Take these Tokens from the Tokens played, or make change using the Discard Deck to do so.

Outcomes:

WINNING

The winning side decides how the action taken takes place or is averted.

If the Opponent Wins, they do get to say what advantage they have gained from blocking the action, work with other players to establish this.

TIES

If both sides have the same value, the Test is inconclusive. Both sides Fail, but keep their Tokens. Something happens in the story world that distracts or blocks both from getting what they were after. Hidden have first say in what comes between the characters. Others may suggest.

In the case of a Tie, the Actor does not accomplish their task it was not due to the Opponent, and the Opponent can be relieved that the action didn't happen, but they do not gain an advantage from this. The players cannot attempt another Test about this until new Scene or after different Test has taken place. Shorn and

Consequences of Failure (Non-Ties):

If Power Fails a Test, take Corruption equal to difference between Winning and Losing side's Tokens.

If a Minion or other Shadow Element Fails a Test, reduce their value by amount of Token levels Winning side won by. If reduced to no Token levels by this, take value of Tokens played by Winning Side and Invest in this Element: it is now an Ally or other Power-controlled Element.

If an Ally or other Power-controlled Element Fails a Test, reduce value by amount of Tokens Winning side won by.

Conflicts with the Shadow can increase a Power's Corruption. If a Power fails in a direct Magical Conflict with the Shadow, that character gains Corruption points equal to the number of points spent by the Shadow.

If the Rose wins a Conflict against the Shadow or a Minion: gain a Random Token.

If the Thorn wins a Conflict: it may invest the lowest of the Shadow's spent points in an Ally, Object or Place in this Scene.

If the Hidden loses a Conflict: it learns more about its nature, and it gains 3 Tokens.

If the Shorn is with a character who loses a Conflict: the Shorn may take on the what the corruption would have been, and change the Failure to a success. All Tokens kept/loss and Consequences are now as if it had been a Success for the Non-Shadow Power.

Redemption and Corruption Tests

Redeeming reduces the Corruption on a character or world Element, or brings it over to the side of the Rose. Corrupting brings it into control by the Shadow. Tokens are invested as shown in Redemption/Corruption Tests below.

Corrupting a Power

Conflicts with the Shadow can increase a Power's Corruption. If a Power fails in a Magical Test with the Shadow, that character gains Corruption points equal to the number of points the Power lost by in

the Test.

Redeeming a Power

The Rose may attempt a Test to Reduce the Corruption in a Power. Powers may only be Redeemed by the Rose.

- 1) Describe how the Rose is interacting with the Power. Is the Rose using Magic? Talking? Intuition? Knowledge?
- 2) Make a Test, opposed by the Corruption Tokens of the Power
- 3) If more than Two Corruption Tokens on Power, mix up the Tokens and randomly draw two to use to oppose the Rose in their Test.
- 4) If the Rose's total value is higher, Reduce the Corruption by the Difference between the totals. Discard Tokens from the Power's Corruption Pool equal to that amount. You may make change from the Discard Deck.

Redeeming or Corrupting a World Element

The Rose may initiate a Test to Redeem a Minion, an Object or Place. The Shadow may initiate a Test to Corrupt a Power, an Ally, Object or Place.

In a Redemption Test:

The conflict is handled the same as any Test, but the Shadow must be present in order to lend additional Token Cards. If it is not, the character or Minion defends with its own points.

When control is gained, the Element may be destroyed, retired or made an ally. A redeemed Element is not reduced, it just moves into the Control of the Power who Redeemed it.

In a Corruption Test:

The conflict is handled the same as any Test, but the Shadow may act directly or work through a Minion, Location or Object to affect the Ally, Object or Place.

Using Corruption as Magic

A character with Magic, whose Corruption outnumbers its Tokens may use its corruption points in a Test. This must be decided before cards are revealed. Once having done so, that character may no longer use its Art or Tradition. When doing so, the character must narrate their character acting in a cruel, ruthless, betraying, cold or callous manner to those that it loves, calls friends or that have been gentle to it. If a character is successful in a Test when using Corruption points as Magic, add as many points as it succeeded by to the Shadow's Token pool.

However, if the conflict was targeted against the Shadow, points spent by the Shadow increase the character's corruption whether the Shadow succeeds or fails. If a character begins using its Corruption for Magic, it may trigger a Shadow Switch.

Investing Mercy in the Shadow

Power players may choose to hope that the Shadow's real intentions are ultimately good. They do so when they win a Test against the Shadow or one of its minions. However much the Power won by, that many Token levels can be invested in the Shadow's Mercy.

These Tokens stay on the Shadow's sheet until a Shadow Switch or the End of the Game.

If the Shadow's Need activated their Mercy, when the Shadow Shift occurs—all their former Tokens are discarded and the Mercy Tokens become their new pool of power.

If the Shadow's Need was not selfless, then no Mercy will be active. The Shadow is truly beyond redemption. All Mercy Tokens invested in this case go to the Hidden, or are split among the Powers if there is no Hidden in play.

Optional: The Rose may attempt a Redemption Test on the Shadow personally in order to invest Mercy-- if successful, these Token levels are matched by the Shadow out of their own pool.

REALMS AND DOORS

Realms

In HEART OF THE ROSE, there are worlds that lie side by side with the normal, mundane world. Another world may open from the garden path that leads into the tangle of dark forest beyond the castle walls.

In each game there is one Realm accessible to some of the characters at the beginning of play. This Realm is under the sway of the Shadow character. All roads, all exits, all Doors are controlled by the Shadow. All that is seen within is described by the player of the Shadow. Characters must have the Realm's master's permission, or use magic in order to be able to enter or leave through Doors.

The Realm in Play

During character creation the player of the Shadow chooses a Realm. This influences the creation of the rest of the setting and can be used as a marker for tone of play. If the Realm is under the sea, the magic used by the Shadow may have a murky, fluid otherworldly feel. If it is the forest, the Shadow's magic may be full of tugging and prying branches or roots. When other characters enter the Realm, the Shadow character describes their surroundings, until the action leaves the Realm.

Magic in Realms

The Shadow player may affect the characters who are in their Realm through use of magic or intervention of a Minion, as in the mundane world. In a Power's home Realm, their magic is more powerful than any others'. Visitors to a Realm may do magic, but it will be mastered by the owner of the Realm.

For example, if the Rose and the Thorn are finding their way out of the Shadow's court in the forest, the Shadow player describes the dark, twining vines and the trees, the damp moss hanging from the trees tickling their faces and confusing their sense. In order to keep them from escaping, the player of the Shadow must use magic, in which the roots of the trees reach up and wrap around their feet, or through a Test using Minions such as baying Hounds of Hell, pale silver-white with glowering leaf green eyes that come hunting after them in the gloom of the woods. The Rose and Thorn can try to escape by finding a Door and passing a Test to go through. Or they may face the Minions.

Doorways to the Realm

A Door is a passage into a Realm. They are Magical in nature and are invisible to most, except for the Shadow and the Rose.

For example, a door into the Forest Realm may be a fall of light, or a pool of water (example from Winter Rose by Patricia McKillip, whose works inspire this game). Doors to the Ocean Realm may be eddies and tide pools, or underwater caves that one must swim to through the undertow. A Celestial Realm might be reached by riding on a hawk, climbing starlight ropes or a smoke path. When seen by someone without magic, they appear to be a normal part of the world.

The Shadow can create Doors at will between their Realm and the mundane world. These are special Objects, with Tokens Invested in them by the Shadow.

The Rose, has the power to find the Doors and entry ways into the Shadow's Realm. At the start of play,

the player of the Rose will describe one Door to the Shadow's Realm. The Rose may use magic to enter or to allow another to leave.

Passing Through a Door

The ruler of a Realm may see and pass through any and all Doors to their Realm at any time.

The Rose may pass through Doors they create. Other characters need permission from the Realm's Ruler to cross over. If denied, they must pass a Test opposed by the Shadow player

Once a character crosses over, they are subject to the will of the Shadow in their Realm, through the Shadow player's Gift, and the nature of Magic in the Realm.

To trap someone, the Shadow can deny them exit. Characters with Magic may face a Test to open a Door and escape. If they fail, they must try again to leave from a different Doorway. For characters with no magic, once entering a Realm they may be held indefinitely until someone frees them.

Creating a Door

Doors can be created by the Realm's Ruler, and by the Rose.

During Setting Creation, the Rose creates the first Door to the Shadow's Realm. They may see this Door, and pass through it if they so choose. After this, the Rose may create other Doors by investing them with Tokens or by taking control of one created by the Shadow. Describe what the Door looks like and where it appears in the normal world.

New Doors can be created during play by the Rose by means of a magical conflict with the Shadow. In case of a failure, the player of the Shadow may choose to create a Door, but make it invisible to the Rose except by means of a magical conflict, just as other characters must do.

Doors are special Places. All Doors must be distinct from one another.

The Ruler of a Realm may create a Door to their Realm at any time during play. It needs no Token cards. The Rose may see any Door, and attempt to pass through by making a Test. Other Powers must make a Test to see a Door (unless assisted by the Rose), and a separate test to go through the Door.

A Door that has been created remains stable unless destroyed.

Destroying a Door

The Shadow can destroy a door they control at any time, so long as no one has declared their character is travelling through or opening a door. If the door was created by another, a successful Test is needed to destroy it. Other Powers must make a Test to destroy a Door. If it is a Shadow controlled Door, the Shadow player can use Tokens Invested in the Door to assist.

Destroying a Door can shut characters out of a Realm, or trap them within. The Shadow may trap unwary characters on its side of the world, locked beneath the ice in the stream, inside the roar of the wave, moaning in the sigh of the wind.

Other Realms

Other Realms may be created later in the game by the Hidden. The character who creates it Rules the Realm and holds all the powers that the Shadow holds over its Realm.

Realms may be also held if another character becomes the Shadow through a Shadow Shift. That character may take over Ruling the Shadow's Realm or make their own, new Realm.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The Powers change over the course of the game. Some grow in magical ability. Some learn more about themselves. All may wax and wane in the influence of the Shadow, or find themselves lost in their own worst aspects.

CORRUPTION INCREASES occur as the outcome of failing in a magical contest against the Shadow. Corruption points are also gained when Tests are Failed against the Shadow. If a Power loses against a Shadow or Minion, add Tokens to their Corruption Pool equal to the amount the Power lost the Test by. For more discussion of Corruption see p. 28. For discussion of Tests, see page. 30.

CORRUPTION DECREASES occur as the outcome of Redemption conflicts by Powers with magic.

Redemption

The Rose can Redeem a Power, or reduce their Corruption through a successful Test.

The Rose may attempt a Test to Reduce the Corruption in a Power.

- 1) Describe how the Rose is interacting with the Power. Is the Rose using Magic? Talking? Intuition? Knowledge?
- 2) Make a Test, opposed by the Corruption Tokens of the Power
- 3) If more than Two Corruption Tokens on Power, mix up the Tokens and randomly draw two to use to oppose the Rose in their Test.
- 4) If the Rose's total value is higher, Reduce the Corruption by the Difference between the totals. Discard Tokens from the Power's Corruption Pool equal to that amount. You may make change from the Discard Deck.

See page 31 for further discussion of Redemption and the Roses's abilities.

Shadow Uses Corruption

Corruption may also be reduced when the Shadow uses the Corruption to affect the Powers. The Shadow player may use Corruption points to affect the Power which has them. There is a cost, and the types of actions and their cost in Tokens are described below. Corruption Tokens so used are removed from the Power they were on, and are discarded.

For 1 point (one I Token), the Shadow may give another Power a dream. The player of the Shadow describes the setting, and events of what a character sees while sleeping. The Power's player describes what their character does in response. The Shadow's player controls the Dream world as in the Shadow Realm, but no Tests are possible. The Shadow dictates all outcomes, but the Power has no ill effects when they awake.

For 1 point (one I Token), the Shadow may influence what another Power sees in the real world. The Shadow's player describes a haunting or frightening image that the Power sees during waking hours. No others can see this thing.

For 2 points (a II Token, or two I Tokens), the Shadow may influence another Power's footsteps. The Shadow's player chooses a path for the other character, and at the start of or during a scene places that Power where the Shadow chooses. This place may be in the Shadow's Realm. The Power may think they chose to come there, or may not remember how they got there. Gifts are used as usual, but a Scene or portion of a Scene must take place before the Power may leave, if they are able to.

For 3 points (a III Token, a I and a II Token, or three III Tokens), the Shadow may influence another

Power's heart. The Shadow's player chooses an emotion that the other character now feels about someone or something. Emotions to choose from: HATE, DESIRE, FEAR, ENVY, ANGER. If the ensorcelled Power takes major, detrimental action based on this emotion (as judged by the Shadow), they are then freed from the geas. Otherwise, the targeted Power (or another on their behalf) must successfully best the Shadow in a magical challenge to allow this feeling to pass.

See page 28 for further discussion of the Shadow's Corruption powers.

Character Changes

The Rose grows in magic as the character is successful in Magical Conflicts against the Shadow. The Rose player gains a random Token when defeating the Shadow player in a Test.

The Thorn gains back some its power as Allies (or other World Elements) it has brought into play are reduced to 0. If the Thorn controls them when they are reduced to zero, the Thorn player may choose one Token from the Element to put back into the Thorn's Token pool.

The Hidden changes over time in the following way: it comes into play with an Archetype, no magic but an element that it has an affinity for. When it fails a Test with the Shadow, it gains magic and information about itself. Each time is different. No more than one change can happen per a character's turn (though it does not need to be the Hidden's Turn). The Turns must come back to the Hidden again before they can go through another Change.

The first change: The Hidden's secret becomes a problem. The player chooses a Doubt, some aspect about its life and nature that is untrue or uncertain. The Hidden becomes able to start affecting their element. The character's magic resembles or flows through that aspect of the world.

Example Doubt: the Hidden finds that she was a foundling, washed up on the beach shore; the Hidden realizes that he has no memories from before he entered the Village, and the first person who met him said wore smoky, tattered clothes. However, she now realizes that she can call dolphins to dance with her when she swims (fire), or she is impervious to damage from flames (fire). Draw three random Tokens.

The second change: On the 2nd Draw, the Hidden's real being begins to show. The player then chooses a Truth, the character's true nature is revealed. Examples: the Hidden's mother is a Lord of the Deep and greets her with pearl and abalone armor for the coming battle; the Hidden is revealed to be a djinn who was cursed to walk among humanity and until he should find true love. Draw three random Tokens.

The third change: On the 3rd Draw, the Hidden comes into their full power. The player then chooses a Realm, like the Shadow's realm, but one which relates to or connects with the Hidden's element. Examples: the Hidden claims her power in the Realm of the Water Depths and comes to the rescue of the other Powers by raising the force of the sea against the Shadow's Citadel; the Hidden is freed from his curse by the love of the Rose, and he claims his Realm, the Garden of Flame and Shadows. Draw three Random Tokens.

The Shorn can take on Corruption for others, allowing them to Succeed at Tests. However, since the path is open for all characters to begin using their Corruption as Magic for Tests, this may be a grave

temptation.

At the start of the game, the Shorn is separated from an Object of great power they once controlled. Being reunited with it allows them to regains some of their past glory through the use of its substantial power.

The last type of change is a Shadow Switch, which may happen to any character, and is described in the next section.

SHADOW SWITCH

When a character grows high in Corruption, it becomes vulnerable to taking part in a SHADOW SWITCH. In a Shadow Switch, a new character takes the role of the Shadow. This occurs when a non-Shadow Power does the following:

- 1) has more Corruption points than the Shadow has Token values in play
- 2) chooses to use its Corruption Tokens as Magic
- 3) wins a conflict against the Shadow

The Shadow's Token values do not include those invested in Elements of the world. Total the values on the Tokens. Blanks count as zero.

Whenever a Power begins using its Corruption as power, the Shadow must check to see if a Shadow Switch Occurs.

Characters grow in corruption when they fail in a magical conflict with the Shadow. Due to its special ability, the Shorn may grow in Corruption faster than the others. This makes it the most likely to Switch with the Shadow.

When a Shadow Switch Occurs

This is a grave juncture in the story. It may be that all is lost, or that new hope must be found. When a Shadow Switch happens, the Power who it happens to becomes the New Shadow. The original Shadow is now the Old Shadow.

If it is the Rose that becomes the New Shadow, the game ends immediately, with the allied Powers losing to the forces of Negativity. See Epilogues in the section Ending the Game Section.

If it is one of the other Powers, the Old Shadow character now assumes this character's role. It retains all its Tokens, but takes on the abilities (or lack thereof) of what that Power was.

The player of the Old Shadow reveals any secrets that are not yet known, such as its Need. If their Mercy was active, they explain how their character had been misunderstood, held in the sway of some greater power or whatever makes understandable why they created the chaos that it has.

If the Mercy was active, the Old Shadow now regains all Tokens Invested in its Mercy, and helps the other Powers fight the New Shadow, though it may be in different ways now that it has become a different Power.

If the Old Shadow's Mercy was inactive, the Mercy Tokens all go to the Hidden. If the Hidden has just become the New Shadow, they take the Tokens and can use them against the allied Powers. If there is no Hidden in play, the Mercy Tokens are distributed among the other Powers randomly, as evenly as possible.

The player of the New Shadow reveals what has driven their character to cross the line, for example, a past failure or mistake, drive for vengeance or ambition overcoming its better nature. The New Shadow takes control of all Minions, Objects and Places formerly controlled by the Old Shadow.

The player of the New Shadow then chooses a Realm. If it was formerly the Hidden, they may have one in play already. If not, they choose a Realm now. The New Shadow may take over the Realm of the Old Shadow. It will now be changed to take on aspects of the New Shadow's nature.

Doors to the Old Realm may be closed. If the Old Shadow is reduced to 0 points in the final conflict with the New Shadow and the New Shadow does not take on the Old Shadow's Realm, then all entryways to the old Shadow Realm become useless and sealed—even the Roses or other's Doors. If a character is on the other side at that moment, it is trapped within. A new Door must be found and successfully opened in order for that character to return from the Old Realm.

The other Powers' players have a choice: they may have a final confrontation with the New Shadow, or the game may be ended there, with a closing Epilogue.

If there is a final confrontation, a final round of Tests may be held with each Power facing off against the New Shadow or a Minion. After this round, the game comes to a close with Epilogues for each.

ENDING THE GAME

The game concludes when the Shadow is defeated, or when all hope is lost for the other Powers. In some games, the spell is broken. The thrall of fear and hatred lifted. In other games, untruth prevails. The heart of the rose is broken and the land subsides deeper into the power of fell forces.

Triggers for the Game to End:

- When the Shadow runs out of Tokens
- After a Shadow Switch or when the New Shadow has been defeated
- If the Rose gains 10 or more Corruption

When the Shadow Runs out of Tokens, check to see if the Tokens remaining in Elements of the World they control equal a value higher than the total of what the allied Powers hold, or invested in Elements they control.

If the allied Powers' total is higher, it is a hopeful ending, the Shadow is overcome.

If the Shadow's total is higher, it is a fearful ending, the Shadow will return.

The game can also be ended earlier with an Epilogue if:

- The Shadow is unmasked and shows that its Mercy was active
- The Rose uses its Corruption
- The Powers do not have a final confrontation with the New Shadow after a Shadow Switch

EPILOGUES

At the end of play, go around and each player should give a brief description what their character went on to do. Did they stay in this land? Travel far away? Become imprisoned and languish? Become freed?

What did happen? It depends on what type of ending there was, and how things fell out at the end.

There are two types of Endings: Fearful and Hopeful. These determine what type of Epilogue each character will have.

There are two types of Epilogues: Vanquished and Triumphant. In Fearful Endings, a Shadow will have Triumphant Epilogues, and the united other Powers will be Vanquished. In Hopeful endings, the reverse is true.

There are seven types of each of these Epilogues. When a character has been described as having one, cross that type off the list. All Powers must have a different Epilogue type.

Vanquished Epilogues:

- Lost
- Abandoned
- Exiled
- Transformed
- Resisting
- Captured
- Forgotten

Triumphant Epilogues:

Ruling
Reunited
Healed
Serves
Celebrated
Settled
Mastery

Shadow to 0 Tokens

Do the Tokens invested in the Elements of the World by the Shadow out number the Tokens remaining to the other Powers and their Allies or controlled Objects and Places? It is a Fearful ending. If not, it is a Hopeful Ending.

Was there a Fearful ending? Describe a Triumphant Epilogue for the Shadow, and a Vanquished Epilogue for the other Powers.

Was there a Hopeful ending? Describe a Triumphant Epilogue for the Powers, and pick among the Vanquished endings for the Shadow.

Rose Corrupted Ending

Choose among the Triumphant Epilogues for the Shadow, describe a Transformed Epilogue for the Rose, and choose among the other Vanquished Epilogue types for the other Powers.

Shadow Switch

Does the New Shadow and the Elements of the World it controls have more Tokens than those held by the other Powers (include the Old Shadow with the other Powers if their Mercy was Active)? The ending is Fearful. If the New Shadow has less, the ending is Hopeful.

Was there a Fearful Ending? The New Shadow describes a Ruling Epilogue, and the other Powers describe Vanquished Epilogues. If the Old Shadow's Mercy was not Active, they are given the Serving Epilogue. If it was Active, they get to choose among the Vanquished Epilogues.

Was there a Hopeful Ending? The New Shadow describes a Vanquished Epilogue. The Old Shadow describes a Vanquished Epilogue as well if their Mercy was Inactive. However, the Old Shadow may have a Triumphant Ending if their Need was Active, however, the other Powers chose which they receive. The other Powers may choose their own Triumphant Epilogue.

FURTHER GAMES

The players may revisit this same world, choosing a different land or country in it that has different Realms, people and places. Choose one character to cross over from the prior game. Its Power Change is thus based on the role it held at the end of the preceeding game, after a Shadow Switch if this occurs:

Shadow becomes Hidden or Shorn

Rose becomes Shadow or Thorn

Thorn becomes Rose or Hidden

Hidden becomes Shadow or Shorn

Shorn becomes Thorn or Rose

The latter game may well be a prequel to the former.

Heart of the Rose - Character Overviews and Set Up

Powers

The main characters of the game are known as the five Powers in the world. These are characters who wield influence and possibly magic. Creating these characters helps create more about the world. Each Power has specific rules and abilities, and is associated with different aspects of making the game happen. Each player takes one Power in a five player game. Omit the Hidden with four players. Make the Shorn a starting Ally with three players.

Rose	Shadow	Thorn
A young person with an Art that allows them to do magic. A fresh face, untouched by Corruption, who brings hope to a weary world. Can redeem those who have been Corrupted by the Shadow. The Rose describes and begins scenes.	A dangerous and powerfully magical being. Has a True Name, unknown to the other Powers, as well as a mundane persona—their Mask—that others know them by. The Shadow rules over a magical Realm that exists side-by-side with the Mundane world, and a Place in the mundane world which they control. Only the Shadow and Rose know Doors between at the start. The Shadow has a Need that they keep secret from the other players. This impels them to make the Bane that threatens all. The Shadow provides the threat to the other characters, with many tools to do so.	A connected mover and shaker in the world, who is actively fighting against the Bane that oppresses everyone. Not magical, but can recruit strong Allies. The Thorn suggests what characters are present, and ends scenes.
Hidden	Shorn	
Someone whose true nature is hidden from themselves and those around them. They seem a part of the mundane world, but over time it is revealed that they are a person of great magical ability, and, too, have a magical Realm they will control. The Hidden helps the players see and feel the world around the Powers.	An old, wise but wounded person of magical power. They have seen much of the world, but have lost much of their once-great magical strength. Can wield magic, and can shield others from the Corrupting force of the Shadow. The Shorn provides a deeper understanding of the background of the world.	

Setting up for play

- 1) Mundane World Features: Each player chooses one.

Mountains	Field	Hill
Forest	Meadow	Grotto
Lake	River	Swamp
Ruins	Road	Temple
Butte	Ravine	Cave
Sea	Harbor	Island

Place your chosen Feature on the map (page 5): On a large, central sheet of paper, draw in something to represent the Feature you chose. A line showing the shoreline of the sea, or a river by a temple, for example.

More features are added as Places during character creation. Some examples: village, castle, tower, palace, house, farm, labyrinth, tomb, fairground, well, oasis, tree, nest, lair, cabin, tent, pasture, knoll, path, library, great hall, court, market, gallows, amphitheater, pond, scree, dell, brook, copse, or cemetery.

- 2) Read out the descriptions of the Powers above, and choose roles (page 5). Each role is critical, and complementary with the others. Each gives the players a unique role in running the game. Some characters are opposed to one another, but the players are united in a common goal: making a surprising and challenging story, and playing engaging characters.

- 3) Each player fills out their Power's character sheet (pages 5 - 14). Take some time to do so, and look over the step by step descriptions together. Some items will be created together after information is shared in the World step.

- 4) World (page 12). Share information from Power sheets in order (Shadow, Rose, Thorn, Hidden, Shorn). Draw Realm and Places (and Items, if appropriate) on the Map. Add to Rose, Thorn and Shorn, and fill in effects of Bane for each Power. Add Doors between the Shadow's Realm and the mundane world.

- 5) Relationships (page 13). Create relationships between the Powers. Each character should have one or two relationships.

- 6) Starting Corruption (page 13). The Shadow player takes three Corruption Tokens, a I, a II and a blank from the general supply and hands one to each of the following: Thorn, Hidden and Shorn. If there are four players, omit the blank. If there are three players, choose secretly between the I and II, and place the other in the stack. Place the sixth blank Token out of play with three or four players. The Rose gets no starting Corruption Token.

- 7) Distribute Tokens from the general supply to each player (page 13). Number is on Power sheets, adjusted for number of players.

Heart of the Rose - Cheat Sheet for Play

Scenes (pp. 17)

The game takes place in Scenes. Starting with the Rose, each player has a turn in which their Power is in Focus. A Scene is framed and played out about this characters. Each player has a unique role in making the Scene happen based on their Power's Gifts.

Gifts (pp. 18-21)

Rose Gifts: Frame the Scene: ask or tell, where is this happening? What is going on at the start?

Thorn Gifts: Cast the Scene: ask or tell, who is present? Who will join later? If present, place character card in center of table. Ending the Scene: ask or tell: is there more to be done in this Scene? Is there more to be learned? If someone says "yes", continue Scene until either 1) that player says scene may end, or 2) Thorn player says scene should end.

Hidden Gifts: ask or tell: what can be seen here, heard here, tasted, felt or smelled here? What colors are here? What textures?

Shorn Gifts: ask or tell: why is this here? What happened here? What does this mean to people? What is it's history?

Shadow Gifts: add Shadow or Minion after scene has played for a bit, even if not invited by the Thorn. Say how the Bane is affecting other Elements of the World. Use Tests, Corruption and Investing in the world to bring threat and adversity to the others.

Investing in the World (pp. 25-27)

Add Elements to the world. Types: Allies or Minions (people or beings), Objects, Places and Doors.

Write down on note card: 1) Name, 2) Type, 3) Power that controls it 4) Place it is commonly found.

Tokens: If Shadow, may place one, two or 0 Tokens on card, can be blank. If other Powers, must place at least one Token on card.

Control: If created by Shadow player, controlled by Shadow. If created by other Powers, they may offer to assign control to another (non-Shadow) Power. Offer may be declined. May be held by a character of a player that does not Control it.

Allies and Minions: Act as independent characters, can participate in Tests or assist Powers. May be reduced, or taken control of.

Objects and Places: If present in a Scene, their tokens may be used to assist in Test. Locations retain their tokens.

Doors: Special Place that allows travel between Realm and mundane World. May be Destroyed.

Magic (pp. 22-24)

Some Powers can do magic. Magic flows in certain forms and can have limits. Only needs Test to be done if action is opposed.

Rose Magic: accomplished through commonplace Art that holds magical powers for the Rose. Replenish as win against Shadow.

Thorn Magic: May only do magic if of Wand (Three Spells) or Flame (Ritual, Lore and Boon) archetype. Three uses only.

Hidden Magic: Unless of Wand or Flame archetype, learn magic later. Gain power if lose Test to Shadow or in Shadow Switch.

Shorn Magic: Formerly very powerful, now limited by Wound. Use magic through esoteric Art. Take Corruption to help Others.

Shadow Magic: Will not openly use in Mask identity, but may use obliquely. Complete mastery of Realm. Use others Corruption, to help Minions, take control of other Elements of the World, or directly as True Name identity.

Corruption as Magic: if Power has more Corruption than Tokens, may use Corruption as Magic. Provides Tokens to Shadow. May trigger Shadow Switch.

Corruption and Redemption (pp. 28-29)

Powers gain Corruption when fail in Test against Shadow, Mask or Minion. Add Corruption Tokens equal to amount lost by.

Rose can Redeem to reduce Corruption. For Minions, when Reduced to 0 Tokens, Invest amount won by. For Powers, use two randomly chosen of their Corruption Tokens for Test, and Shadow cannot Assist. Reduce Corruption by difference if Rose wins.

Shadow can Use Powers' Corruption levels. Discard these Token levels to gain effect described:

1 – Dream: Shadow frames Scene for Power in Dream world – controlled as in the Shadow Realm, with no real effects on Power.

1 – Vision: Power sees terrifying or compelling image in the mundane World. No others can see or are moved by its meaning.

2 – Footsteps: Shadow decides Place where Power goes. May be in Shadow Realm.

3 – Heart: Shadow implants a power feeling and single direction on a Power. Must act on feeling or win Test to shake off.

Tests (pp. 30-33)

Use Tokens when character takes action that is opposed by another. May be magical or mundane in nature.

1) Square off. Who is taking action? This is Actor. Who opposes? This is Opponent. Who helps each side? They Assist.

2) Commit Tokens. Each side decides which Tokens to use. Place one or two Tokens face down on table.

3) Assistance. Those helping can Offer one Token to be used. Actor and Opponent choose whether to replace a Token with one of those Offered. If do not take Offer, Token goes back to the Assisting party. If take Offer, may be lost in Test.

4) Compare. Show final Tokens simultaneously. Each side totals their value. Side with higher total wins. May be a Tie.

5) Outcomes. If one side Wins: Winner says outcome of action (what it accomplishes if Actor wins, how it fails and what advantage is gained if Opponent wins).

If Tie, action is interrupted by some other or Element of the world that intervenes and distracts both sides. Hidden and Shorn have first say about what intervenes. Others may suggest.

Heart of the Rose - Cheat Sheet for Play

Realms and Doors (pp. 34-36)

Realms are magical worlds, invisible to, but side-by-side with the mundane World. Shadow controls a Realm at the start. Hidden may gain a Realm. Shadow's Realm may be seized by another in a Shadow Switch.

Doors are special Places that allow passage between Mundane World and Realm. Realm owner may create or destroy (their own) Doors at will (discard Tokens Invested), and can permit or forbid others to move through or even see their Doors.

Rose has special power to see and Create Doors. Others must use Test to see, move through or Destroy Door.

Shadow Switch (pp. 40-41)

Another Power may rise in Corruption and take the place of the Shadow. This is the New Shadow.

Happens when: 1) non-Shadow Power gains 10 Corruption, 2) this Power uses their Corruption as Magic, 3) and wins a Test against the Shadow.

Changes: 1) They take the Shadow's Realm or Create one of their own, 2) Take control of all Minions, Objects and Places controlled by the Shadow 3) the Old Shadow takes the New Shadow's old Power role, and takes on its attributes.

Endings: The Powers choose 1) to have a Final Confrontation, and do one round of Tests by all sympathetic Powers and Allies against the New Shadow and its Minions. The Old Shadow will help if their Mercy was Active.

The Rose cannot take part in the Shadow Switch since the game ends immediately if the Rose gains 10 Corruption.

Ending the Game (p. 42)

The game ends automatically when one of three things happen:

- 1) The Shadow has 0 Token levels remaining. (Fearful or Hopeful Ending)
- 2) The Rose gains 10 Corruption levels or uses its Corruption as Magic. (Fearful Ending)
- 3) There is a Shadow Switch, after the Final Confrontation (Fearful or Hopeful Ending)

The group may choose to have the game end when one of the following things happens:

1) The Shadow's Need is revealed and their Mercy is Active – the Shadow player may choose to concede and the game ends. (Hopeful Ending)

2) There is a Shadow Switch and the Power choose not to have a Final Confrontation (Fearful or Hopeful Ending)

When the game ends in any of these ways, each character gets an Epilogue. How it ends determines what kind of Epilogue.

Fearful or Hopeful:

If Shadow is reduced to 0 Tokens, compare the Total Token levels controlled by other Powers and their Elements, against Tokens invested in Minions, Objects and Places controlled by the Shadow. If Shadow's total is higher, there is a Fearful ending.

If the other Powers' total is higher, there is a Hopeful Ending.

If there was a Shadow Switch, compare Total Token Levels controlled by other Powers, their Elements (and the Old Shadow as well if their Mercy was Active) with those of the New Shadow and Minions, Objects and Places they now control. If New Shadow's level is higher, there is a Fearful Ending.

If the other Powers' total is higher, there is a Hopeful Ending.

Epilogues (pp. 42-43)

Each player describes a brief epilogue for their character, depending on what type of ending the game had. Will have either a Vanquished Epilogue or Triumphant. Will choose or be assigned a descriptor that flavors what happens in the Epilogue.

Types of Epilogue: List of descriptors. (No two Powers can use same descriptor.)

Vanquished: *Lost, Abandoned, Exiled, Transformed, Resisting, Captured, Forgotten*

Triumphant: *Ruling, Reunited, Healed, Serves, Celebrated, Settled, Mastery*

Shadow at 0 Tokens:

Fearful Ending - *Ruling* Epilogue for Shadow, Choose among Vanquished for other Powers

Hopeful Ending – *Ruling* Epilogue for Shadow, Choose among Triumphant for other Powers

Rose Corrupted: Shadow chooses a Triumphant Epilogue, Rose gets *Transformed* Epilogue, all else choose a Vanquished Epilogue

Shadow Switch:

Fearful Ending – *Ruling* Epilogue for New Shadow, *Serving* for Old Shadow if Mercy is Not Active. Choose among other Vanquished for other Powers (including Old Shadow if Mercy was Active).

Hopeful Ending – Vanquished Epilogue for New Shadow, Choose among other Vanquished for Old Shadow if Mercy was Not Active), choose among Triumphant Epilogues for all others (including Old Shadow if Mercy was Active).

Create the Shadow. Fill these out on your own.

THE SHADOW

True Name

The Shadow's magical identity, hidden from other Powers, but known to all players. Alludes to the source of their magic.
Examples: The Queen of the Forest, Flame of Wrath, The Forgotten, The Red Knight, Keeper of Sorrow.

Mask

The Shadow's mundane identity, by which the other Powers know them. A person of influence, status or standing.
Examples: Severil, King of Gutre; the Travelling Fortuneteller; Elder Partu; Qadi Rahim; Sala, Sultana of Aris.

Realm

A magical region lying parallel to but hidden from the mundane World, ruled over by the Shadow.
Examples: The Winter Forest, The Ocean Deeps, The Under City, Behind the Walls, Dreams, The True Labyrinth.

Place

A location in the mundane World under the control or influence of the Shadow. Connects to the Shadow's Realm through a Door created by the Shadow. A well-known place in the mundane World, visited by the Powers and others.
Examples: The Castle of Dolphins, A Traveller's Wagon, the Caravanserai, the Rock Temple, a Market Shop.

Door

A special Place controlled by the Shadow that magically allows travel between the Place they control and their Realm.
Examples: The Empty Well, The Diamond Mirror, the Ivory Dolphins, the Jeweled Tome, the Starlit Path, the Silver Tapestry.

Bane

A grave curse, stress or price laid upon this community. The Shadow is behind this, but none of the characters realize that this is so. It feeds the Shadow in some way or grows out of their injury, and plays into their Need.
Examples: An annual sacrifice impoverishes the people, War grips the land, The animals talk and cannot be hunted, Mad ghosts terrorize the land, The Sovereign seeks a mate and each who fail to meet the test are put to death.

Need

SECRET FROM ALL OTHER PLAYERS until revealed in play. Cover this portion of the sheet with a sticky note.
A secret source of sorrow, pain, anger or ambition for the Shadow. What powers their actions, and leads to the Bane.
Needs are *Selfish* or *Selfless*. If Selfless, the Shadow's Mercy is Active. If Need is Selfish, Shadow's Mercy is Inactive.

Choose the type of Need. Decide if it is Selfish or Selfless, then choose one of the options after it.

Selfish Needs: Power Greed Conquest Revenge

Selfless Needs: Love Fear Loss

Describe how this Need manifests itself, and why the Shadow feels this way. See rules text for examples.



Fold along this line to keep the Shadow's Need a secret.

When creating Relationships, use this space to record how the Hidden knows one or more of the other Powers as their Mask.

Relationships

When everyone has completed their section to fill out on their own, share what you've created with the other players. Some of them will ask you to add to other Powers backgrounds.

In the World phase of game Setup. Add your Places to the Map. Draw them in amongst the Features already on the Map.

Back of the Shadow's Setup Sheet

Create the Rose. Fill out the first four on your own.

THE ROSE

Name _____

The Rose is a young, strong but unproven hero or heroine. They bring hope to a world under threat.

Sample Names: Ameen, Arha, Beatriz, Castella, Gyorg, Hawke, Thistle, Paras, Itheus, Lycidas, Lyra, Metis, Tywa, Zarana

Art _____

The Rose has an Art commonly practiced in the mundane World, but which uniquely allows them to do magic.

Examples: Dance, Writing, Fire-making, Scrubbing Pots, Knitting, Gardening, Drawing, Weaving, Falconry, Poetry.

Group _____

Who did the Rose learn their Art from? A group of people in the mundane World who ply this trade or teach this skill.

Examples: the Sultan's Falconers, the Wild Hunters, the Bard guild, the Marketplace Scriveners, the Herbalists.

Place _____

A location in the mundane World where the Rose and their Group meet to work, play or live together.

Examples: the Aerie, the Evergreen Forest, the Harper's Quarters, the Aisle of Scrivening, the Green Yurt.

Once you are done with the above, wait for the others to help you answer the question below. Take turns sharing what you've created with the other players. On your turn read the next item and ask others to contribute. Help others with theirs.

Magic has touched the Rose's life through their Art as they have grown up. Ask each of the other players to describe a moment when this happened. (See examples on page 8.)

Thorn: _____

Hidden: _____

Shorn: _____

Shadow: _____

Rose: Door (Element) _____

The Rose goes last, and describes how their Art lead them to find a magical Door into the Shadow's Realm.

Example: Rose: "The Rose let go the Gyrfalcon and it brought down one of the Sultana's shining sunbirds, but the Rose saved it. When returning the jewel-beautiful bird to the Sultana's garden, the sunbird thanked the Rose and told her of the secret entrance to the true labyrinth at the center of the jasmine hedge maze. Door is The Center of the Hedge Maze." Create your Door as a Place as on page 25, except add a Random Token to it from the Deck.

After the Shadow has shared the Bane, answer this:

Bane's Effect _____

How has the Shadow's Bane affected the Rose and their loved ones?

In the World phase of game Setup. Add your Places to the Map. Draw them in amongst the Features already on the Map.

When creating Relationships, use this space to record how the Hidden knows one or more of the other Powers.

Relationships _____

Create the Thorn. Fill out the first four on your own.

THE THORN

Thorn's Name _____

The Thorn sees the injustice in the World and is organizing to fight against it. A person with many connections.

Samples Names: Agathe, Bast, Dhameer, Ishme, Jericho, Kanni, Manzir, Nicodemus, Quince, Razmouhi, Samson, Zaven.

Archetype _____

An identity, trade, way of living or calling. How the Thorn fits into the mundane community. See Archetype List, page 15.
Pick a different Archetype from that of the Hidden.

RESOURCE _____

Each Archetype comes with a Resource. Write it down here, and create it as described on page 25, but Invest Tokens in it as described in the Archetype list, rather than drawing on the Thorn's Tokens.

Place _____

A location in the mundane World where the Thorn meets with others to plot the fight against the Shadow's Bane.

Examples: the Tavern, the old Marketplace, the Watchtower, the Root Cellar, the Crossroads, the Cave.

Once you are done with the above, wait for the others to help you answer the question below. Take turns sharing what you've created with the other players. On your turn read the next item and ask others to contribute. Help others with theirs.

Allies rally around the Thorn. These are people or beings in the Mundane World that the Thorn can trust and rely upon. Friends and compatriots in the struggle.

Examples: the Cobble Thor, the Thorn's Son Hazzim, the Brewer Estelle, the Blacksmith Anastasia.

Create these Allies by Investing in the World as described on page 25, however, Give one Random Token to those created by the Shadow, Rose, Hidden and Shorn, and one random and one II Token to the one created by the Thorn. All begin controlled by the Thorn. (Elements)

Thorn: _____

Hidden: _____

Shorn: _____

Shadow: _____

Rose: _____

After the Shadow has shared the Bane, answer this:

Bane's Effect _____

How is the Thorn challenging the Bane? The Thorn and their Allies do not know about the Shadow's True identity, and do not suspect that the Shadow's Mask identity has anything to do with the Bane.

In the World phase of game Setup. Add your Places to the Map. Draw them in amongst the Features already on the Map.

When creating Relationships, use this space to record how the Hidden knows one or more of the other Powers.

Relationships _____

Create the Hidden. Fill out through Affinity on your own.

THE HIDDEN

Hidden's Name

The Hidden is a person with a past unknown to them. They carry a powerful legacy that will be revealed during play.
Sample Names: Chanda, Iset, Jala, Maya, Ovsanna, Phaedre, Pythias, Qamar, Rhea, Sabah, Seeley, Tareq, Tristan, Utu.

Archetype

An identity, trade, way of living or calling. How the Thorn fits into the mundane community. See Archetype List, page 15.
Pick a different Archetype from that of the Thorn.

RESOURCE

Each Archetype comes with a Resource. Write it down here, and create it as described on page 25, but Invest Tokens in it as described in the Archetype list, rather than drawing on the Hidden's Tokens.

Group

Who does the Hidden live with in the community? With whom does the Hidden belong?

Examples: the Kitchen Staff, the Pearl Divers, the Archers, the Millers, the Cobblers, the Elders.

Place (Element)

Where does the Hidden's Group spend their time? May be where they live, work or ply their trade. Create this as a Place under the Hidden's control. Use the rules to Invest in an Element of the World from page 25, but place on Random Token on it from the Deck instead of from the Hidden's Tokens.

Changes come to the Hidden as they interact with the Shadow. Describe the *Affinity* when making the Hidden. The others Changes come into play at set times later in the game (see page 38).

Affinity: (fill in during setup)

Name an aspect of the natural World that the Hidden has an affinity for. Examples: Water, fire, air, shadow, light, earth, stone, metal, plants.

How does this show? Examples: water--the Hidden love to swim, fire--the hidden gazes into fires at night, plants--bring flowers to sisters.

Doubt:

Something calls into question what the Hidden believed to be true about their past, identity or heritage. With this mystery, Magic enters their life.

For example: the village their mother was said to come from does not exist; an heirloom of great power is passed on from their humble family.

They may now do Magic involving their Affinity. It is limited, however, by the Doubt, and by the Doubt and the Hidden's lack of knowledge about their identity and heritage. Gain three Random Tokens.

Truth:

There is a revelation about the mystery in the Hidden's identity. They now understand more about who they are. There may still be more to learn.
Gain Three Random Tokens.

Realm:

The Hidden comes into their own, and gains access and control over a Realm of their own. It is part of their Affinity. See page 38. Gain 3 Random Tokens.

When everyone has completed their section to fill out on their own, take turns sharing what you've created with the other players. They will ask you to add to their Powers backgrounds. Your character will develop throughout the game and you may ask the others for their help as the Changes occur.

After the Shadow has shared the Bane, answer this:

Bane's Effect

How has the Shadow's Bane affected the Hidden and their Group?

In the World phase of game Setup. Add your Places to the Map. Draw them in amongst the Features already on the Map.

When creating Relationships, use this space to record how the Hidden knows one or more of the other Powers.

Relationships

Create the Shorn. Fill out the first five on your own.

THE SHORN

Shorn's Name _____

The Shorn is learned and formerly powerfully magical. You guide others and help protect them from the worst of things.
Sample names: Apollonia, Cytheria, Heliodora, Jocasta, Marodeen, Nergal, Nunuphar, Sybilla, Taharqa, Thetis, Xanthippe.

Art _____

An esoteric knowledge or skill in which the Shorn is skilled which allows them to do Magic. Different from Rose's Art.
Examples: translating dead languages, mandala painting, naming, runecraft, pyrotechnics, geomancy, starcraft, dreaming.

Wound _____

What happened to make it so that the Shorn has lost almost all of their magic? The Wound may be physical, social, emotional, metaphysical or whatever else you can imagine, but bars them from their past power. Examples: Lost heart to do magic after causing a devastating defeat in battle, lamed by their Teacher who offered them as a sacrifice, stripped of their power in a warding duel with a demon, exiled from court when their student broke oaths of honor.

Object (Element) _____

There is an Object of Power which the Shorn once owned. It has been lost to them, but is somewhere in the Worlds. Create this Object as Investing in the world as described on page 25, but add three Random Tokens to it. Place them face down so none may see. Examples: The Swan Feather Cape, the Crystal Staff, the Brass Mirror, the Glass Dagger. The Shadow decides where is at the start of play. It must not be in the possession of any of the Powers. It may be in the Shadow Realm, or anywhere in the mundane World.

Place _____

Where does the Shorn now live their life?

Examples: The Mountain Retreat, the Great Library of Scrolls, a Shelter in the Cold Wastes.

Once you are done with the above, wait for the others to help you answer the question below. Take turns sharing what you've created with the other players. On your turn read the next item and ask others to contribute. Help others with theirs.

Achievements the Shorn has made in their life when they were at their full power. As with the Rose, all the players add one such achievements. What the other Powers add are all in the past, or would now be attainable only at great cost. The Shorn goes last and gives an example of the place Magic has in their life now.

Shadow: _____

Rose: _____

Thorn: _____

Hidden: _____

Shorn: _____

After the Shadow has shared the Bane, answer this:

Bane's Effect _____

What does the Bane remind the Shorn of from the long past?

In the World phase of game Setup. Add your Places to the Map. Draw them in amongst the Features already on the Map.

When creating Relationships, use this space to record how the Hidden knows one or more of the other Powers.

Relationships _____

Playing the Rose

Gift:

Setting a Scene:

1) Whose Turn is it? Their Power is in Focus in this scene. Place their Name Card in the center of the table.

2) Where are they?

3) What is happening?

The Rose may decide each of these things, ask the player whose Power is in Focus, or ask others for their suggestions. What the Rose decides is final. If the Shadow or their Minions is not present at first, they may join the Scene later, at the Shadow's discretion.

You bring hope and new energy to a community under siege. The Shadow is the great threat which will become known, slowly over time. You are strong in magic, and free from the influence of the Shadow. You are unproven, though, and have much to learn. And if you are lost, the tide will turn against your side. Your role is to fight against the powers of injustice and fear.

Redemption Tests

Reduce another Power's Corruption levels. Does not apply to Shadow.

Rose must be with the Power.

1) How is the Rose interacting with them?

2) Rose puts forward 2 Tokens (as Opponent in Test), may be Assisted

3) Randomly choose 2 Tokens from Power's Corruption (if they have more than 1) to put forward (as Actor in Test)

4) Compare.

5) Outcomes: If Rose wins follow usual procedure, but reduce Power's Corruption by Token levels by which Rose won. If Rose loses, resolve as usual for lost Test. (Rose may gain Corruption.)

Development

Rose gains 1 Random Token when win Test agains Shadow or Minion.

Corruption

If Rose Gains 10 Corruption levels, game ends immediately. Fearful Ending. See page 42.

Playing the Thorn

Gifts

Casting a Scene

1) Who - What Powers, Allies, or Minions are likely to be present? Decide or ask others what they think.

2) Cards - Place Name Card in center of table in front of controlling player, to indicate which characters are present. Objects and Places, too.

Shadow may add Shadow or Minions later in the Scene if not present.

The Thorn is a person with many connections in the mundane community, who recognizes that something is terribly wrong. You make the game fun by fighting the Shadow and finding Allies in the Mundane World. The Shadow is the great threat to the community in which you and the other Powers live. Your role is to help the others recognize that there is danger and to organize them to fight against it.

Ending Scenes

End scenes when action has wound down, or perhaps it is at a high point of tension.

1) Suggest Cut - When scene seems complete say "Can we end here?" If all agree, scene ends.

2) Continue - If someone wants to continue, scene goes on. Thorn may withdraw some characters.

3) Final Cut - Scene ends when Continue requestor or Thorn ends scene. again.

Development

The Thorn gains back Tokens when Allies created (or other World Elements) are taken out of play. When Element is reduced to 0, Thorn chooses Token to put back into their pool.

Investing in the World

- Add an extra Random Token from deck to each Element created by the Thorn player.
- Make note that Element was created by the Thorn
- If Element is Destroyed, Thorn takes back a Token from Element into their Token pool.

Magic

The Thorn does not do magic, unless their Archetype is Wand or Flame. If so, see Archetype Magic (p. 23).

Allies

Create Allies controlled by Thorn during Setup as on Power Setup. (p.9)

Playing the Hidden

Gift

Describing the World

Create Descriptions for Scenes and Elements. Answer or ask one or two of these questions at the start of each Scene, and then as inspired.

- 1) *Scene Start: what is the time of day? season?*
- 2) *Scene, what are the surroundings like? What are the colors here? What are the smells?*
- 3) *Power, Ally or Minion: what do they look like? How do the move? What is their demeanor? What clothes do they wear? What are their colors? What does their voice sound like?*
- 4) *Object or Place: what does it look like? what are its colors? How does it feel to the touch? What sounds are made?*

Magic

The Hidden can do Magic once their Doubt is discovered. Or earlier if they are of the Wand or Flame Archetype. See Archetype Magic (p. 23).

Starts play with an Affinity for some aspect of the natural world.

Development (p. 10, 38)

Hidden's Nature: Draw 3 additional when they lose a Test to the Shadow or a Minion (must have another Focus Scene before making another Draw - ie Once per Round of Turns.).

The Hidden is a person in this community who does not realize they have an unknown past and carry a powerful legacy. You make the game fun by being an element of mystery in the world. You will learn more about yourself and your history as the game goes on. You are the ace in the hole.

Changes

First draw: DOUBT, some aspect of life or identity that seems untrue. May now use magic using Element, but each use is limited by the Doubt. Shadow Player describes how this manifests.

Second draw: Pick TRUTH, a new aspect of the Hidden's life and identity are now revealed. Each use of Magic is freed from limits of Doubt, and enhanced by use of Truth. Hidden player describes how this manifests.

Third draw: Choose new REALM associated with Affinity. Hidden has powers in their Realm as the Shadow does in theirs.

Playing the Shorn

Gift

Learning About the World

Create a background and history for the world and its inhabitants. Answer or ask one or two of the following. May have Shorn describe in Character.

- 1) *Locations in the World: Who lived there long ago? What happened here in the past? How was this place made?*
- 2) *Objects: Who was the maker or discoverer of this Object? Is it Magical? What are its qualities and virtues? How may it be best used? Who would know how to make use of it?*
- 3) *Beings in the World: What are they known for? Where do they come from? What is a word to describe their character? How do they figure in the World's history? How has the Shadow affected them?*

Magic

The Shorn has an esoteric Art they still practice. They are hindered by their Wound, and all magic they try to do other than those backed by a Test, should be described as being limited by this Wound. (P. 19)

The Shorn is a learned and formerly powerfully magical person in this community. You make the game fun by offering wisdom and background to the story. Also, by sheltering others from the worst effects of the Shadow. You must struggle with the burden that creates, but you have the opportunity to come to terms with your past loss.

Shield

The Shorn can take on Corruption for others, allowing them to Succeed at Tests. However, since the path is open for all characters to begin using their Corruption as Magic for Tests, this may be a grave temptation. (p. 31, 39)

Lost Artifact

At the start of the game, the Shorn is separated from an Object of great power they once controlled. Being reunited with it allows them to regains some of their past glory through the use of its substantial power.

Tests

If the Shorn is with a character who loses a Conflict: the Shorn may take on the what the corruption would have been, and change the Failure to a success. All Tokens kept/loss and Consequences are now as if it had been a Success for the Non-Shadow Power.

Playing the Shadow

The Shadow's Gifts

The Shadow is given wide-ranging gifts to help provide pressure on the other Powers. They have various tools to do so, some of which are quite different from those of the other Powers.

Introducing Adversity

As the Shadow, your job is to keep the other players on their toes and remind them that their characters are in a world that is being tested and changed. You have various tools for doing so, some of which are available to everyone, some of which are unique to your role. All will be discussed below.

Enforcing the Bane. During Scenes, the Shadow Player looks for ways to make the Bane matter in peoples lives. This may be through foreshadowing what will happen, making the conditions of the Bane take away what characters love, or involving others in the activities of the Bane itself.

Playing the Shadow. The Shadow, in their Mask identity or under their True Name, is a formidable foe with an agenda and a great deal of power. Although they will not willingly appear in the form of their True Name among the other Powers, they can and will be present as their Mask. This character is available for you to speak to the others, drop hints, distract and mislead, or take action on your goals.

Playing Minions. You have available to you a cast of many other characters to play. Called Minions when you control them, these may be attached to the Shadow or may be others in the community that have no direct connection. They are all under the sway of the Shadow though, and as such you can use them to threaten or tempt the other Powers from undoing the Bane and uncovering the Shadow.

Investing in the World. At any time, you can create another character, an object or location. You can do so for free, controlling it even if you do not place a Token on it, or you may Invest Tokens.

Tests. Oppose Powers and their Allies through Tests. You may use your pool of Tokens to Assist your Minions even if the Shadow is not present. Exception: Must be present to offer assistance for Redemption Tests to reduce a Minion.

Using Corruption.

When the Powers have Corruption points, you may inspect them at any time to find out how many. You may also use them to make that Power see or perhaps do what you want. Corruption points so spent are removed from that character and discarded.

- Spend 1 Corruption point to give a Power a vision in the waking world, or to have a dream.
- Spend 2 to Frame a Power into a scene at a place and situation of your choosing. Use this at the start of a turn when they are the Focus Character.
- Spend 3 to Place an Emotion in a Power's heart, and command them to take one action. (See page 30)

Visiting your Realm. When other Powers or Allies visit your Realm, the usual Gifts for the Roles that have to do with Scenes do not apply. Instead:

- The Shadow's player describes all that the others see, hear, feel etc. in the Shadow's Realm.
- The Shadow describes where the Power is in the Realm, and what is happening at the start of the Scene.
- The Shadow says who is present. If the Powers entered through a Door controlled by the Shadow, only those the Shadow's player allows to enter may do so freely. All others must succeed in a Contest against the Door to enter. The same is true of those who wish to leave again. Doors controlled by the Rose or others are not under the Shadow's control.
- If others ask about the Background of what is seen in the Shadow's Realm, the Shadow's player may answer—or not—as they feel inspired, but the information is only known to the players, none of the characters other than the Shadow would know

You make the game fun by bringing challenge and suspense to the story. The Shadow is the great threat to the community in which the other Powers live. Your role is to give them something to fear and fight against.

Overview

At the start of play you begin with an overwhelming advantage. With time your powers deplete as your Tokens are used in Tests against the Powers, and are invested in Minions, Places and Objects that you control. When you have used all of your Tokens, the game comes to a close, and you see if the allied Powers have prevailed. A Shadow Switch may occur, creating a new, final threat to overcome. The game may also end earlier, if the Rose becomes deeply Corrupted.

The Shadow's Magic

Whenever anyone other than a Power tries to do something magical, the Shadow player says how it turns out. In this world, the magical channels are held by the Shadow. This ends if the Shadow is defeated.

The Shadow controls all that is seen within their Realm, and all (but one at the start) of the Doors to enter there. This is a magical place. Anything can happen there.

The Shadow can use magic through the Minions, Objects and Locations they control. Even if they are not present with them.

The Shadow can affect the other Powers through the Corruption they carry. Giving them dreams, visions, affecting their travel and emotions.

The Shadow, in their Mask form, will not overtly practice magic or allow others to know that they are so deeply magical. They may secretly use magic in Tests against others, however.