

BELIEF

A LORE Sourcebook

By Gregory Weir

Introduction

The world is not as it should be. Once, long ago, humankind lived in a state of perfection, wanting for nothing, despairing for nothing. In Paradise, there was no sickness or death, and whatever any person could dream would be. But one day, two humans, Adam and Eve, asked a question. "Why," they asked, "do we choose to do one thing over another?"

Instantly, the answer came to their minds. "Because some things are good and some things are bad." And thus the pair brought into being the existence of evil and of good. The pair told others of these concepts, and others came to believe in them. And because they saw evil in every one of their hearts, they could not bear to live in perfection. How could they be justified in living in Paradise when they had such darkness within them?

So they tore the fabric of Paradise in two, leaving Eden and Earth, two worlds separated by a void of light. And so it is today that evil and suffering exist in the world, all due to the original sin created by Adam and Eve. But there is a way back to Paradise within all of us.

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The world is not as it should be. Did you ever wonder why there are some days when everything goes so wrong, it feels like you're in a story? Did you ever see those flickers out of the corner of your eyes, hear a voice from nowhere, feel a cold breath on your cheek just before sleep? This isn't the real world. The real world is out there, somewhere, and we live in an illusion. The chains keep us bound here, stop us from realizing the truth. Only the chosen ones can see the gaps in the simulation, see the way to Eden, and affect the system. We need to wake the Slaves. We need to escape to Reality.

* * *

The world is not as it should be. A clockwork universe, that is the way of the world, but something is gumming the gears. Something is winding and loosening the spring that should unwind true. There are minds among us that are sick, so sick that the very fabric of existence bends in response to their delusions. They see beyond the veil of truth an imaginary Eden. We see chaos. War, disease, pain: these are all manifestations of the wrongness of the world. To protect reality, we must stop the approach of Eden, and heal these poor, sick souls.

* * *

The world is not as it should be. The other night, I saw a ghost. No, I called a ghost. Becky and I were just fooling around, drawing symbols out of cheap, fake books from the library. But for a second, I almost managed to believe in it. And that's when it showed up. Just a flicker, and it was gone. Becky didn't see it, but I did. I turned on the lights and took the book back to the library.

But now the book's back, right there on my desk. And I think it's looking at me.

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Truth

There is no truth. Reality is what we believe it to be. If you think you can fly, then that flight is real to you. Others may see you plummet and die, but you might live on, soaring above the clouds. Anyone can dream, but it takes someone special to make those dreams real.

You are one of those special people. Somehow, you realized the nature of the world: it can be changed by enough belief. Maybe you need to speak the spells passed down by ancient people. Maybe you need to persevere to make your brilliant discoveries. Maybe you need to release the shackles of straightforward thinking. Maybe it's enough just to verify that the world works as it does, that nothing strange occurs, nothing out of the ordinary.

This is a game of belief. Your character has the ability to warp reality with her mind: to impose her will on the very nature of existence. Your omnipotent Belief struggles against the overwhelming, endless tide of human Doubt. If you are strong enough, you can bend reality for more people than just you.

Some Believers like the world the way it is. They call themselves Regulators, the ones responsible for keeping reality in place, and keeping the horrid otherness beyond the veil of existence from encroaching on the real world. They are in a constant struggle against the horrors from outside as well as the sick Aberrants who try to further poison reality with untruth.

Other Believers think they know better. They call themselves Explorers or Breakers or a hundred other names, and they refer to the other group as the Keepers of the Chains. They believe in a perfect world where dreams become real, and believe that this world and the world of Eden are not meant to be.

And then there are Believers who don't know of this struggle, and are just trying to deal with the intimidating realization that existence responds to their belief. Some can't handle it, and become Unfettered from sanity and reality.

Outside it all are the Others who come from between the worlds. Some believe them to be Unfettered who escaped from their human forms. Others assign them a much more sinister purpose.

LORE Summary

This is a source book for the Lightweight Omnipotent Roleplaying Engine. The details of the rules can be found in the base rulebook, but here is a summary:

Characters Have:

- Three attributes: Mind, Body, and Charm.
- Traits that give special abilities or disadvantages.
- Skills and Specialties that represent expertise. Skills aren't ranked; you either have them or you don't.
- Quirks that let you re-roll once per scene.
- Earned experience points that can buy new attribute points, traits, skills, and quirks.

To Roll the Dice:

- Roll two six-sided dice and add them together.
- Two ones mean an interesting failure. The player chooses what went especially wrong.
- If you roll doubles, re-roll and add the new total to the old one. Keep rolling if you get doubles again.
- Add a base attribute and the number of relevant skills you have.
- Compare the total to a target number. If it meets or exceeds the target, the roll succeeds.

Combat Rules:

- Most characters have five health points.
- Initiative proceeds from lowest to highest, but higher-initiative characters can interrupt lower-initiative characters.
- To attack, roll a normal skill roll against the target's Defense. The target gets to pick whether he's Dodging, Parrying, or taking it on his Armor.
- Armor can also reduce damage.

Modern Setting:

- The base book contains a simple Wealth system for buying items,
- An optional Facility system for campaigns that need a base of operations, and
- A Vehicular Conflict section for car chases and similar conflicts.

The Nature of Belief

Belief is the method by which the chosen few impose their will on the universe. By a massive effort, Believers are able to bend existence to cause the impossible to occur. Lightning flies from their fingertips. Animals obey their commands. Other worlds lie just a footstep away. An expression of Belief is called a **Casting**.

Modus

Each Believer has a **Modus**. A Believer's Modus is the method by which they impose their Belief. One Believer might follow the Wiccan faith, and impose his will by performing mystical rituals and ceremonies. Another Believer might simply see herself as able to commune with inanimate objects. A Believer's Modus both empowers and limits them. The Wiccan might find it easy to bring good fortune to someone, but would find it impossible to open a lock at a touch. For another, it could be the opposite.

The Modus is not required to perform Castings. All that is required is force of will. The Modus is just a way for the Believer to coerce their inflexible mind into accepting the impossible. As a Believer's understanding of reality grows, they become more able to overcome their Modus and perform truly unique acts, but their Modus still serves as their pathway to their power.

Paths

Belief tends to be displayed in similar ways for all Believers. Some think that this is the result of some sort of cosmic order, even to the disorder of Belief. Others argue that this is due to a similarity in the way people view the world. Regardless, one can categorize expressions of Belief into a series of nine Paths. When a Believer predicts the future, she is using the Knowledge Path. When she speaks into someone's mind, she is using the Mind Path.

Paths are not combined; a given manifestation of Belief is obtained by a single Path, although similar effects can be created using various Paths; for instance, melting a lock could be done with the Elemental or Transmutation Paths, depending on if one channeled Fire into the lock or merely changed the lock into a liquid.

Brief descriptions of the Paths are provided below. The descriptions of their abilities are not meant to be exhaustive. The Paths are categorizations, not limits to Belief. All that limits what one can do with Belief

is the power of one's mind. For detailed information on abilities and target numbers for Path abilities, see the Skills section.

Knowledge

The Knowledge Path allows the discovery of truth. It allows the divination of information, the prediction of the future, and the analysis of reality. Knowledge is exclusively a passive Path; it does not change the nature of existence, but simply discovers it. Because of this, the Knowledge Path is not subject to Unfettering. See the Dangers of Belief section for more on Unfettering.

Elemental

The Elemental Path governs pure elemental forces. Fire, light, cold, air, earth, electricity; all of these things are forms of energy, and can be controlled with it. A practitioner of the Elemental Path can harness all of the most primal powers of existence to do her bidding. The Elemental Path allows Believers to create, strengthen, shape, and direct elemental forces.

Transmutation

The Transmutation Path lets practitioners change the very nature of things. This is the power that turns lead into gold, or softens an iron bar so that it can be bent, or turns a man into a frog. Transmutation allows a Believer to change the nature of material entities. Substances can be transformed or shaped, and an object can be turned into another.

Suppression

The Suppression Path is responsible for the suppression and negation of Belief. With this path, Believers can make it more difficult for others to use Belief, or cancel a manifestation of Belief entirely. This is the most important Path for Regulators. The Suppression Path is not subject to Doubt. See the Dangers of Belief section for more on Doubt.

Mind

The Mind Path governs the manipulations and examination of thought. Animals, humans, and stranger things can all be contacted, examined, and manipulated with the power of thought. With the Mind Path, a Believer can read thoughts, communicate telepathically, plant suggestions or illusions, and even possess another person's body.

Nature

The Nature Path involves animal and plant life, weather, and the natural world. When using this Path

on animal life, including humans, a Believer can heal wounds, enhance natural abilities, or control the instinctual behavior of fauna. The Nature Path can grow or kill plants, control the weather, and purify or pollute streams and air. The only limits of the Nature Path are that it cannot affect Others or man-made structures, substances, and devices.

Spacetime

The Spacetime Path allows Believers to bend the fabric of space and time directly. This Path can stretch or compress linear dimensions, move things through space, connect points in space, speed up or slow down time, and manipulate gravity. Users of the Spacetime Path are able to levitate and teleport objects, accelerate their own movements, and bend space.

Fate

The Fate Path controls probability, luck, and destiny. With Fate, Believers can manipulate odds, modify a person's destiny, and cause bizarre coincidences. Practitioners of Fate can cheat at gambling, give curses or blessings, provide unnatural luck to themselves, and arrange events in their favor.

Void

The Void Path governs the space between the worlds and the nature of Belief itself. By using the Void Path, a person can open a rift to other realities, summon Others, and pull at the very strings of existence. Void Believers have the ability to summon horrific demons, to travel between worlds, and to meddle in the pure energies of reality.

Crutches

All that is required to do a Casting is Belief. As long as one Believes that something will happen, it will occur. However, in many cases, this requires great strength of will. It is much easier to Believe that a lightning bolt can be produced by waves of the hand and arcane words than to Believe that it can simply be thought into existence. These gestures and chants are Crutches.

Crutches are not required to do a Casting, but they make it easier. Arcane materials, special gestures, meditation: all these things could help a Believer change the world. The more Crutches a Believer uses, the easier it is for him to change reality.

The Dangers of Belief

Belief is powerful, but it comes with risks. These risks make it so that Believers are careful with the use of their abilities. Often, it is easier to do something the mundane way than to bend the rules of existence. It's much less risky to kick a door down than to blast it away with a fireball, and simpler to look up a person on the Internet than to cast a divination spell. However, the rewards of Belief are often worth the effort, and a Believer should never hesitate to use Belief when it is necessary.

The first risk is Doubt, the heavy weight of human disbelief. The second is Unfettering, the ever-present danger of insanity. The third is the risk of attracting Others, the creatures that live in the Void between the worlds.

Doubt

For every Believer, there are hundreds of thousands of normal people, or Mundanes. These people are convinced that Reality is simple and immutable, and their combined force of will is greater than even the most powerful Believer. To make a Casting, a Believer must overcome this Doubt with the power of her will.

This task is easier if the Casting could more easily be accepted by a normal person. Shooting lightning from one's hands at someone is likely to incur a large amount of Doubt, while making a nearby electrical transformer arc to the person is much easier to accept. Generally speaking, the more plausible a Casting would be to someone who doesn't know about Belief, the less Doubt the Believer has to overcome. Reality itself resists modifications to the status quo.

Doubt is even more powerful if the Casting is observed by someone who is not a Believer. The more Mundanes who can observe a Casting, the more difficult it is to successfully complete. However, in order to count as observing a Casting, the Mundane must realize that something strange is going on. If the effects of the Casting are not noticed by the observer, or if the observer dismisses the effects as mundane in origin, that observer does not count for purposes of Doubt. People count as observers for this purpose if they are indirectly observing an event as it is happening (for example, on live television) but not if they observe it after the effect (on a videotape).

Tricking a Mundane into thinking that a Casting is a stage magic trick or the product of technology

means that they do not count as an observer for the purposes of Doubt. However, there are two important catches to this rule. First, the non-Believer must actually think that the Casting has a mundane explanation. Second, they must believe this at the time that the Casting occurs; it does not work if they are only convinced after the fact.

Unfettering

In order to change reality, one must Believe strongly enough that it becomes real. However, there is always the risk that one believes strongly enough to convince oneself, but not to convince the world around them. This is dangerous for Believers, and can lead to Unfettering, a state where one exists in one's own reality and drifts through the real one, sending ripples of twisted Belief out from themselves.

If a Believer fails horribly at a Casting, they will convince themselves that it has worked, but will not convince reality. Effectively, they split themselves off a little from everyone else's existence, into an almost-parallel world connected to this one but subtly different. As far as the failed Believer knows, her attempt succeeded; but others see the Believer as Unfettered.

When a Believer is Unfettered, the spell she tried to cast "bleeds" out from her, releasing its effects in an uncontrolled fashion as the two worlds try to attain equilibrium. Left to their own devices, the two worlds will merge again, and the Believer will understand what has happened. However, if the Believer continues to attempt and fail Castings, she will become more and more detached until she vanishes from this world and becomes lost in the Void between the worlds.

Others

The last risk of Belief is the chance of attracting Others. In the Void between the worlds live creatures beyond human understanding. Normally, they cannot enter our reality, but Belief and Castings weaken reality and make ripples in the Void that attract Others. Each time a Casting is made, there is a chance that an Other will slip in through a rift in reality into our world. The more Castings are made in an area in quick succession, the easier it is for Others to slip through.

There are several kinds of Others, from simple Figments that manifest as unusual phenomena to

terrible Horrors that surpass even human intelligence and perversity. Others seek our reality because of its hospitable environment, but ironically, they often tend to try to shape our world to resemble their strange home. In the worst case, an Other can twist the minds of Mundanes in order to modify the local status quo and turn a patch of this world into something from another reality.

Societies of Believers

It is a difficult thing to be gifted and alone. Believers tend to find each other through their skills and form into groups dedicated to a common purpose. These groups take several forms, depending on the goals and perspectives of the Believers involved.

Every group of Believers is, in the end, motivated by one core concept: the world is not as it should be. When a person can change reality, he is likely to believe that it should be changed, for the better. Different groups hold different views of what the world should be, and often work at cross purposes.

The following are some broad categories of Believer societies, and some examples of specific groups. Not every Believer will fit into one of these categories, but these are the most common approaches that Believers follow. Some Believers know of other categories, while others may not even know the name of the one they belong to.

Explorers

This world is not as it should be. Somewhere out there is a world called Eden or the Promised Land or the Prime Reality or Fairy, and this world is just a pale shadow of perfection. Explorers believe that by searching through the Void, they can find a world of ancient power and somehow transform this reality into a better one.

Explorers often concentrate on the Void Path in order to travel between the worlds. Many Explorers are members of small, independent groups, on personal quests to recover magical items, discover lost worlds, or simply study the dimensions. Other Explorers are part of grand organizations dedicated to a common purpose.

The Astral Cartographers

This group of Explorers is a scattered association of scholars. Their stated purpose is to explore the worlds of the Void and catalog them, forming maps and finding a pattern among the chaos. The Cartographers believe that, given sufficient understanding, a path or trend will be discovered that points the way to Origin, a world with no Doubt where everyone can live in happiness with the many worlds permanently connected through collective Belief.

The Cartographers form small study groups of three to eight scholars and spread out across the world

to seek out ancient wisdom and hide their efforts from the less enlightened. They share their knowledge and experience through quarterly journals and various secret Internet forums. Some groups actually go out into the Void and explore; others merely collate information in this reality.

Regulators

This world is not as it should be. There is a cancer spreading: a cancer of Belief. Power from outside this reality has leaked in and given some people the strange ability to bend reality. Regulators believe that the proper use of this ability is to protect reality and the status quo. Believers who disrupt the natural order of things by traveling the worlds and creating magic or hyper-tech need to be stopped for the good of everyone.

Regulators almost always concentrate on the Suppression Path, as it allows them to stop other Believers' Castings and minimize the damage they cause. Some Regulators are strict, almost fanatical soldier types who believe in protecting reality at all costs by hunting down rogue Believers and invading Others. Other Regulators take a more tolerant approach, preferring to pick their battles and focus on the worst offenders while allowing more harmless Believers to continue their activities as long as they don't cross the line.

Believers who know and reject various groups of Regulators sometimes call them the Keepers of the Chains, because the Regulators try to strengthen the bonds of Doubt and the status quo that make Belief more difficult for everyone else. Regulators, in turn, will often call other Believers "Aberrants."

Section 17

There is a branch of the US FBI dedicated to strange and unusual phenomena. Despite jokes about spooks and paranoia, the FBI realizes that there are things out there that cannot be explained by normal science, and created Section 17 to investigate these things. Through research programs into childhood parapsychology, the FBI has recruited Believers and trained them to investigate and prevent crimes involving Belief and intrusions of the Others.

Section 17 is based in FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C., and sends small teams of operatives out to investigate strange occurrences. These teams usually consist of one or two Believers accompanied by several Mundane support personnel.

While the agents will not hesitate to arrest or fire upon an active threat to national and universal security, they generally look the other way if the strange phenomena are caused by Believers who are careful with their abilities and mean no harm.

Breakers

This world is not as it should be. It is a prison for the mind. The unrelenting status quo tricks humanity into believing that this is the only world, when in reality so much more is possible. Breakers believe that Mundanes are victims of a cruel world that suppresses originality and Belief, and take up the cause of freeing others from the shackles of a Doubt-filled existence.

Breakers concentrate on a wide range of Paths, but will often take at least a bit of Mind, to help understand and convince others of the truth. Some Breakers take a gentle, patient approach, saving a mind or two at a time or causing random acts of weirdness in an attempt to disrupt Mundanes' way of thinking. Other Breakers take their name a bit more literally, and try to shatter reality's walls through acts of terrorism or large-scale rituals designed to tear a hole in space-time and save many minds at once.

The Golden Apple Corps

Named after the golden apple of Discord that started the Trojan War, and inspired by 60's-era counter-cultural postmodernism, the Golden Apple Corps seeks to sow chaos in order to cause a paradigm shift in peoples' minds. They draw on esoteric pop religions like Discordianism and the Church of the Subgenius, as well as LSD and designer drug culture. By disrupting the status quo, the Corps believe they can inspire Mundanes to become Believers.

The Corps is a cell-based organization, where members only know the fellow members of their small cell and perhaps one contact in another cell. Each cell works independently to foil the actions of the Establishment (and various Regulator groups) by using acts of (generally non-violent) willful insanity and inanity. A Corps cell action is more likely to resemble a Monty Python skit than a terrorist attack. On a more serious note, the Corps actively battles Others that seek to suppress and control human thought and Belief.

Architects

This world is not as it should be. Everything is so

dull and uninspired. The mind can conceive of so much more if it is only released from the limitations of common thinking. Architects see Belief as a means toward producing a Great Work. They focus their creativity through their belief and create masterpieces that bend the rules of reality.

Architects may be artists, scientists, utopian thinkers, or craft-persons. Depending on the individual, the Transmutation Path is likely to be important, but the Nature and Elemental Paths are also common. Architects usually adopt a patient and careful perspective toward producing their works, but when their self-control fails, Architects can embody the worst concepts about mad scientists and crazed artists.

The Summit of Transcendental Science

Every year, a group of Believers gathers in a remote retreat in the Rocky Mountains to demonstrate their genius. For a week, the sprawling ski lodge is converted to the world's foremost science fair. Freeze rays, androids, bioengineered monkey-ponies: nothing is too unlikely or dangerous for the attendees of the Summit. Accidents do happen, and Others are attracted by the concentration of Belief, but that just serves as a way for the attendees to show off their scientific prowess.

When not at the Summit, the attendees rarely have contact. Many adopt pseudonyms during the convention, and genius seems to go hand-in-hand with antisocial tendencies. However, for seven days, the attendees are in their element, among other great thinkers with perhaps more inspiration than caution.

Neonates

This world is not as it should be. People aren't supposed to have these powers, but you do, and you don't know where they come from. In the absence of public knowledge about Belief or any sort of overarching organization, many Believers awake to their abilities without any true knowledge of the reason behind them. The patronizing term other Believers use to describe these innocents is "Neonate," which literally means "infant." Neonates don't quite know how to use their abilities, but they tend to be drawn to each other through confused Internet forum posts and conspiracy theory newsletters.

Most Neonates band together to seek out knowledge and information about their condition. This may lead them to have adventures among the

dangers of untrained Belief, or may cause them to adopt one of the more common Believer philosophies and join a proper society. Regardless, the path of the Neonate is primarily one of discovery.

There is no organized group of Neonates. The closest things are the training schools or recruitment branches of the larger Believer societies, who seek out Neonates to bring them around to their individual ways of thinking.

Cosmology

The Belief universe is a broad one. Most of the details will depend on the GM and the sort of campaign she wishes to run, but there are some general facts that will remain the same.

Reality

Reality, our reality, is a world of the status quo. The overwhelming majority of people do not believe in magic. They share a collective belief in the way the world works that is difficult to overcome. Any attempt to change this status quo must fight against Belief.

The walls of reality are strong, but they can be weakened by Castings. Each time a Believer bends reality, there is a weakening of the barriers around this world, and that weakness attracts Others from the void. In time, the billions of minds strengthen the barriers again, but in the meantime things from elsewhere can push through into this world.

It is difficult to separate oneself from this reality. Doing it safely is even harder; this requires enough Belief to wrap a little reality around oneself, to protect from the ravages of the Void. It can definitely be done, though. Some Believers regularly travel to other worlds, while others might only do so once when the need is great.

The Void

The Void is a place without rules or structure. Rules of logic, scientific laws, all of these things simply don't exist in the Void, as there is no status quo to enforce them. The Void is unbridled chaos, and merely continuing to exist within it is difficult. Without sufficient belief to hold oneself together, atomic bonds split apart and chemistry boils away.

The weakest minds that land in the Void unprotected shatter, and become Figments, tiny scraps of Belief that wash up in worlds and evaporate with the faintest of results. Stronger unprotected minds hold on to a semblance of instinct, and become Gremlins, which are beings of pure impulse and obsession. The strongest minds maintain their individual consciousness, but are stripped of their identity. These Horrors become creatures from dreams and nightmares when they arrive in a world; they grasp onto the strongest available status quo belief and make an identity out of it. The most strongly-willed and alien Horrors somehow manage

to survive in the Void and form an existence out of the chaos there. When they break into a world, they do so as horrific, shifting beings that strain human comprehension.

There are two basic ways to protect oneself while traveling through the Void. The easiest is to make a temporary link between two worlds. This corridor of Belief protects travelers as they move from one world to the next, but it is a temporary and limited mode of transportation. Each bridge only connects two worlds, and generally only lasts for a matter of hours at the most before it dissolves. There are, however, stories of permanent portals between the worlds which are either naturally-occurring or powered by incredibly strong Belief.

The other way to travel is to built a Voidship. Voidships are tiny worlds, self-contained realities that can move through the Void and land in other worlds. Voidships often take the form of spaceships or similar vehicles, but this isn't necessary; a Voidship could take the form of a phone booth, a floating island, or anything else the creator chooses. Voidships are more versatile than bridges, and they allow travelers to stay in the Void for extended periods, but they carry a risk. Others are attracted to Voidships just as they are attracted to Belief, and a trip in one may require the travelers to battle or avoid mobs of Others searching for existence.

Other Worlds

In addition to our reality, there are other worlds floating in the void. Each of these worlds has its own status quo, and follows different rules than ours. In one world, magic might be completely normal, but science is regarded as a fairy tale. In another, fairies may actually exist, and sometimes travel to our reality to play tricks on Mundanes.

These different status quos can make Castings much easier. In a world where the status quo aligns with a Believer's Modus, that Believer can generally ignore Doubt while casting, even if she is being observed by the Mundanes of that world. However, the different physical laws of that world may mean that devices that are normal here, like CD players or pistols, require Castings to even work at all.

Just as Believers from our world visit other worlds, their Believers sometimes come here. These beings may be quite different from humans, and it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between Believers from another world and Others. Generally,

alien Believers come of their own accord, while Others are drawn instinctively by the use of Belief.

Eden

Some Believers, especially Explorers and Breakers, speak of a world somewhere in the Void that is the original home of sentient life. Some call this place Eden, others Shangri-la or Paradise or the Primary Dimension. Stories vary as to how we left Eden. Some claim that there was a mistake, or we were cast out, or we simply drifted away. Other people tell stories of a great cataclysm that split apart a larger, better reality, of which Eden is just the most faithful shard.

The stories about Eden share one fact: Eden is a place without Doubt or a status quo. It's a place where even Mundanes can Believe, and make anything their heart desires come true. For many, this sounds like a perfect world. For others, especially Regulators, it sounds like a recipe for chaos and anarchy.

No one really knows whether Eden actually exists. It seems reasonable that if anyone had found it, Believers and Mundanes alike would know. On the other hand, it might be difficult to leave a world where your every thought came true. Eden is a tempting and terrifying idea.

Casting Mechanics

To create a Casting, a character must make a Mind roll modified by the appropriate Path skills. A character must have the appropriate primary skill for a Path in order to create an effect in that Path, but does not require the specialty for a technique to use that technique. Each Path is described in the Belief Skills section, with descriptions of possible effects.

The target number of a Casting roll is usually 6, modified by Crutches and Doubt. Some applications of Belief have additional modifiers, which are described under the appropriate specialty skills.

Using Crutches

Using a Crutch for a Casting gives bonuses to a Believer's Casting roll. The more elaborate a Crutch is, the easier it makes a roll. Crutches can be combined, so that a Believer gestures and consumes arcane substances at the same time for increased effect. Each Crutch gives a certain numerical bonus to a Casting roll, and combined Crutches add

together. The table below provides sample bonuses, but Believers may use any Crutch that fits their Modus.

Additional Believers may act as an assistant to a primary Believer's Casting. Each assistant effectively becomes a Crutch with a Casting bonus equal to her Mind plus her relevant skills.

The GM has final say in how large of a bonus is provided by a Crutch. Believers will often have standard Crutches that they carry around, like wands (+1), elaborate mystical tattoos (+2), or complicated technological devices (+2). These are often dedicated to a specific Path, so that a Believer with a Modus of traditional magic would use alchemical reagents for Transmutation and a crystal ball for Knowledge.

To help with a complicated Casting, a Believer will often combine several Crutches. She may go to an ancient circle of stones (+4), light a brazier (+2), draw a complex diagram (+4), speak a complex spell (+2), and burn a rare herb (+2) for a total Crutch bonus of +14 on her Casting check.

Description	Sample Crutches	Casting Bonus
Quick Crutches that do not prolong Casting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift gestures • Short chants or magic words • Using up easily obtained substances like ash or oil • The presence of a simple focus, device or talisman 	+1
Crutches that require a small amount of time or preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate gestures or movements • Long spells or songs • Using up costly or rare substances like eye of newt or gold dust • The presence of complex devices or talismans • The destruction of a simple focus, device, or talisman • The presence of natural fire 	+2
Complicated Crutches that significantly delay or complicate Casting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated drawn spell circles • Bulky or highly complex apparatus • Hours of study or chanting • The destruction of a complex device or talisman • Using up very rare or dangerous substances like a virgin's tears or plutonium • A specific Casting location with strong significance 	+4
One-of-a-kind Crutches that involve dedicated preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hundreds of chanting assistants • Incredibly valuable substances like a fragment of the Cross • Human sacrifice • Cosmically significant circumstances like a planetary alignment • Extreme preparation like the construction of a cyclotron or the detonation of an atomic bomb 	+16

Doubt

Doubt has the effect of increasing the target number of a Casting roll. This increase depends on the "subtlety level" of the effect. The table below gives examples of Castings and the Doubt modifiers to the target number for each level.

The presence of non-Believer observers multiplies the Doubt modifier to the Belief roll. The table to the right gives the multipliers to the Doubt modifiers for various numbers of non-Believer observers:

For a few examples: if two non-Believers observe an attempt at a Subtle Casting, the total Doubt modifier to the Casting roll is $+2 \times 2$, or $+4$.

If 13 people observe a Blatant Casting attempt, the total Doubt modifier to the Casting roll is $+6 \times 4$, or $+24$.

A character counts as an observer if he can detect either the Believer doing the Casting or the target of the Casting. He need not recognize that something

has occurred; his observation of the object is enough to provide resistance to Belief.

Sometimes a Believer can do Castings in such a way that it fools bystanders into believing that the effect is a trick or conforms to the status quo reality. In this case, any fooled observers do not count for the purposes of Doubt. The observers must be fooled at the time of the Casting; explaining it away after the fact does not retroactively change the target number of a roll.

Number of Non-Believer Observers Doubt Multiplier

None	x1
1-3	x2
4-10	x3
11-50	x4
51-200	x5
More than 200	x10

Subtlety Level	Example Castings	Target Number Modifier
Covert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guessing or modifying the result of a coin toss • Convincing someone to do something reasonable • Anything from the Suppression Path • Slightly enhancing an action or ability 	+1
Subtle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining general information (such as a weather forecast) through Belief • Causing a convenient coincidence like a sudden power surge or gust of wind • Convincing someone to do what they would not otherwise do • Enhancing an action or ability noticeably 	+2
Obvious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining specific information (such as lottery numbers) through Belief • Lighting a fire with Belief • Calling lightning from the sky or creating a localized earthquake • Enhancing an action or ability to superhuman levels • Summoning an animal or creating an object from thin air 	+4
Blatant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firing lightning from the fingertips • Summoning an unnatural monster • Transforming into an animal • Doing the clearly impossible 	+6

Unfettering

When a Believer performs a Casting, he is taking a risk. There is a fine line between bending Reality with your mind and just bending your mind. If a believer's willpower is weaker than his faith, he can fool himself into thinking he has succeeded in a Casting when he has actually failed. This separates him slightly from reality, and places him in risk of breaking off altogether.

If a Believer rolls an interesting failure (snake eyes) on a Casting roll, the player does not narrate an interesting failure as usual. Instead, the Believer begins to become Unfettered. Unfettering has two symptoms: **Denial** and **Bleeding**. Denial hides the truth from the Believer, and Bleeding affects bystanders.

Denial

The Believer who rolled an interesting failure sees and experiences the world as if he succeeded. The rabid dog was calmed down, the door was unlocked, or the bullet was stopped in midair.

However, in reality the attempt failed. The dog is advancing on the Believer, the door stands firm, or the bullet hit its target. The force of Denial is hiding the truth from the Unfettered Believer.

The Believer's reality and the true reality are still linked; his companions can tell him that his attempt didn't work, and his actions continue to occur in the true reality. However, he is still unable to see the direct results of his failure. This can be especially dangerous during combat. Denial can hide enemies and even injuries from the Unfettered. Unfettered Believers suffer no wound penalties from injuries that are masked by Denial... until they return to reality. At that point, all the things that have been hidden "catch up" with them at once.

Normally, an Unfettered Believer's body moves in the true reality like it does in his split-off reality. However, if he does something that makes his reality impossible to reconcile with the true reality, he falls unconscious in the true reality. For example, if a character becomes Unfettered while failing to open a lock, then walks through the actually-locked door, his real body hits the closed door and falls unconscious.

Meanwhile, the Believer doesn't notice, thanks to his mind's ability to fill in the blanks, as discussed below. Once the Believer rejoins the true reality, his real body awakens.

Filling in the Blanks

If an Unfettered Believer observes something because of Denial which is still hidden from him in the true reality, the most appropriate observation is supplied by his own mind. The Unfettered character is subconsciously "filling in the blanks" with his own mind.

For example, if a character becomes Unfettered as the result of a Casting that gives him x-ray vision, the character is able, through Denial, to see through walls. What he sees, however, will not be what is actually there. He will probably see an approximation, based on what he knows is in adjacent rooms.

The GM decides exactly how an Unfettered Believer fills in the blanks.

Bleeding

At the same time as the Unfettered character experiences Denial in his own world, those around him see side effects in the true reality. As the Unfettered reality tries to achieve equilibrium with the true reality, the effects of the failed Casting "Bleed" into the true reality.

This takes the form of an aura around the Unfettered Believer that has a similar effect as the Casting he was trying to perform, but never proves as useful. A Casting to create light will result in a visible, glowing aura that somehow fails to illuminate anything. A Casting to turn lead to gold will result in some things around the Unfettered to turn to gold for the duration of the Unfettering. A Casting to read a person's mind will cause the people around the Unfettered to experience short flashes of telepathy.

Any direct results of the Bleeding, like transformations and spatial distortions, will go away when the Unfettered character returns to reality. Any indirect results, like burns from elemental fire or broken furniture, will remain.

The GM decides exactly how Bleeding manifests. The Unfettered character cannot detect the Bleeding or its direct results, but can see indirect results of the Bleeding.

Unfettering Mechanics

Unfettering begins whenever a Believer rolls an interesting failure on a Casting roll. Instead of the player narrating an interesting failure, the character becomes Unfettered.

Simple Unfettering Example

Jonathan and his friends are being pursued by a Regulator down a highway. Jonathan decides to try and give the Regulator's car a flat tire by weakening it with heat. He rolls for his Casting attempt, but rolls two ones. He sees the Regulator's car blow out and drive off of the road into a tree. He relaxes.

His friends, however, see the truth: nothing has happened, and the Regulator is still chasing them. Waves of heat are rippling away from Jonathan. They tell him that he has become Unfettered, and he decides to refrain from Casting until he recovers.

Because Jonathan cannot see the Regulator's car (to him, it has crashed), he's not much help in the rest of the chase, but they manage to escape anyway, and he returns to reality once they're safely home.

To everyone else, it appears as if the roll has simply failed, and nothing has happened. However, the Believer sees the Casting succeed. She is not mistaken or insane; she has become slightly disconnected from reality, and the truth is hidden by her Denial.

On the next turn, the Unfettered character begins Bleeding the Casting which caused her to become Unfettered. If nothing else goes wrong, the character rejoins true reality at the end of the scene.

Compounding Unfettering

Things can always get worse. Being Unfettered makes the Believer's connection with reality more tenuous. This makes Casting much more risky. If an Unfettered character tries a Casting and succeeds, the Belief effect occurs in both realities as normal.

However, if the Believer tries to do another Casting and fails, the Unfettering gets worse. This need not be an interesting failure. Once a character is Unfettered, *any Casting failure* will make it get worse.

The length of the Unfettering is increased by one scene for each new failure, and each new Casting effect joins the existing Bleeding. At the end of each scene, the oldest Bleeding effect fades, but the Unfettered Believer's Denial doesn't go away until the entire Unfettering period is over.

Compound Unfettering Example

Maureen is exploring a haunted house with her companions. It is dark, so she tries to make a floating light with the Elemental Path. She rolls two ones (snake eyes) on her Casting roll and becomes Unfettered. She sees the light brightening her path. Her friends see an aura of eerie, flickering light around her, but it doesn't help with the darkness. She continues exploring, with her friends doing the best they can. At this point, her Unfettering would normally be over at the end of the scene.

Later in the same scene, they come across a locked cabinet. Maureen tries to break open the lock with Transmutation, but fails. She sees the lock break open, but her companions see it stay closed. Additionally, small objects near her begin to snap in half as the lock-breaking effect Bleeds out. Now, the Unfettering will take two scenes to go away.

Maureen's friends see her mime opening a locked cabinet, then scream. In Maureen's reality, she opens the cabinet and finds a corpse inside, which falls out toward her. The corpse is made by her frightened mind filling in the blanks. She tries to use Belief to push it away... and fails again. She shoves it away in her reality. Her friends see nothing; they don't even know why she is screaming. However, they do notice the strange gusts of wind bursting away from her.

At the end of the scene, the light aura fades away, but the breaking and pushing Bleeding effects will continue. She still has two more scenes before the Unfettering totally heals.

Becoming Lost

There is one final risk to Unfettering. Each time the Unfettering gets worse, there is a higher and higher risk that the Believer will completely separate from existence, and vanish to drift in the Void.

Each time an existing Unfettering worsens, the character must make a LORE roll modified by their Mind. The target number is the number of times their Unfettering has gotten worse (including the initial Unfettering). If they fail this roll, they become separated from existence and vanish from the real world. Their physical form disappears, and any Bleeding effects fade away. From the character's perspective, nothing immediate happens, but the world will slowly dissolve around them over the

course of days as their splinter reality is absorbed into the Void. It is like a waking nightmare.

The initial interesting failure that causes the Unfettering carries no risk of becoming lost, and the player need not roll. However, every time it gets worse a roll is required, and even on the first roll, two ones is an automatic failure.

The only way to rescue a lost character is to go into the Void to find them. Because the character is enclosed in a splinter reality, they can exist for quite some time in a world that will make less and less sense. Exactly how long is up to the GM, but is likely to be just enough time for players to mount a dramatic rescue, if they are so inclined.

Others

Every time a character uses Belief, it weakens the fabric of reality and sends out ripples in the Void that attract Others, beings that are the remnants of minds floating free in the Void. Each time a Casting occurs, there is a chance that an Other appears.

To determine if anything slips through, make an Other check. Whenever a character successfully makes a Casting, make a LORE roll and add the number of Castings successfully made in that scene, including the one just made. Additionally, add the number of Others that have appeared in the location in this scene. The table below indicates what Others, if any, appear. Even if an Other does appear, the Casting succeeds as usual.

Other Check

Result	Consequence of Casting
2-8	No Others appear
9-10	1 minor Figment appears
11-12	1 major Figment appears
13-14	2 minor Figments and 1 major Figment appear
15-18	1 minor Gremlin appears
19-22	1 major Gremlin appears
23-26	2 major Figments, 1 minor Gremlin, and 1 major Gremlin appear
27-32	1 minor Horror appears
33-36	1 major Horror appears
37+	2 major Figments, 2 major Gremlins, and 1 major Horror appear

Special modifiers can also apply to this roll. Mundanes believe that reality is stronger or thinner in certain places, so it actually is. If a location has a reputation for being eerie, like a graveyard or supposed haunted house, there is a +2 to the Other check. If it is famous for its mystical or occult significance, like Stonehenge or the Bermuda Triangle, there is a +4 to the Other check. On the other hand, a location of reason and logic or of faith, like a university or a church, provides a -2 to this check. A famous location of great faith or science, such as St. Paul's Cathedral or Cape Canaveral, provides a -4 to the Other check. Effects from the Suppression and Void Paths can also apply modifiers to this check.

Castings from the Suppression Path reinforce reality, so they never cause Other checks or count toward the number of Castings in the scene for purposes of Other checks.

The full equation for the Other check is:

$$\text{Other check} = \text{LORE roll} + \text{Castings this scene} + \text{Others this scene} + \text{Modifiers}$$

This means that Others tend to “snowball;” once one Other appears, it's more likely that more will follow. Wise Believers limit their frequency of Castings to reduce this risk.

When an Other appears, the Believer who performed the Casting can tell that something strange happened, but does not know what. A practitioner of the Knowledge Path can use Othersight to detect, locate, and identify Others.

There are three general kinds of Others: Figments, Gremlins, and Horrors. There are minor and major versions of each. The Others appear nearby, but not necessarily in line of sight. Figments typically appear in the same room, Gremlins appear nearby, and Horrors can manifest as much as a city block away. The GM decides just where an Other appears.

The Belief used by Others does not trigger Other checks or contribute to the number of Castings in a scene for the purpose of an Other check.

Others can be banished using the Void Path.

Figments

Figments are the most harmless kind of Other. They are the remnants of minds torn to shreds by the chaos of the Void. Figments are not intelligent, and fade after only a few minutes, merging with reality.

As the smallest of all Others, Figments easily slip through cracks in reality, but they have no real motivations and have a very limited ability to affect the world around them.

Minor Figments

Minor Figments are almost unnoticeable. They are tiny modifications of reality in a location, such as a sudden chill in the air or a feeling of uneasiness. The following list gives some examples of minor Figments, and may be rolled on with 1d6 if a GM does not wish to come up with her own ideas.

Example Minor Figments

1. Sudden chill in the air, crawling skin, or feeling of uneasiness
2. Flickering lights, flaring candles, or crash of thunder
3. Strange air currents or smells
4. Eerie creaking from walls or sudden shift of rocks
5. Swarm of spiders, insects, or centipedes scurries out of nearby holes
6. Odd headaches or dizziness to all in location

Major Figments

Major Figments are more significant than minor ones, but are still not harmful. They are decidedly unnatural occurrences that go against the natural order of things. The following table gives some examples of major Figments, and may be rolled on with 1d6 if a GM does not wish to come up with her own ideas.

Example Major Figments

1. Sudden unintelligible voices from nowhere or a distant scream
2. The strong smell of rotting flesh or a mist that burns the eyes and nose
3. Doors shaking, objects falling over, or wallpaper bulging
4. Faces appearing in windows or movement in the corners of the eyes
5. All electronics failing or strong static electricity charge in the air
6. Distortion of distances or angles or changes in the strength of gravity

Gremlins

Gremlins are actual creatures, of a sort, with a limited intelligence and the ability to act with purpose. As their name suggests, they often seem to simply be causing mischief, although there can be

more complex motives behind their actions. Gremlins can have strange powers, but they are not particularly formidable in a confrontation.

Gremlins are the remnants of minds that were strong enough to survive the Void in some form, but not strong enough to retain identity or anything but a vague sense of purpose.

After entering reality, Gremlins will pursue their tasks for a scene or three before fading back into the Void.

Minor Gremlins

Minor Gremlins tend to have very limited abilities, and are not very smart or strong. They are small in size, ranging from the size of a rat to the size of a small dog. Their form can be entirely corporeal or almost nonexistent, and they can come in all shapes, from humanoid to indistinct blobs. Each minor Gremlin has a single thing that it is good at, and that it will try to do to the exclusion of all else. A minor Gremlin has a -5 in all base attributes and no skills except for those necessary to do their task. In this one area, they are just as skilled as a human master of that field, if not more so, getting a total +8 to these rolls.

The following are three example minor Gremlins. GMs are encouraged to make up their own.

Pattern Gremlin

The Pattern Gremlin is a creature that makes complex patterns or designs in any available medium. These designs are complex and geometric, often incorporating radial symmetry and circular shapes. No meaning has been found in these patterns, and every one is different. The Pattern Golem has the ability to make patterns in whatever is at hand: crop circles are the result of Pattern Gremlins manifesting near fields, while a Pattern Gremlin which appears inside might manipulate a television to display a pattern or just scorch a design into wallpaper as big as the wall.

Pattern Gremlins appear as round creatures as large as a dinner plate. They resemble their designs in their geometric appearance and their radial symmetry, although the designs they make do not match their own form. They have the ability to climb smooth surfaces, and can move incredibly quickly, especially when creating a design. An enormous crop circle could be completed by a single tiny Pattern Gremlin in a matter of minutes.

Goo Gremlin

The Goo Gremlin resembles a quickly-replicating slime mold. When it first manifests, it is nothing more than a small puddle of slimy, stringy ooze, easily overlooked. However, it soon begins growing, spreading over any available surface. Its mode of sustenance is unclear, as it doesn't appear to consume any solid matter. It simply spreads, coating everything it touches with gooey, slightly oily slime. Each Goo Gremlin is a different color, anywhere from fluorescent pink to dull charcoal. Each Goo Gremlin also has a distinctive smell, which seems entirely random; cheese or fruit smells are common. A Goo Gremlin grows at a rate of nine square feet a minute. At the end of the scene, the entire mass evaporates, leaving behind no trace.

The ooze of a Goo Gremlin can be boiled away by heat or destroyed with many household chemicals, leaving behind a gummy residue that evaporates when the rest of the Gremlin does. Any surface that has been cleaned in this way is never re-infested by the goo. Scraping or wiping away the goo does not help; it merely transfers the stuff to a new surface, where it continues spreading.

Shriek Gremlin

A Shriek Gremlin is a tiny creature that resembles a floppy-eared, large-mouthed mouse. It scampers to a safe location, showing excellent climbing skills, then begins emitting a horrible, ear-splitting shriek. It is able to constantly emit this piercing noise from its enormous mouth without pausing for breath. The noise is near the upper range of human hearing, and is loud enough to prevent any conversation in the same room. Finding the source of the noise can be difficult, as the Shriek Gremlin likes to hide under furniture and in small holes. If the Shriek Gremlin survives for an entire scene, it vanishes, leaving behind only a quiet echo and possible ringing in the ears.

Major Gremlins

Major Gremlins are special among the lesser Others. They possess the ability to use Belief to a limited extent. Each major Gremlin has mastery over a single portion of a single Path, such as the ability to create and control fire or the ability to turn straw into gold. The Gremlin pursues the use of this power single-mindedly, and seeks to make the most

spectacular use of it in their limited time in this reality. Due to this behavior, major Gremlins are often perceived as malevolent, but they apparently simply do not care what effect they have on bystanders in their obsessive quest.

Major Gremlins are typically the size of children, and humanoid to a certain extent. Their appearance reflects their purpose (the Path ability they possess). Major Gremlins are sentient and capable of rational thought, although they are not as smart or strong as the average person. They are capable of speech, and seem to always speak and understand the language of the Believer responsible for their manifestation. A major Gremlin has a -2 in all base attributes and no skills except those pertaining to their Belief abilities. In this narrow area, they possess skills equivalent to a human master.

Two examples of major Gremlins follow, but GMs are especially encouraged to be creative with these creatures. No major Gremlin is like another.

Pyros Charnelhouse

This Gremlin controls fire, from the Elemental Path. He looks like a young boy who has been horribly burned in a furnace; his skin is blackened and cracked, and horrid wet redness can be seen in places on his naked body. His eyes, ears, nose, and mouth glow red, and he is surrounded by a haze of smoke. Pyros lives for the blaze, and is able to create and control fire. He immediately begins igniting things around him, and cuts a swath of destruction through the area for as long as he is able to stay in this world.

Stumble Antipathy

This is a Gremlin with control over probability, from the Fate Path. She resembles a cute, unnaturally innocent-looking little girl in an elaborate lacy dress. Stumble makes things break. All around her, bad luck reigns. Devices fail, people trip, and objects fall off of shelves. Stumble instinctively heads for places where she can spread the greatest amount of misfortune.

Horrors

Horrors are intimidating creatures, intelligent and powerful. Horrors can resemble demons, angels, vampires, and aliens, to name just a few. The most powerful Horrors are beyond most human understanding, and knowledge of their very existence

has been known to drive weak minds mad.

Horrors are the strongest kind of minds to have weathered the Void. They retain full sentience and a weak sense of identity, but not enough to remember or maintain their original form.

Minor Horrors

Minor Horrors lack the ability to create their own identity, so they borrow one from the superstitions and beliefs of the status quo. Centuries ago, this would have meant only demons, elves, talking beasts, angels, nature spirits, and similar creatures. However, in the modern day there are even stronger monsters and hopes: the child-snatching pervert, the benevolent alien, or the organ-stealing femme fatale.

When a minor Horror first manifests, it latches onto a superstition or strong belief and makes that its identity. The Horror gains qualities that people assign to that entity. A Horror that becomes a vampire may get supernatural charisma and the ability to resurrect itself, but is also destroyed by sunlight and stakes to the heart. A Horror that becomes the public's worst nightmares of a terrorist would gain tremendous abilities of bomb-making and planning, but would be stymied by airport security procedures that a seven-year-old could bypass.

Not all Horrors are actually horrible; some take hold of positive superstitions. Unfortunately, though, there are many more nightmares in peoples' minds than there are hopeful dreams. Even the benevolent Horrors are simply playacting, however; they don't truly understand ethics or feelings. They only do what is expected of the role they adopted.

The GM can choose to build a minor Horror as a full character or simply construct a simple summary of its abilities. If the Horror is meant to be a long-term antagonist, it should be fully built. If it is expected to last only a scene, the simple summary approach is best.

The GM may want to prepare a minor Horror or two in advance to save time when the characters unexpectedly summon one.

To build a minor Horror as a full character, use the Troubled slot template from the base LORE book. The Crippling trait that template requires should be some sort of weakness that the characters can exploit. The GM should be creative in making up new traits for minor Horrors.

To create a quick Horror summary, first decide

what sort of superstition-born creature the Horror is. Pick three powers or abilities it has. The Horror has a +4 total modifier to any rolls involving those abilities, and a +0 to any other rolls. Now pick a weakness for the Horror that is appropriate to its chosen identity. Other than these qualities, the Horror is like an average human, with base attributes of zero, five health levels, and no other traits or skills.

Some examples of Others follow, built using the summary method.

The Masked Killer

Thanks to horror movies and sensational news stories, the public has created the myth of the masked killer: a person so insane that they simply kill like a machine, and are nearly-unstoppable.

The Masked Killer stalks its victims, and dispatches them in cruel and artistic ways. It wields a glittering butcher's knife and has a mask made out of black plastic trash bags.

Abilities:

- Strength: The Masked Killer gets a +4 to all rolls related to physical strength, and an Extra Healthy health level.
- Stealth: The Masked Killer gets a +4 to all stealth rolls. Additionally, it will feign death if reduced to its Busted health level, only to attack when its pursuers have relaxed.
- Perception: The Masked Killer can always find a victim's hiding place. It also is able to sense sin and transgression, and will seek out trysting teenagers or underage drinkers as priority victims.

Weakness:

- The Last Girl: If the Killer tries to kill someone (of either gender) and she escapes, the Killer loses its Stealth and Perception abilities and can do nothing except chase the escaped victim until she or it dies. If the Killer kills the victim, it regains its lost abilities.

The Black Coyote

On the edge of metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona, the desert is being turned into housing developments and golf courses. Chance encounters with displaced animals and occasional minor incidents have spawned concerns about the dangers of living where wild

things hide at the edge of your backyard.

The Black Coyote is a huge black-furred beast the size of a Great Dane, with patchy fur and eyes that glow red when the light hits them. It attacks children, raids garbage, and can keep a family trapped in their car for hours.

Abilities:

- **Predator:** The Black Coyote gets a +4 on attack rolls, and its bite does two damage instead of the normal one for an unarmed attack.
- **Feral Howl:** The Black Coyote can howl and attract mundane coyotes from the surrounding desert. One to three coyotes will arrive within fifteen minutes of the Black Coyote's howl.
- **Discerning Nose:** The Black Coyote gets a +4 to tracking, searching, and any other rolls where its sensitive nose can be of use.

Weakness:

- **Tied to the Wild:** The Black Coyote cannot travel further than half a kilometer from undeveloped land.

The Angel of Mercy

People in awful situations often reassure themselves with faith, believing that an angel might some day rescue them from their sweatshop or abusive family or crack den.

The Angel of Mercy is a beautiful androgynous being that, in its normal form, dresses in long, white robes and has broad, black wings. It punishes those who exploit others with its flaming sword, and saves the defenseless. If it judges that a person is too far into addiction or corruption to be saved, it grants them a quick, painless death.

Abilities:

- **Flaming Sword:** The Angel of Mercy gets a +4 to attack rolls with its sword, which does 3 damage.
- **Black Wings:** The Angel can fly through the air, and can fold its wings around itself and generate the illusion of a person wearing a black trenchcoat.
- **Ears of the Choir:** The Angel can hear any prayers for deliverance within a ten-kilometer

radius, and will seek out the most needy supplicants to save them.

Weakness:

- **Seeker of Sin:** The Angel cannot see anyone who is acting out of a desire to do good.

Major Horrors

Most alien of all the Others are the major Horrors. These beings don't need to adopt an identity provided by superstition. They have managed to forge their own identity, one based on the roiling chaos of the Void. These beings appear as masses of tentacles, or sentient pools of red ooze, or as gray smoke that possesses a building and twists it into a living structure.

Major Horrors are enormous and dangerous. They are often less like characters than like environments. They may actively try to destroy everything around them, or be uninterested in anything but themselves.

GMs should design major Horrors as tiny adventures in their own right, with creativity required to destroy or banish them. As with minor Horrors, GMs might want to prepare one ahead of time in case the players summon one unexpectedly.

Below are examples of major Horrors. Because of how powerful these beings are, the GM has full reign in designing one to fit the needs of an individual campaign.

The Oily Spheres

When this Other invades reality, glossy spheres begin appearing in midair. They're bigger around than a human head, are dark purple in color, and shimmer with oily iridescence. They float, apparently motionless, but if a character touches one, their hand enters with little resistance, sending ripples across the sphere's surface. When touching the sphere, a character hears a hundred voices shouting unintelligibly in her head.

Between twenty and thirty spheres appear in the area surrounding the initial invasion. They are affected by wind and air currents. If they meet a wall, they begin to dissolve it as if by acid, but there is no affect on living tissue.

When two spheres meet, they merge into one larger sphere, which gently attracts the rest of the spheres. As the spheres merge together, the shouting voices become audible to everyone nearby, and they

get louder the more spheres join the mass. In the process of traveling to the main mass, the spheres are likely to burn holes through surrounding structures. Should all of the spheres merge into one large mass, it will begin to float around of its own volition, dissolving and absorbing inanimate matter to fuel a gradual growth in size.

There are several ways to deal with this Horror. Its spheres are affected by air currents, so a strong fan or wind can scatter the spheres and delay their merging. The spheres can also be broken apart with blunt force. The only way to permanently get rid of the spheres is by banishing them with Belief or by setting them on fire. The substance of the spheres burns brightly, and will reduce each one to nothingness in less than a minute.

The Space Between the Stones

This being is a creature of negative space. It exists in the absence of dirt, sand, and rock. When it first comes to be, a depression appears in the ground and quickly expands into a deep well. The creature exists as the space between the walls of this hole, and can control the size and shape of the hole. It cannot form enclosed pockets of air, as all parts of the hole must be indirectly connected to the surface. Additionally, no part of the creature can be less than two meters wide.

The creature can, however, freely move the tunnels that make up its body. It can fork one tunnel into two, or merge two into one. It can change the length of the tunnels, although if someone or something is at the end of a tunnel when it shortens, that person or thing is pushed along harmlessly by the approaching wall of dirt. The tunnels extend rather slowly, at a pace of one cubic meter per five seconds. The opening to the surface can move at human running pace.

If the creature feels threatened, it can attack by manipulating its tunnels to suddenly drop an intruder down a shaft, or move to a body of water so that the tunnels become flooded. The creature can also speak by vibrating the walls of its tunnels.

The Space Between the Stones isn't overtly harmful, except that its presence can interfere with much of modern life. Any sewer, water, or power line that is interrupted by the Space's tunnels is severed, even after the creature passes by.

The only way to eliminate the creature, besides banishing it with Belief, is to block its connection to

the surface by filling the passages with dirt or rocks. This usually requires filling the creature at a rate faster than it can expand (one cubic meter per five seconds). The creature will surely attempt to hinder this process by moving its entrance under construction machinery or harming workers inside its body.

The creature can manipulate its form through dirt, rock, gravel, sand, and mud, but not concrete or other man-made materials thicker than half a meter.. Covering the entrance to the creature with a substance it cannot manipulate does not destroy it; it must be filled with dirt or another compatible surface. Once the entrance of the creature is filled in, it vanishes and any remaining tunnels collapse.

Belief-Specific Traits

The following are traits specific to the Belief module.

Superlative Traits

These traits provide the basic abilities unique to the Belief setting.

Believer

This world is not as it should be.

You are a Believer, and are able to affect reality through Castings. Without this Trait, no Path skills can be purchased and no Castings can be made.

Positive Traits

Positive Modus Traits

These traits represent certain categories of Belief. They govern a Believer's Modus and what sort of Belief is easy to accomplish. Belief Traits can be combined when appropriate to create, for example, a Regulator Believer in the Faith who uses her faith in God to preserve the natural order of things.

Artist of Belief

Inspiration is the most powerful impulse of the mind.

Your Belief stems from artistic expression. Your Modus involves the creation of artistic works. It is difficult for you to do anything that you don't feel emotionally invested in. You get a -4 to your Belief roll if you don't feel strongly about what you're doing. You get a +2 to your Belief roll if you involve your art in the casting process.

Believer in a Faith

Your power is a gift from the heavens above.

Your Belief stems from religious faith. Your Modus is appropriate to your chosen faith; for example, you may pray for miracles or meditate to attain a state of enlightened thought. Regardless, it is difficult for you to do anything without the assistance of your religion. When attempting to Believe something that goes counter to your religious teachings, you are at a -4 on the Belief roll. If you are Believing something that is directly in line with your religion, you get a +2 to the Belief roll.

Regulator

Reality is not something to be played with like a toy.

Regulators Believe in reality and absolute truth. They are dedicated to preserving the natural order of things, and in preventing reality from being tainted by

Aberrants or invaded by the Others. Regulators get a -4 to any Belief roll on a Path other than the Suppression or Knowledge Paths. They receive a +2 to any Belief roll on the Suppression Path.

Practitioner of Science!

All great theories are regarded with skepticism and mockery at first.

Your Belief is based in science and technology. However, it goes just a little beyond the state-of-the-art. Your Modus relies on super-science or pseudoscience; you either have a set of unusual scientific theories or a special Belief-based technology that assists with your Casting. You have a special benefit, as working within your Modus tends to avoid the Doubt of observers, as non-Believers will often accept outlandish events if "science" explains them. This does not reduce the basic Doubt caused by the effect's very existence, however. Practitioners of Science! get a -4 to any Belief roll that is not grounded in a reasonable scientific or pseudo-scientific theory. They receive a +2 to any Belief roll that conforms to the specific theories or technologies of their Modus.

Traditional Magician

The ancients had more understanding of Belief than we realize.

Your Belief takes the form of magic. You cast spells, trace ritual circles, and use mystical talismans. Players of characters with this trait should figure out what sort of magic they use: Wiccan spell-casting, alchemical processes, Kabbalistic magic, and so on. Traditional Magicians get a -4 to any Belief roll that is not accompanied by a magical ritual or that affects technological devices. They receive a +2 to any Belief roll that is a traditional effect of their style of magic, like a blessing of good fortune for a Wiccan or a transmutation for an alchemist.

Positive Background Traits

Dreams

"I have the feeling that I've seen all this before..."

Somehow, you are receptive to the collective subconscious of Belief. When you sleep, you sometimes have dreams that show you important events that are happening or are about to happen. They may be of personal importance to you or have significance to the world as a whole.

Every time this character goes to sleep, she makes a TN12 Mind roll. If she succeeds, the GM describes

a dream she has that holds special significance. This dream may be a literal depiction of events or a metaphor.

Figment Magnet

There's a cold chill whenever she walks by.

There's something about your talent for Belief that makes you slightly visible to Others. Whenever the GM makes an Other check for a Casting you make and the result is "No Others appear," a minor Figment appears instead. If it calls for a minor Figment to appear, a major Figment appears instead. However, this attraction to Figments makes it more difficult for stronger Others to see you. Any Other check the GM makes for your Castings is at a -4.

Informed Mundane

"You'll never believe what I found out about my best friend."

You are not a Believer, but you know of the existence of Belief. Maybe you have a friend who is a Believer, or you are a member of an organization that employs Believers and Mundanes alike. Regardless, you are open-minded enough to accept that Reality is malleable, but do not have the strength of will or desire to affect it yourself. You can learn the skill Reality Theory and its specialties. Additionally, you do not count as a Mundane observer for the purposes of Doubt.

You cannot take both Believer and Informed Mundane.

Negative Traits

Former Unfettered

Ever since you came back from that place, nothing has seemed quite real.

You became Unfettered and severed from reality at some time in the past, and a little bit of you remained in the Void. Because of this connection, you are more likely to attract Others. Any Other check the GM makes for your Castings is at a +2.

Not all characters who become fully Unfettered gain this trait.

Unconvinced Believer

"I think I've got powers, but what if I'm just imagining things?"

This character is a Believer, but she isn't sure that it's real. She counts as a Mundane for the purposes of Doubt, even for her own Castings.

Skills

The skills below allow a Believer to actually use Belief. In order to use any Path, a character must have the basic skill for that Path. Once she does, she is then able to use any of the abilities from that Path in her castings. The specialty skills for each Path merely allow her to specialize in certain techniques in order to make those techniques easier. This means that a Believer with the Knowledge skill can attempt to tell the future without purchasing the Precognition skill. Having the Precognition skill simply gives the Believer the normal +1 bonus to any Casting rolls for precognition.

Additionally, while the specialty skills provided below are intended to be complete, they are bound not to be exhaustive. If a player wishes to purchase a specialty skill not shown below, the GM is encouraged to allow it, as long as the category of Casting described fits the abilities of that Path.

The target number of a Casting roll is 6 (modified by Crutches and Doubt) unless stated otherwise. Note that Doubt always adds at least 1 to Castings in our reality.

If an effect says it lasts until the end of a scene, the Believer who created the effect can cause it to end earlier simply by deciding to do so, without taking an action.

Path Skills

Elemental

The Elemental Path governs pure elemental forces. An element is the pure form of energy or substance. Elements are expressed in the real world in impure forms; for example, elemental Fire requires no fuel and gives off no smoke; it is strictly the embodiment of heat. A scientifically-minded Believer might call elemental Fire "plasma," while a mystically minded one would see it as an alchemical substance. Regardless, the Elemental Path allows practitioners to control impure versions of the elements, to purify them into their elemental forms, to create elemental substances from nothing, and to direct them as they see fit.

The elements listed as specialty skills below are not an exhaustive list. Different Believers, depending on their Modus, might consider other things elements, and might consider some of these not to fit that classification. These Believers would (with GM

permission, of course) be able to take different elements as skills. Regardless, the Elemental Path is distinguished by the fact that these elements are infinitely pure, energy-like materials, and not mundane substances. The manipulation of mundane substances is handled by the Transmutation and Spacetime Paths.

Utility Specialties

The following are specialties that help with techniques. They can be used with any element.

Create Element

This skill belongs to Believers who are especially skilled at creating pure or mundane forms of elements out of nothing. A Believer who possesses this skill will find it easier to create pure elements of any sort. Note that creating something from nothing tends to incur quite a bit of Doubt: creating an element is always at least Subtle, and creating pure elements is always Obvious.

Direct Element

This skill allows a Believer to better modify the path of an element. For example, she could more easily direct the path of a spreading fire, or bend light to shine in a different direction. Depending on the nature and amount of the modification, use of this specialty could be anything from Covert to Blatant.

Elemental Burst

This specialty skill represents expertise in a particularly damaging method of directing elements: creating an elemental burst. With an elemental burst, Believers can direct a powerful blast of a pure element directly at a target, often doing large amounts of damage. A Fire Burst can be a spray of Fire or a fireball which explodes upon hitting a target. An Ice Burst can either freeze the target or injure it with shards of pure Ice. An Air Burst hits the target with winds of tremendous force. A Light Burst is a blinding ray of light that causes horrible radiation burns to living targets. An Electricity Burst is a lightning bolt that shocks a target.

Elemental Bursts are always at least Obvious, even when coming from a believable source. Pure elements simply don't appear in nature.

Attacks with Elemental Bursts use the target's appropriate Defense as a base target number

instead of 6, and are then modified by Crutches and Doubt as usual.

Enhance/Diminish Element

This specialty governs strengthening or weakening existing expressions of elements. A practitioner could make wind blow stronger, thaw frozen objects, or cause brownouts. Use of this specialty is often Covert or Subtle, but can be Obvious or Blatant if the change is dramatic.

Element Specialties

The following specialties help with a specific element, and can be used in combination with utility specialties.

Fire

The Fire element is the pure form of heat. Mundane fires are an impure version of elemental Fire being produced by material substances. Using Fire, Believers can create or extinguish mundane fires, heat things up, and create and manipulate pure elemental Fire. Pure elemental Fire looks reddish-orange and gives off no smoke or ash.

Ice

The Ice element is the pure form of cold. The solid phases of physical substances are inhabited by an impure form of Ice. Using Ice, Believers can freeze material things (causing them to become solid or brittle), cool things down, and create and manipulate pure elemental Ice. Pure elemental Ice looks pure white and crystalline, and sublimates into nothingness if unattended.

Air

The Air element is the pure form of air. The gaseous phases of physical substances are inhabited by an impure form of Air. Using Air, Believers can produce wind and air currents, assist or prevent breathing, concentrate and rarify atmosphere, and create and manipulate pure elemental Air. Pure elemental Air is colorless, perfectly transparent, and without odor.

Light

The Light element is the pure form of electromagnetic radiation. The different wavelengths of light are impure forms of Light. Using Light, Believers can shift the wavelength of radiation, bend the path of light, brighten or dim existing light, form visual "illusions," and create

and manipulate pure elemental Light. Pure elemental Light is constant in intensity across all wavelengths, and thus can be dangerous to living things.

Electricity

The Electricity element is the pure form of electric power. Mundane electricity and static electricity are impure forms of Electricity. Using Electricity, Believers can transform, strengthen, and weaken electric currents, encourage power to flow where it usually would not, produce electric voltage, and create and manipulate pure elemental Electricity. Pure elemental Electricity appears as blindingly bright, bluish-white arcs of lightning.

Fate

The Fate Path controls probability, luck, and destiny. With Fate, Believers can manipulate odds, modify a person's destiny, and cause bizarre coincidences. Practitioners of Fate can cheat at gambling, give curses or blessings, provide unnatural luck to themselves, and arrange events in their favor.

Bend Fate

This specialty governs the modification of a character's long-term destiny. Nothing is certain, but a Believer can try to cause a single specific destiny to come true for a character. "You will marry a handsome stranger" is just fine; "You will succeed in everything you do" is much too general.

This effect, if successful, gives a +4 bonus or a -4 penalty, as appropriate, to all rolls that help or hinder the fulfillment of the destiny. This modifier *does not* apply to rolls made to survive long enough to meet the destiny, like attack rolls or Defense scores. The effect only guides a character down the path; it does not ensure she will reach the end.

Because of the enormous scope of this ability, a Believer can only have one Bend Fate effect active at a time. If she succeeds at Casting a new Bend Fate effect, the old one ends and its modifiers go away.

This is a Blatant effect.

Bestow Curse

This specialty can help to provide a -1 penalty to all rolls a target character makes for the rest of the scene. Such a long-term tweak to fate,

however small, is Obvious.

Create Coincidence

Sometimes convenient things just happen. That missed bullet ricochets and hits another target. The light turns green just when you arrive at the intersection. This skill helps to make these things happen.

Some coincidences are just too unlikely. This ability can't make it so that someone conveniently left an assault rifle behind that bush over there. It can cause some pretty improbably events, though. It's the GM's decision whether an effect is possible.

This is a Blatant effect.

Grant Blessing

This specialty can help to provide a +1 bonus to all rolls a target character makes for the rest of the scene. Like Bestow Curse, this effect is Obvious.

Manipulate Probability

This specialty helps a character to modify the outcome of a random event. She can decide a coin toss or cheat at gambling. This cannot cause an extremely unlikely event to occur (that would fall under Create Coincidence), but it can decide on one of several equally-likely outcomes. Generally, this effect is Covert, but an extreme use, such as ruining a quantum physics thought experiment, could be Subtle.

Knowledge

The Knowledge Path allows the discovery of truth. It allows the divination of information, the prediction of the future, and the analysis of reality. Knowledge is exclusively a passive Path; it does not change the nature of existence, but simply discovers it. Because of this, the Knowledge Path is not subject to Unfettering. See the Dangers of Belief section for more on Unfettering.

Use of Knowledge might seem immune to Doubt, but finding information that would be otherwise inaccessible is still hard to believe. Information that could be explained as a lucky guess is Covert, while discovering specific, hard-to-get information is Obvious. The number of Mundane observers only multiplies the Doubt modifier if the observers are aware that the knowledge has been received at the time of the Casting.

Depending on the Modus of the Believer, the information may simply appear in the Believer's head, or it may appear on a screen, in a crystal ball, be encoded in tea leaves or scattered sticks, be gleaned from cloud patterns or a Ouija board, and so on.

Clairvoyance

The ability to sense things in the present that are out of range of one's normal senses. The most direct application of this is to see or hear what is in another place, but it can also be used to see inside of an opaque object, to detect a broader range of the electromagnetic spectrum, or to observe things that are too large or too small to see clearly.

Precognition

The ability to tell the future. It is much easier to answer the question "what could happen if we pressed this button?" than it is to answer "what is my best path to success in life?" The information gleaned by precognition is either the most likely possibility, or a range of possibilities.

Sense Past

The ability to determine past events in a location or past events that have occurred to an object or person.

Beliefsight

This ability lets the user find current or past uses of Belief in an area, or detect Belief over a long distance.

Othersight

This ability allows Believers to detect the presence of Others and to understand their purpose and abilities.

Mind

The Mind Path governs the manipulations and examination of thought. Animals, humans, and stranger things can all be contacted, examined, and manipulated with the power of thought. With the Mind Path, a Believer can read thoughts, communicate telepathically, plant suggestions or illusions, and even possess another person's body.

Non-human targets may be affected using Mind, but the effects may be odd depending on how different the target mind is from the Believer's.

Any effects that affect another being's mind have a modifier to the Casting TN equal to the target

creature's social resistance bonus (Mind + Charm + modifiers). If the target consents to the effect, this modifier can be ignored.

Cloud Mind

Characters with Cloud Mind are especially skilled at weakening the resistance of another person's mind. This is a Covert roll. If it succeeds, the target's Mind is reduced by 4 for the remainder of the scene. This indirectly reduces the target's social resistance bonus, so it makes other uses of Mind on the target easier. If a target is already suffering from the effects of a Cloud Mind effect, this technique cannot be used on him again.

Command Mind

This specialty helps to make other characters obey commands or requests. Instead of making a Persuasion or similar social roll, a Believer can use this ability to directly affect a target's mind. Convincing someone to do something reasonable is Covert. If he is reluctant, the effect is Subtle, and if the attempt contradicts his core values, current intent, or self-interest, the effect is Obvious.

This technique can be combined with Send Thought to persuade a character without directly interacting with them. The character will believe he is doing the action of his own volition. This increases the subtlety level of the effect by one, making a Covert action Subtle, a Subtle action Obvious, and an Obvious action Blatant.

Form Illusion

This technique makes others hallucinate something that is not actually present. This hallucination can involve any of the senses. Illusions are always Subtle, but any Mundanes among the targets count as observers like normal for the purposes of multiplying Doubt. Any people who are not targets of this effect *do not* count as observers, even if they can see the targets. Use the highest social resistance bonus among the targets as the modifier to the Casting TN; do not total the group's social resistances.

Depending on the nature of the hallucination, the Music or Visual Arts skills may help with Casting, and depending on its complexity the GM may assign a penalty to the roll.

Mind Link

This technique lets the Believer link her mind with another person's, turning them into two-way radios. If the Casting roll is successful, the two minds are linked for the rest of the scene, and either party may choose to “think at” the other, who will hear the thoughts in the sender's voice inside his own head. Not all thoughts are transmitted, only those which are intentionally sent. Unless the target is familiar with this technique, he may not realize that he can communicate back to the Believer, but he can do it easily if he thinks to try. This effect is always Obvious. Only the target counts as an observer for the purposes of Doubt on the Casting roll.

The Believer can choose to act as a “relay station” for any two or more targets with whom she has a mind link. This is optional, but if she chooses to do so, the targets she chooses may speak to each other through the mind link without any conscious action on her part.

Plant Idea

This effect is more delicate than Command Mind. It simply places an idea in the target's mind, like “Maybe I should check behind that door,” or “I wonder if there's anything interesting on TV.” The subject is under no compulsion to go along with the idea, but if she is inclined to do so, she is likely to act on it. This effect is usually Subtle, but if the idea is completely unrelated to the target's situation or train of thought, it could be Covert. Only the target counts as an observer for purposes of Doubt for this effect, meaning that there is always a Doubt multiplier of x2 for Mundane targets.

Possess Mind

This is the most direct and invasive use of the Mind skill. The Believer can directly take control of a target's mind. If this attempt is successful, the Believer's body holds perfectly still, unable to act or defend itself. Meanwhile, the Believer can act and speak with the target's body. She can also read the target's mind with a bonus of +8 to her casting roll. She does not, however, gain access to the target's personality, which means that Subterfuge rolls are likely to be required to avoid suspicion.

This effect is always Blatant.

Send Thought

This ability allows a character to speak directly into another person's mind. The target hears the Believer's voice speaking inside her head. On a successful Casting, the Believer is able to continue sending thoughts as long as he takes no other action. Once he does something else, the effect ends. This effect is Obvious.

Read Mind

This specialty assists with attempts to read another creature's mind. The character may be trying to read emotion or even exact thoughts or memories. Doubt for this effect works much like for Knowledge effects: reading emotion is usually Covert, because it could be explained as good body language interpretation, while unearthing specifics from buried memories is Obvious or even Blatant depending on the obscurity of the information.

Mental Ward

This specialty allows a Believer to designate a location as “off-limits” to a certain category of creatures. This category could be broad (“Others”), narrow (“police officers”) or very specific (“your mom”). The effect works by mentally stopping any desire to enter the area. This effect is Obvious.

If the Casting roll succeeds, record the total result of the roll with modifiers. That result serves as the target number for any attempts to enter the area. Any members of the target category who wish to enter must succeed at a social resistance (Mind + Charm) roll or be stopped. Sentient characters who stop will realize something strange is going on, and if aware of Belief they are likely to realize what is causing the effect.

The location should be no larger than a house. The effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Nature

The Nature Path involves animal and plant life, weather, and the natural world. When using this Path on animal life, including humans, a Believer can heal wounds, enhance natural abilities, or control the instinctual behavior of fauna. The Nature Path can grow or kill plants and control the weather. The only limits of the Nature Path are that it cannot affect Others or man-made structures, substances, and

devices.

Any Nature ability which can affect another organism can also be used to affect the Believer.

Affect Growth

This specialty helps a character to affect the rate or manner of growth in an organism. Modifying the manner of growth can make a tree sprout a limb in a certain place (usually a Covert effect), make a person's fingernails grow faster on one hand than the other (a Subtle effect) or give a growing embryo an unusual birth defect (an Obvious effect). Increasing or decreasing the natural rate of growth of the organism as a whole is an effect with a subtlety dependent on the amount of change in the time required for a certain amount of growth, as described below:

	Subtlety	Increased Time	Decreased Time
Covert		110%	90%
Subtle		125%	75%
Obvious		200%	50%
Blatant		1000%	10%

A Blatant time modification can be increased even further by a factor of 10 for each +4 to the target number of the Casting roll.

Control Instinct

A character with Control Instinct is especially good at initiating or suppressing instinctual behavior in organisms. This effect can cause a flower to stop turning toward the sun, make a cat react as if smelling catnip, keep a bird from migrating, or cause a person to have an irrational fear response. It can only affect instinct, not complex emotions or rational decisions. It can make a person sexually aroused, but not make him fall in love or decide to have sex with someone.

This effect can be Covert, Subtle, or Obvious, depending on how appropriate the instinctual reaction is to the situation. It lasts until the end of the scene.

Control Weather

This specialty helps a character to affect weather patterns. Making an already-dark cloud rain is most likely Covert. Causing a drought across the western US is Blatant, and is likely to have millions of mundane observers. Weather control is very difficult due to the high numbers of

possible observers to the slightest change. However, it is still feasible in small, isolated locations such as rural farmland or uninhabited islands.

The GM may rule that observers to a Covert weather effect do not count for purposes of Doubt. This will allow a character to more easily cause a lightning strike in the middle of a city during a thunderstorm, or make it rain on a baseball game on a cloudy day. The GM should be aware that this increases the power of the Nature Path.

Enhance Body

Characters can use Nature to enhance the abilities of a character's body. As a Subtle effect, a Believer can temporarily give a character a new Positive Body, Mind, or Charm Trait or a similar +2 bonus to a specific area of activity. As an Obvious effect, a Believer can give a character a +4 to any one base attribute.

This effect can also be reversed, assigning a -2 penalty to an area of expertise or a -4 to any one base attribute.

This effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Heal Wounds

This specialty helps a character to heal wounds. As an Obvious effect, a Believer can restore a single health level of damage to a character. As a Blatant effect, a Believer can restore three health levels of damage. This technique can only be used once per scene on each target, but may be used on any number of targets in a scene. This technique can't increase a character's health above his maximum health level (Healthy, or Extra Healthy if the character has the appropriate trait).

Spacetime

The Spacetime Path allows Believers to bend the fabric of space and time directly. This Path can stretch or compress linear dimensions, move things through space, connect points in space, speed up or slow down time, and manipulate gravity. Users of the Spacetime Path are able to levitate and teleport objects, accelerate their own movements, and bend space.

Effects from this Path are not very subtle.

Bend Space

Using this ability, a character can modify the

fabric of space. The distance between two points can be reduced without moving the points, or an object can be made longer in a direction by stretching space. This can, for example, reduce the range of an attack by one step, or let a five-foot board span a six-foot gap. Because this effect doesn't actually change the relationships between objects, it is only an Obvious effect.

Generally, any one dimension can only be modified to be 75% to 125% of its original size, and only in a limited area.

The effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Bend Time

This specialization helps a character to modify the flow of time. A character can make an object, location, or creature move faster or slower through time. An object or non-sentient organism can be slowed or accelerated by a factor of ten, making it apparently slow to a near-stop or age at an accelerated rate. A sentient creature can be slowed to half his normal speed or accelerated to twice his normal speed. A location can be affected by a factor of two, as with a sentient creature. This effect is always Blatant. It lasts until the end of the scene.

If used on a character who is in combat, this effect allows him to act twice, once on his normal initiative count and once as if he was at initiative count zero. Alternately, it can slow him, causing him to skip every other turn.

Form Portal

This effect connects two points in space with a portal, allowing objects and creatures to move from one place to another by moving through it. Depending on the Modus of the Believer, this may be a glowing hole in midair, a modification to an existing doorway to make it lead to someplace else, or anything else appropriate. The portal can be one-way or two-way. One end of the portal must be at the Believer's location, and the other end must be a place familiar to the Believer. This can either be a place the Believer has spent at least a scene in, or an easily-described nearby place like "the other side of that wall." This effect is always Blatant. It lasts until the end of the scene.

Manipulate Gravity

Characters with Manipulate Gravity are

especially good at increasing or decreasing the effect of gravity on or by an object. This is actually an application of Bend Space, and that specialty can help with this roll. Using this technique, a character can change the effects of gravity on an object or creature, effectively making it weigh up to half its normal weight or up to double its normal weight. A character whose weight is halved gets a +4 to all rolls involving jumping, acrobatics, and similar activities. A character whose weight is halved gets a -4 to all Body-based rolls. This effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Alternately, the Believer can increase an object or creature's own gravity by a factor of one million for a single turn. This does not directly harm the target, but it affects the path of all projectiles toward the target and pulls people and small objects in his direction. The Believer can only use this effect on a target that is human-sized or smaller. All ranged attack rolls made while the attack is active are have a penalty of -4. It is the GM's decision whether missed attacks hit the target of this effect instead, depending on his proximity to the target of the attack. Note that even one million times a person's gravity does not come close to the pull of the earth, which is about 10^{23} times the normal mass of a human.

Both of these effects are Blatant.

Teleport

This attribute governs the instant movement of an object or creature from one place to another without it crossing the intervening space. The Believer can bring a familiar object or creature to her own location, teleport an object or creature from one place in her own location to another, or send an object or creature in her location to a distant, familiar location.

An object, creature, or location is considered familiar if the believer has spent at least a scene in its presence.

The Believer can choose to either maintain the object's original velocity or bring it to rest relative to the target location.

This effect is always Blatant. Note that a teleported character counts as an observer for the purposes of Doubt.

Time Travel

Time travel is an incredibly problematic ability. For simplicity's sake, a GM can assume that the risk of paradox and the complexities of temporal dynamics make time travel impossible.

However, if a GM wishes to allow time travel, it should properly be very, very difficult. At the very least, traveling through time would affect millions of past and future individuals (thanks to the "butterfly effect"), all of whom would count as observers. Because of this, time travel would require an impressive set of Crutches to achieve.

An especially fool-hardy GM may decide that only characters present at the origin and destination time and place count as observers. She does so at her own risk.

Working out the intricacies of temporal mechanics and the result of paradoxes is left as an exercise for the reader.

Time travel is always Blatant.

Translate Objects

This specialty allows a character to move objects by compressing space in front of them and stretching space behind them. It appears for all purposes to be telekinesis. The character can move objects in defiance of gravity, making them float. She can move objects up to her own walking speed for some time, or apply an instantaneous shove that is equivalent to her own throwing power, all without touching the object. She can affect objects with a mass less than or equal to her own.

Small "thrown" objects can be used as weapons. They have a damage of one and an accuracy of zero. The character must first make a normal Casting roll to perform the effect, then make a separate Ranged Attack (Thrown Weapon) attack roll to hit the target. The Spacetime skill and appropriate specialties may help with the attack roll.

A character may take no other actions while translating an object. Giving a gentle nudge to something – in order to tip it over, for example – is Subtle. Most other uses of this ability are Blatant.

Suppression

The Suppression Path is responsible for the

suppression and negation of Belief. With this path, Believers can make it more difficult for others to use Belief, or cancel a manifestation of Belief entirely. This is the most important Path for Regulators. The Suppression Path is not subject to Doubt, and carries no risk of summoning Others. See the Casting Mechanics section for more on Doubt and Others.

Counteraction

This specialty governs direct resistance to a Casting. Any time a character has reason to believe a Casting is going on, or is about to occur, they can prepare to Counteract any Casting being performed by one character or group of characters. These target characters must be nearby and the Counteracting character must know of their existence. The GM decides if the targets are within the acceptable range. While Counteracting, a Believer can do nothing except use the Crutches for the Counteracting roll. She can stop Counteracting at any time.

If any of the target characters attempt a Casting, the Counteracting character can automatically detect the attempt and attempt to interfere with it. The Counteracting character makes a Counteraction roll with the normal bonuses from any Crutches. This Counteraction roll opposes the target's Casting. If the target both wins the contested roll and succeeds at hitting the target number for his effect, the target Casting occurs as normal. If the target loses the contested roll, then the Casting fails even if it met the original target number. If the target wins the contested roll but fails to meet the original target number for the effect, then the target attempt fails as usual.

Doubt Enhancement

This specialty helps to enhance the strength of Doubt in an area. It multiplies the Doubt modifier to a Casting TN by a specific amount. The target number of a Doubt Enhancement roll is dependent on the desired multiplier, as in the table below:

Doubt Multiplier	Target Number
x2	10
x3	12
x4	14

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is the strengthening of the walls

of reality, which makes it more difficult for Others to enter this reality or for Believers to leave. The target number of a Reinforcement roll is always 6. The amount by which the Casting roll succeeds becomes the penalty to all Other Checks and to Void rolls that involve exiting or entering a universe. In other words, if a Reinforcement roll results in 12, there is a penalty of -6 to Other Checks and appropriate Void rolls. This penalty lasts until the end of the scene. A failed Reinforcement roll does not apply a penalty or bonus to any rolls.

Attempts to banish Others do not receive a penalty from this effect. They don't belong in reality anyway.

Transmutation

The Transmutation Path lets practitioners change the very nature of things. This is the power that turns lead into gold, or softens an iron bar so that it can be bent, or turns a man into a frog. Transmutation allows a Believer to change the nature of material entities. Substances can be transformed or shaped, and an object can be turned into another. Transmutation also allows the creation of substance from nothing.

Create Substance

With Transmutation, Believers can create matter out of nothing. This is always at least an Obvious act. Created substances can be made in any shape that the Change Shape specialty can create.

Change Nature

This is an effect that changes what something thinks it is. A person can be convinced that he is a frog, and actually change shape. A fork can become a spoon. The Believer can even change themselves into an animal. This is always a Blatant act, since it modifies the very nature of something.

Change Shape

This specialty allows a character to change the shape of something with Belief. While this is often more easily done in a mundane way, Belief can be used to shape rigid or complex objects as if they were more pliable or simple. Slightly warping a door frame to make the door difficult to open would be a Subtle act. Rearranging a brick of gold into a working clock would definitely be

Blatant.

Depending on the substance and the intended final shape, appropriate Craft, Engineering, Mechanics, or Visual Arts skills may contribute to the Casting roll. More complex shapes may add to the target number of the roll, at the GM's option.

Change Substance

This specialty governs the most classic use of Transmutation: transforming one substance into another. Lead into gold, coal into diamonds, or wood into plastic. Depending on the transition and the Modus used, this could be anything from Subtle (tool steel into stainless steel) to Blatant (lead into jello).

Void

The Void Path governs the space between the worlds and the nature of Belief itself. By using the Void Path, a person can open a rift to other realities, summon Others, and pull at the very strings of existence. Void Believers have the ability to summon horrific demons, to travel between worlds, and to meddle in the pure energies of reality.

There is a penalty to all Casting rolls that attempt to affect an Other, depending on the type of the Other. These penalties are listed in the table below.

Other Type	Casting Penalty
Figment	-0
Minor Gremlin	-2
Major Gremlin	-4
Minor Horror	-6
Major Horror	-8

Banish Others

Once an Other has entered a reality, it is surprisingly difficult to cause it to leave. This skill helps to send Others out of a reality and back to the Void. It is an Obvious effect, and has a penalty to the Casting roll depending on the type of the Other.

Because of the alien nature of Others, observers to a Banishing Casting do not apply multipliers to the Doubt. Additionally, no Other Check is required for this effect, and the Casting does not count toward the number of Castings in this scene for the purposes of Other Checks.

Bind Others

This specialty assists in attempts to force Others to obey the will of the Believer. If the character succeeds at this Casting, the target Other will obey the character's explicit commands to the best of its understanding and ability. This effect lasts until the end of the scene. The Other is fully aware that it is under the character's control, and may resent this once it regains control of itself. However, it cannot attempt to misinterpret the character's orders, even if their literal meaning is vague. It must obey the character's intent, as it understands that intent. It can, however, unintentionally misunderstand. The character may make a single Casting roll at the end of the scene to attempt to extend this effect to the end of the next scene without any loss of control.

This is an Obvious effect, and it has a penalty to the Casting roll depending on the type of the Other.

Call Other

This specialty attempts to intentionally call an Other to the reality of the Believer. The character should select a type of Other, including deciding on the minor or major variety. If this roll succeeds, that sort of Other appears as if it is a result of an Other Check, and no normal Other Check is made for this roll.

The Believer may attempt to summon a more specific kind of Other at a penalty of -4 to his Casting roll. If successful, an Other that more or less matches the character's desires appears. The GM may choose to have the Other be slightly different than what the character expects.

This ability grants no control over the summoned Other. A separate Bind Others Casting is required for that.

This is a Blatant effect, and it has a penalty to the Casting roll depending on the type of the Other being summoned.

Create Voidship

This skill allows a character to dedicate a vehicle or environment as a Voidship. This is easiest to do with a vehicle or structure that is already built inside a reality, but it can also create one from the raw chaos of the Void. If the Casting roll is successful, any existing structure or vehicle disappears from reality, leaving only the entrance

visible. The Voidship can then be entered and used to navigate the Void using the Vehicle Operation (Voidship) skill.

This is a Blatant effect. If the Voidship is not created from an existing structure, the Casting roll has a penalty of -8. The Voidship is permanently able to serve in that capacity until destroyed or until the effect is ended by the original Believer.

Open Rift

This effect creates a rift between two realities. The rift can be traveled through from both directions, and it lasts until the end of the scene. One side of the rift must be in the Believer's current reality, and he can choose the other side to be in a universe the Believer has previously visited, a universe he imagines, or a random universe selected by the GM.

If the Believer imagines a universe, the rift will lead to one that is similar to his specifications... although the GM determines how similar it is, and it may differ in important ways. The fact that no one has shown evidence of opening a rift to Eden suggests that Eden is difficult to properly imagine... at least, difficult without spending a campaign collecting clues about it.

This is a Blatant effect.

Note that since the rift is two-directional, curious inhabitants of the other reality may pass through while it is open.

It is possible to open a rift to the Void, at a penalty of -16. This is not advisable, as it would cause a mob of Others to enter the originating reality.

Walk the Worlds

If opening a rift is choosing a TV channel, Walking the Worlds is fiddling with a radio dial. Succeeding at this Casting roll allows the Believer and up to eight companions of her choice to step between dimensions slowly, making only slight changes to their current reality with each step.

Only the Casting character's movement causes the reality to shift. Her companions simply come along for the ride. Moving in different directions causes the world to change in different ways. The character must discover via trial and error what effect a given direction has on her dimensional travel. Heading in one direction might make gravity stronger, while another direction might

change the likelihood of a woman to become pregnant. It is near-impossible to backtrack; a character who tries to turn around and head in the weaker-gravity direction will instead end up heading in the leaves-are-lighter-green direction. It is, however, easy for the Believer to stand still; there is no risk of accidentally shifting her foot and changing realities.

Because of the gradual nature of the changes, there is little danger of sudden death from buildings popping into view or the air suddenly vanishing. After an hour of walking, though, enough subtle changes can accumulate to create a danger of which the travelers are unaware. Who could predict that making flies the size of songbirds would make frogs the size of elephants?

The effect is Obvious, and it lasts a single scene. Once the effect runs out, the travelers must spend an entire scene in whatever reality they have arrived in before any of them can make another Casting to continue the journey.

To be clear, this effect does not change any one reality. Instead, it causes the travelers to move continuously from one reality to the next so that it appears that the world is changing around them. To someone watching in a single reality, there would be no change; all he would see would be an impossibly short flash of the travelers as they passed through his reality. If the travelers stop in a reality, it is as if they appeared from thin air.

Weaken Reality

This skill helps make the fabric of reality weaker. On a successful Casting roll, all future Casting rolls in the Believer's location get a +2 bonus for the rest of the scene. However, the risks of Casting also increase: all Other Checks get a +4 bonus, including the one in response to this Casting, and Believers become unfettered when the dice for a Casting roll add up to 3, not just when they come up snake eyes!

This effect is Blatant. Once reality has been weakened, the effect can't be used again until the next scene, when the first effect has worn off.

Miscellaneous Skills

These skills are not Paths. They are skills that can be learned even if a character is not a Believer... although just the fact of having some of them means a character is an Informed Mundane. Generally, these

skills represent knowledge of aspects of Belief.

Mechanics (Voidship)

This is a new specialty of the Mechanics skill, dedicated to the unique maintenance of a Voidship. Depending on the Modus of the ship's creator and the design of the ship itself, the ship provides a “metaphor” for its trans-dimensional abilities. The component that drives the ship through the Void may look like a steam engine or a set of sails; the part that steers the ship may resemble a steering wheel or a computer. This specialty helps a mechanic understand the metaphorical connection between the apparent components and their actual purpose in order to fix and maintain a Voidship.

Reality Theory

This skill represents knowledge or experience in the theory of how Belief and reality manipulation work. There's debate among some Belief scholars over whether there is a higher absolute truth governing the mutable reality. The answer is unclear, but there do seem to be commonalities across all Believers, including the phenomenon of Unfettering and the existence of Others. This skill can be used to recall or figure out questions about the process of Believing.

Other Theory

This specialty helps a character understand the details of Others. A character with this skill can easily understand the different types of Others, anticipate their behaviors, and maybe even help to suppress them. Urban Mythology and its specialties may help to understand minor Horrors.

This specialty does not provide bonuses to Casting rolls involving Others.

Unfettering Theory

Characters with Unfettering Theory are better at understanding the intricacies of Unfettering. They are better at recognizing when they or someone else has become Unfettered, and how to behave while the effect is going on. In extreme cases, these characters are useful when finding a character who has completely separated from reality.

Belief Theory

This is the specialty dedicated to Belief itself, and specifically the intricacies of Casting. It helps a character recognize the originating Path of an

effect, and possibly to figure out what effect a Believer is Casting just from the Crutches being used.

Dimensional Theory

This specialty helps characters to understand the nature and relationship of the many realities. This can help a character identify the properties of a reality with enough study, or assist with the operations of a Voidship.

Urban Mythology

This skill governs knowledge of the superstitions and irrational beliefs of the modern status quo. Most modern people consider themselves rational and science-oriented, but there are a number of common beliefs that are not strictly based in reason.

This skill can be very useful when trying to convince Mundanes that a Casting is compatible with the status quo, which avoids Doubt multipliers. It also can help characters understand minor Horrors, who base their identities upon superstition and fear.

Moral Panics

This specialty helps characters understand sensational beliefs spread by fear of moral decay. This is the origin of the Salem Witch Trials and of modern fears of promiscuous middle-schoolers holding Rainbow Parties. Drugs, sex, devil-worship, child abuse, terrorism: all these things trigger irrational fears and speculation.

Pseudoscience

Pseudoscience is the practice of false and misleading information that is phrased in scientific terms. The fraudulent and the misinformed make pseudoscientific claims to sell homeopathic remedies, claim strange abilities, and convince themselves that their cold fusion device actually works. Knowledge of pseudoscience can be especially useful for Believers with the Modus “Practitioner of Science!”

Religious Belief

This specialty governs knowledge about strongly-held religious beliefs that concern the mundane world: faces appearing on toast, visitations of saints, guardian angels, and the like.

Urban Legends

Tales are told over and over and distorted into the telling into modern folk tales. This specialty

applies to stories like the one about the hook-handed fugitive, the chihuahua that's really a sewer rat, and Bloody Mary.

Vehicle Operation (Voidship)

As described under Mechanics (Voidship), each ship uses a “metaphor” to present its complex trans-dimensional functionality in a simpler form. This is a new specialty of the Vehicle Operation skill that helps the pilot of a Voidship understand the connection between the metaphorical controls of a ship and their actual purpose in order to navigate and control a Voidship.

Running a Belief Campaign

This section offers tips, assistance, and ideas for Game Masters wishing to run a Belief campaign.

The Most Important Thing

The most important thing to keep in mind about Belief is that this is a game about magic. Believers can change reality with their minds, and the GM should not only let them do so; she should encourage them to. If you ever find yourself saying "You can't do that" to a player who wants to expand a little on the rules in this book, reconsider. Believing lets you change the rules of reality; it should be able to bend the rules of the game a little. Here are some guidelines:

Anything is possible, but not in every Path.

A character can't use the Mind Path to change water into wine. They can make others think it's wine, but the substance remains the same. If a player wants to make a Casting that matches their Path skills, let them. However, keep in mind the divisions between the Paths. A character must have the basic skill for a Path in order to use that Path, but can then cause any effect within that Path without knowing an additional specialty skill.

Doubt and Others make Belief difficult and risky, but not impossible.

Be generous when it comes to deciding the strength of Doubt. Doubt exists to encourage players to be clever about their use of Belief, not to discourage them from using it at all. If an effect could be explained away by observers as an odd coincidence, it counts as Subtle, even if the mechanism that causes it is very unlikely. A Casting only becomes Obvious or Blatant if it bends the limits of reasonable belief. The first lightning strike on a stormy night is Subtle. After that, it's Obvious. Lightning from a clear sky or the Believer's fingers is Blatant.

More difficult things can be achieved with Crutches.

If a player wants to do an unusually potent Casting, you may decide that it is very difficult to do. You can set the target number quite high, but it is still possible for characters to combine enough Crutches together to accomplish the task. See this not as a

problem, but as an opportunity. You can create an entire storyline around the search for the unique materials required as Crutches for some vast undertaking.

The Theme

The theme of Belief is the much-repeated phrase, "The world is not as it should be." Believers are people who don't follow the status quo, and don't let things just happen to them. Campaigns should be about changing the world. They may be about changing it to be more magical, or changing it to make it safe from Others. Players may only be changing their own corner of the world, or may be affecting the entire multiverse. Whichever way you go, the game is focused on the strength of will over the status quo.

The Setting

Belief works in any number of settings. Most of this book is written with the Modern Mundane setting in mind, as described below, but there are plenty of alternatives. Below are several ideas for campaign settings, and you should feel free to make up your own ideas.

Modern Mundane

The core setting of Belief is a world very much like this one. It is in the modern day, with cars and computers and airplanes. The US holds a slightly-tenuous seat as the sole remaining superpower, and the majority of the people on earth believe in things like natural laws and distant religions, with occasional superstitions thrown in.

In this setting, Believers are rare. The player characters band together because they don't know many other people with the same powers. Over the course of the campaign, they may only encounter a couple of other Believers. No one else knows they exist; even the government is either clueless or muddled on the details of Belief. Much of the conflict encountered will be mundane in origin or come from outside this world.

Alternately, the player characters could be Mundanes struggling against a Believer or against invading Others.

Conspiracies of Belief

This setting is much like the Modern Mundane one, except that there are many, many more Believers. These Believers form philosophical societies and

band together to fight amongst themselves. The general public remains unaware of Belief, but many governments have been infiltrated by Believers, who use their abilities to place themselves in positions of power. Because of the high number of Believers, Others regularly invade the world and need to be destroyed before they endanger the general population.

In this setting, players will have to navigate the political struggles of Believer societies with opposing governments. Player characters may be Neonates trying to find a group to protect them from a society of fanatical Keepers, or they may be Regulators themselves, employed by the government and trying to prevent a takeover by Abberent influences.

Urban Fantasy

The secret is out. This setting takes place in the modern world, but it is one where everyone knows that Belief and magic exists. It may be a recent discovery, or people may have known for centuries. Regardless, it's possible to hire Believers on a street corner, where they're likely to be called "wizards" or "mages." Harmless Others may sponsor ad campaigns to discourage use of the term "Horror," and the US government is eagerly sponsoring voyages to other worlds under control of NAVA, the National Aeronautics and Voidship Administration.

In this setting, characters can be wizards-for-hire, adventurers, government contractors, or even have a regular job where Belief makes the work go faster. A teenage character may have trouble "coming out" as a Believer to her old-fashioned parents. Congress may be working on a law requiring all users of Belief to register with the government. In this world, everyone is at least an Informed Mundane, and that trait should be given as a Universal Quality. Doubt still applies to Castings, but it is not multiplied by Mundane observers.

The Endless Void

Teams of intrepid explorers travel through the Void in their ships, exploring strange new worlds and bizarre realities. This setting is compatible with most of the others, but it has a focus on dimensional travel rather than being rooted in reality. Voidships commonly float between the worlds, and it isn't uncommon for one ship to meet another along the way. Some ships are independent, while others are members of interdimensional fleets or serve to protect the borders of realities from invasion.

In this setting, characters are part of a crew that mans a Voidship, keeping it running and safe while they travel from world to world. Players will have to figure out the status quo of new worlds and how it affects Belief. One month, the party will be slinging fireballs to battle a dragon, and the next they'll be negotiating for technology on a station in the Void.

A nice twist on this setting is to make the player characters lost. They can then travel from world to world, hoping that this next trip they'll find home.

Walking the Worlds

Instead of traveling in a Voidship, the player characters could be Walking the Worlds. The challenges are different here: no ship, and little knowledge of where the party will end up. This is a setting that would be well-served by making the PCs Informed Mundanes and having an NPC be the only Believer. When the NPC is inevitably kidnapped, injured, or lost to other-dimensional dangers, the party will have to rescue him before continuing on their journey.

Historical Mysteries

Belief doesn't need to be set in a modern setting. A campaign can take place in medieval times, creating an Arthurian or swords-and-sorcery feel. Something less conventional can also work: feudal Japan, the American Civil War, and the Age of Sail are all interesting concepts to add Belief to.

In a historical setting, players are encouraged to mix and match Believers and Mundanes in a party. A Mundane swordsman, for example, has great potential to be interesting beside a Believer wizard.

Magipunk

The game can also be set in the future. The world of roleplaying has various systems that combine magic and cyberpunk or sci-fi. Futuristic worlds vary enough that it's impossible to give an exhaustive list here; pick an approach that works best for your players, and don't be afraid to mix Believers and Mundanes in the same party.

Pre-built Characters

Keeper of the Chain

This Regulator is a member of the All-Seeing Eye, an organization dedicated to seeking out and destroying Aberrants. He has experience in Belief combat and the destruction of Others.

This character is based on the Competent slot layout, and is appropriate for a minor antagonist.

Mind: +2 **Body:** +1 **Charm:** +0

Traits:

- Believer (Universal Trait)
- Group Member (All-Seeing Eye)
- Regulator
- Not So Composed

Skills:

- Ranged Weaponry
 - Pistols
- Dodge
- Knowledge Path
 - Clairvoyance
 - Beliefsight
 - Othersight
- Suppression Path
 - Counteraction
 - Doubt Enhancement

Quirks:

- Always wears a suit
- Suspicious of any odd behavior
- Devout Christian

Johnny Cloud

Johnny is an agent for the NSA. He is also independently wealthy, and develops Belief-powered “spy gadgets” that help him in his work.

This character is based on the Heroic slot layout.

Body: +1 **Mind:** +2 **Charm:** +1

Traits:

- Believer
- Authority (NSA powers)
- Practitioner of Science!
- Well-Off
- Code of Behavior (Duty to USA)
- Habit (Smoking)

Skills:

- Athletics
- Electronics
- Language: French
- Science
- Subterfuge
- Ranged Weaponry
 - Pistols
- Dodge
- Driving
 - Motorcycle
- Knowledge
 - Clairvoyance
- Elemental
 - Light
- Electricity

Quirks:

- Overconfident
- Always has nice hair
- Never jokes about his work
- Likes classic rock music
- Encourages people to do their best

Items:

- Modified laser pointer (Crutch +2)
- Sensor shades (Crutch +2)
- Shock pads (Crutch +2)
- Customized motorcycle
- Pistol

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- “The Chronicles of Amber,” by Roger Zelazny, and the “Mode” series, by Piers Anthony, for the concepts behind Walking the Worlds.

There are, of course, many more sources which this space is regrettably too small to contain.

About the Author

Gregory Weir is a writer, game developer, and gamer. His most well-known work is “(I Fell in Love With) The Majesty of Colors,” a Flash game about love, loss and balloons.

He has been playing tabletop roleplaying games since middle school. He has GMed countless games in systems including *GURPS*, *D&D 3.5* and *4ed*, *Conspiracy X*, *Vampire: The Requiem Mind's Eye Theatre*, *FUDGE*, *Promethean: The Created*, *BESM*, *Etherscope*, *My Life With Master*, *Shadowrun 4*, and *SLUG*.

He currently resides in Charlotte, NC with his significant other, Lissa, and two cats named Jackie and Greg (no relation).

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