

PATTERNBOUND

Roger Zelazny's *Chronicles of Amber*
by way of *Godbound*

by
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INTRODUCTION

Remember the intro to *Forcebound*, where I said I have this weird habit of adapting RPG systems to run Star Wars? Well, I also do that for Amber, the setting of Roger Zelazny's *Chronicles of Amber* novels. And here again I do it with Kevin Crawford's *Godbound*. Like its predecessor, *Patternbound* isn't supposed to have any ultrainnovative material -- it's more a quick and dirty (there's that expression again) resource for GMs wanting to run Amber with *Godbound*. I do feel a little bit of pride in my system-agnostic Shadow navigation mechanic, though. Unlike *Forcebound*, this one got a little playtest in that I started a campaign a few weeks ago and tweaked the rules a bit as a result.

On the shoulders of hill giants

These notes are based on my [Unisystem Amber](#) conversion, which was itself based on the novels, Phage Press' *Amber Diceless Role-Playing*, written by Erick Wujcik, and two unofficial GURPS resources: [Non-Diceless Roleplaying in Limitless Shadows](#), written by Joshua Kubli, and [GURPS Amber](#).

Although I mention Chaosians and even describe Shapeshifting as a Power, you won't find Logrus Mastery here. I much prefer the Corwin cycle and started rereading it for the third time for this project. In that cycle, we don't learn about the Logrus or much anything about the Courts of Chaos. Plus, I won't be reading the Merlin cycle again for now and so wouldn't be able to verify the info I remembered and the one I plundered from other RPGs. Maybe in the future I'll do a *Logrusbound*.

In the page that hosts this file, you'll also find a link to an Excel spreadsheet called *shadow_nav.xls*. It's a way to map the Shadows in your game that takes into account the four dimensions of the navigational axes (Magic, Tech, Time and Weird). It arose from the excellent advice my fellow RPGnetters gave me in this [thread](#). Special thanks to Glyptodont, who inspired the final form of the spreadsheet.

Throughout the text, I reference some sources. Here's a key for the abbreviations: *Godbound* deluxe corebook (Gd), *Non-Diceless Roleplaying in Limitless Shadows* (Am). These will be followed by a page number.

Finally, there are spoilers in here. If you haven't read the first five novels, I suggest you go do that before plunging into this file. Put together, the five books are about the size of *A Game of Thrones*, textwise (888 pages versus 807, respectively).

That's it! Go ahead, essay *Patternbound*!

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CHARACTER CREATION

Follow the character creation guidelines for Heroic mortals, from the deluxe *Godbound* core edition (Gd 188). By default, characters are Royal Amberites, but the GM may allow Chaosians or mixed race PCs. They do not age and their attack bonus is equal to half their level.

Amberites are superhumans when compared to common mortals. Their **attributes** should be considered to be in an upper tier to regular humans'. Assume an Amberite will always win a contest against a mortal, if it's a direct application of an attribute or skill-based Fact and chance has little to no importance to the outcome. Trickery, of course, can help someone of lesser skill or capacity prevail.

If you don't like autosuccess, you can always give +4 to checks made by Amberites against Shadow dwellers. Another option is expanding the attribute range, to encompass the PCs more formidable attributes, but these may wreak havoc with attribute checks and saves. Here are two possibilities:

Score	Bonus	Score	Bonus
19-20	+4	19	+4
21-22	+5	20	+5
23-24	+6	21	+6
25	+7	22	+7
		23	+8
		24	+9
		25	+10

Characters hailing from the Amber royal family **heal faster** than common mortals. Add an Amberite's Constitution bonus to the amount of hit points recovered every day. The bonus is also subtracted from the 1d6 weeks (not months) of recuperation they must undergo if falling to zero hit points. Lost eyes and limbs will regrow, but that takes months or even years. Higher Constitution speeds this process as well.

One of the **Facts** must establish the character's **blood of Amber** (being of Amber and Chaos requires two Facts) -- for example, Son of Oberon --, which fulfills the pre-requisite for the Pattern Imprint Power. Facts can also be used to acquire artifacts, Shadows and minions. The GM may allow the player to "cash in" a Fact for 8 Substance points (see below) that could be spent, for example, in acquiring a Pattern-engraved sword, a Trump deck, and/or a personal Shadow.

Given Amberites' immortality and ability to find Shadows where time flows at a faster rate, it's plausible for characters to remove themselves for a brief while (a scene, for example) to learn a new skill or field of knowledge and return to the game. This can be represented by allowing the player to swap Facts the character already has for new ones. This should only be allowed for skill-based Facts. If the character has none, but the player desires to use this tactic, the GM may allow it, ruling that this new Fact will occupy the next available slot when the character gains a level.

Characters start with **two Talents** that can be used to select Common and Heroic Talents. The latter include those related to the **Powers**: Pattern Imprint, Trump Artistry, Shapeshifting and Sorcery.

Characters start with two points of **Influence**. These can be used to fuel the schemes and conspiracies of the Amberites. They gain one extra point of Influence every time they gain a level.

In *Patternbound*, characters gain **Substance**, which functions like Dominion for Shadow. It's a measure of how real they are. Just by being close to an Amberite, Shadows and shadowstuff also

gain Substance, becoming more real and more resistant to change. Substance can be used to acquire artifacts and creatures, and to modify Shadows. It's accumulated by adventuring, researching, traveling through Shadow, overcoming challenges and so forth. At the GM's discretion, Amberites may also gain Substance automatically at a rate of 1 point of Substance per month.

Characters have the ability to cast a **Blood Curse** when they fall to zero hit points and are about to die. This curse comes true, but if the character who casted it survives, he or she will suffer from the effects of their own curse in one way or another, and an enormous sacrifice will be required to expunge it.

TALENTS

Most Talents described in the *Creating Mortal Heroes* section are applicable for an Amber campaign. Some function a bit differently. The various *Adept of the* are substituted by *Sorcery*. *Low Magic Training* and *Low Magic Archmage* refer to Shadow-specific magical traditions that only work in their native reality or related ones.

Some Legacy Talents may not be appropriate, like *Void Adaptation*, but check with the GM, since *Cybernetic Adaptation*, for example, is possible.

Talents related to the Powers are described in their own section, below, with the exception of:

Jewel of Judgment Attunement: you have attuned yourself to the Jewel of Judgment, the traditional symbol of Amberite royalty, and a powerful and dangerous artifact. To buy this Talent, you must have *Pattern Imprint*. Usually, this Talent is only available during character creation. After that, the PC must perform the attunement in character (described in the *Artifact & Creatures* chapter). Buying this Talent at character creation exempts the character from the required permanent expenditure of Effort.

the powers

A *Patternbound* character can have access to special powers intrinsically connected to the very fabric of reality. These Powers function somewhat as *Godbound*'s Words, as they may encompass several abilities. By default, for a character to gain access to a Power, the player needs only to select the appropriate Heroic Talent. This grants basic abilities and the potential to learn others. The GM may require in-character developments to justify learning new tricks, like finding a tutor.

Alternatively, the GM may allow use of all abilities, but lock the more powerful applications under an Advanced (Power) Heroic Talent and require the character buy it to use them.

PATTERN IMPRINT

Birthright of every Royal Amberite (requires a *blood of Amber* Fact), this power is acquired by essaying the Pattern, not necessarily the one in Castle Amber. It is an oval design 150 by 100 yards, similar to a Celtic knotwork. Walking the Pattern is a grueling process that is not done lightly. It unlocks the Shadow-manipulating abilities of the character.

The basic power that comes with Pattern Imprint is moving through Shadow.

MOVING THROUGH SHADOW

By moving and willing minor details in the environment to change, a Royal Amberite can travel through Shadow, or **shadow walk**. This is slow, but six weeks of constant movement will, on average, take someone from Amber to the Courts of Chaos. Shadow walking doesn't usually require a check -- the GM calculates the travel time (see the Shadows chapter) and informs the player. However, if two characters are racing to a Shadow, opposed checks may be used to determine who arrives first. Also, if the Amberite doesn't know or can't visualize exactly where he wants to go, a check may be in order. A failed one may leave the character somewhere that seems like the right place, but it's not.

Those in a hurry, for whom shadow walking is too slow, can **hellride**. The process is similar, but instead of gradually changing minor details until arriving at the complete environment you want, hellriders fixate on the most important fact and change everything around it while moving fast. Hellriding from Amber to the Courts of Chaos can take less than a week. However, the process is extremely strenuous. Each four hours spent hellriding require a Hardiness or Spirit save, whichever is lower. Failure results in -4 for the next roll. When the penalties make impossible to succeed, the character is exhausted and must rest.

Sometimes, a shadow walker may want to travel only through Shadows that have a common element. Maybe he wants elms lining every road or decides to sail all the way to his destiny, staying only in Shadows with large bodies of water. This is called the **Royal Way** and will make the trip significantly longer. It takes him one year to traverse the Amber-Courts of Chaos distance. Using the Royal Way is impossible if the feature you want can't be found in the final Shadow. For example, if your destination is in a desert, you won't be able to sail there. You'll need to land somewhere and make the final leg of the trip by land (or air).

TRACKING AND SENSING MOVEMENT

Moving through Shadow leaves traces that can be used to track a shadow walker. This requires a Wisdom check with modifiers depending on the number of shadow walkers that have passed, age of the trail and attempts to hide track.

Shadow movement also causes ripples that can be sensed by those with Pattern Imprint, requiring a Wisdom check. The larger the contingent passing through, the greater the ripple will be and the easier to detect it.

BLOCKING THE WAY

If someone with Pattern Imprint knows the destination of another shadow walker or simply wants to make entry into Amber or a particular Shadow harder, he can erect obstacles in the traveler's path. This requires an opposed Wisdom check between the blocker and the shadow walker. If the traveler wins, he makes it through.

If the blocker wins, the traveler must give up or take another route that will add a number of hours equal to how much the blocker rolled beyond the number needed. At the end of this detour, a new opposed Wisdom check is made with the same consequences.

For every block he has erected, a character must commit one point of Effort that remains committed while the block is up.

SHIFTING SHADOW

Pattern-imprinted characters can make adjustments to the Shadow they are in, changing details or altering probabilities. If something is at least possible, it can be attempted by shifting Shadow. This requires movement, but the character must be careful or he might exit the Shadow. Shifting Shadow is slow, so the character won't be popping out two Desert Eagles from his sleeves as soon as bullets start flying. Minor changes take at least half a minute, while bigger adjustments can take one or more minutes. Probability-wise, as long as an event has a reasonable chance of happening, Pattern Imprint can make it happen.

Shadow shifting is mediated by a Wisdom check, modified by how improbable the adjustment is. This system should only be used for significant stuff. Allowing the character to have Shadow-appropriate pocket change should be automatic.

TRUMP ARTISTRY

By taking this Power, the character acquires the ability to create Trumps -- images that establish a link to a person, place, creature or object. It is usually a card, but can be a drawing, a painting, a tapestry or any other form of pictographic representation. Trumps can be used to communicate across Shadow or for instantaneous transport through it (not unlike the theurgy invocation *The Trumpet of Far Utterance*, Gd 64).

When properly crafted, a Trump card (or painting, mosaic, etc.) is an indestructible artifact that is permanently imbued with power. It's cold to the touch and always links to the subject of its image, even if it has changed since the picture was made.

Trump sketches, on the other hand, are relatively quick to make, but are not permanent or indestructible. If the feature they represent changes, there's a chance the sketch will stop working.

USING TRUMP CARDS AND SKETCHES

Trump cards can be used by gazing into them for a full round, which opens the link. If the target is a sentient being, it can refuse the contact by doing nothing else but stilling his thoughts and letting his mind go blank. Most callers will persist in the attempt for 1d6 minutes.

The identity of the caller, however, can only be ascertained after the call is accepted. With the link established, the two parties can converse or allow the other to step through the gate.

Trumps of places open the gate as soon as they activate. GMs may allow a character to Trump to a place in a full round (activation plus a 5-foot step), but may require committing Effort for the day.

Trump sketches function in the same way as cards, but their cruder state requires a greater energy input. Committing one point of Effort for a day is necessary for activating a Trump sketch.

CONTEST OF WILLS

Accepting a Trump call also opens up the receiver to a contest of wills, a mental attack by the caller. Both parties must maintain full concentration on the contest and do nothing else, at the peril of losing it.

Battling on the mental plane is a series of opposed Wisdom checks performed once a minute. If someone loses three consecutive contests, he becomes vulnerable to his opponent, who can inflict automatic mental damage (1d10+Wisdom bonus) every round or step through the gate without the consent of the loser to attack him.

At the GM's discretion, innovative tactics based on emotional background, knowledge of the opponent and such can provide bonuses to the Wisdom checks.

At any point, breaking the Trump contact stops the contest.

SHAPESHIFTING

The ability to change shapes and manipulate your body, it's very similar to the eponymous *Godbound* Word (Gd 231). By buying this Power, you can change into other shapes (as the *Ten Thousand Skins* Gift), but until you become familiar with them (GM's discretion), you will have -4 on checks when in that form.

You also gain two additional favorite shapes (see below) and the capacity to use your Shapeshifting to heal wounds, as the *Shapeshifting* Word bond. Advanced shapeshifters can boost this by committing Effort, which acts like the *Lick your Wounds* Gift.

Shapeshifting is not necessarily a quick process. Minor changes (toughening skin into armor, growing claws, etc.) take 10 to 15 seconds. A full shift into a familiar form takes around 2 minutes, with changes into favorite shapes being faster and, to human form, the fastest of all.

Wounds, fatigue, hunger can double the time. Exhaustion or serious injuries can make the process extremely arduous or even impossible (requires a check that can have up to -8 penalty).

If the Shapeshifter commits Effort for the scene, she can change forms in one round.

FAVORITE SHAPES

All Shapeshifters have three favorite shapes; so familiar that changing into them takes less than a minute:

- **Human:** as it says in the label, this is the character's basic form;
- **Chaos:** designed for combat and usually demonic, it's a thing of scales, fangs and claws [gain AC3 and do 1d10 damage];
- **Avatar:** an animal for Amberites, something more dramatic for Chaosians (elemental, for example) [commit Effort for the day, gain abilities appropriate to your avatar, as in *Knack of the Borrowed Shape*]

SORCERY

The metamagical ability that Amberites and Chaosians wield can function on any Shadow, even those that have no magical energy available, unlike “regular” magic. Sorcerers can commit Effort for the day to negate a Shadow magic spell or banish a summoned entity (like the *Sorcery* Word bond, Gd 51).

Casting Sorcery spells takes several minutes; so most sorcerers prepare their spells in advance, leaving open certain key aspects (target, duration, etc.), called lynchpins, in order to maximize their flexibility. This reduces casting time to several seconds.

Once a spell is prepared, it must be “hung”. A sorcerer can hang only one spell on his mind. Additional slots can be obtained by acquiring an artifact that has the Spell Rack quality.

The time needed to prepare or cast a spell depends on the number of lynchpins and Sorcery components, magical building blocks that are assembled in different ways for each spell.

- **Preparation:** (number of all lynchpins x number of Sorcery components) minutes
- **Casting:** (number of *undefined* lynchpins x number of Sorcery components) seconds

A round is 6 seconds long, so a spell that takes 12 seconds to cast requires 2 full rounds. Break down the total casting time in blocks of 6 seconds. Tally up the remaining seconds after this. If they are up to 3 seconds, then the spell goes off in the character’s action after the last full round. If it’s more, then it requires the full round to cast and will go off next round.

A spell with a casting time of 17 seconds takes 3 full rounds to cast: two blocks of 6 seconds plus 5 remaining seconds. Since 5 is greater than 3, it doesn’t go off in the third round.

LYNCHPINS

The list below includes the factor by which time is increased for each category. How stringent each lynchpin is depends on the GM. For example, Single target can be broad (humanoids) or specific (humans, Chaosians, Amberites).

- **Target:** Single [+1], Area [+5]
- **Destination:** Line of sight [+5], Memory [+10] (used in conjuration, teleportation and such)
- **Shadow Rules:** Defined [+5] (adjusts the spell to function within the Shadow rules; unnecessary with the Invoke Power component)
- **Duration:** [+5] (sets duration of the spell; unnecessary for instantaneous spells)
- **Now:** [+1] (instructs the spell to activate)

Higher values of certain lynchpins may prolong their preparation/casting time. For example, the Area Target may assume a 30-foot radius, with larger areas requiring more time.

COMPONENTS

It should be fairly simple to identify which components make up a specific spell. The GM is the final arbiter on the feasibility of a spell. When discussing a new spell, the guidelines for low magic and theurgy (Gd 56 & 62) should be taken into account.

- **Shadow Opening:** creates temporary intra- or inter-Shadow gates. Used for teleportation or to channel elemental attacks.
- **Shadow Manipulation:** alters or changes Shadow stuff. Used for transmutation, shapeshift and, in conjunction with Mind Touch, mind alteration (Shape Shift Shadow Items);

preparing items to store or use magical energy or hang spells (Prepare Item or Area for Magical Energy); and creating magic wards, circles and barriers (Define Channel for Magic Energy). Each change requires one use of this component.

- **Magical Energy:** creates raw magical power. Used to sustain long-running spells. Objects can usually hold one hour's worth of energy, while magic fields can last for up to 12 hours.
- **Mind Touch:** opens a mind link between caster and subject. Used for spells that directly affect another being.
- **Measure Substance:** assesses information. Used for spells that detect, analyze and locate. The more specific the spell, the greater the detail returned. Usually, it only works in a single Shadow, but may be extended to reflections or Shadows with the same magic rules.

At the GM's discretion, the following components may only be available to advanced practitioners of Sorcery.

- **Granted Intelligence:** grants a degree of intelligence to spells. Used to make spells somewhat autonomous and capable of discerning information, like attack spells that can distinguish between targets based on clothing.
- **Invoke Power:** links the spell to a Power. Used to create spells that operate across Shadows independently of their magic rules. Depending on which Power is invoked, other secondary benefits may be present.

sample sleep spells

Here are three versions of a Sleep spell so you can see the system at work.

SLEEP (Flexible)

Puts a single target to sleep for an indefinite amount of time.

Lynchpins: Single [+1], Destination n/a, Defined [+5], Duration [+5], Now [+1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: 24 seconds (4 rounds)/24 minutes

SLEEP (Flexible for use on Shadow Earth)

Puts a single target to sleep for an indefinite amount of time on Shadow Earth.

Lynchpins: Single [+1], Destination n/a, Earth, Duration [+5], Now [+1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: 14 seconds (2 rounds)/24 minutes

SLEEP (against humans on Shadow Earth for a defined duration)

Puts humans on Shadow Earth to sleep for 8 hours.

Lynchpins: Humans, Destination n/a, Earth, 8 hours, Now [+1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: 2 seconds (1 action)/24 minutes

SHADOWS

There's an infinite number of Shadows and *anything* can be found in Shadow. This is great for writing novels and adventuring, but may soon become a pain in the neck for the GM, especially if you are running a sandbox game. How long does it take to get from Shadow Earth to Shadow Texorami? Is Shadow Avalon close to Shadow Westeros? Should Shadow Takis-A be in the same vicinity of creation as Shadow Earth-616?

These are all questions that may come up in your game. Sure, you can just blurt out an answer to all of them without thinking too much or just say PCs travel at the speed of drama, but what happens a few sessions later if you give a different answer? Your players may start saying stuff like "Why did it change? A shadowstorm, you say? Man, there are *many* more reality storms in this campaign than in the books..."

OK, I may be exaggerating, but wouldn't it be nice if there were a simple system that helped you to have answers for these types of questions? Well, now you have. Below, you'll find a system for shadow navigation that, with the help of Tags, doubles as a quick and dirty method for Shadow creation.

SHADOW NAVIGATION

Creation is divided into four axes of existence, with Amber and the Courts of Chaos at opposing extremes: the poles. The axes are: Magic, Tech, Time, and Weird. Each has 10 degrees of variation (40 in total, 42 if you count Amber and the Courts of Chaos) and the cross-reference of these steps creates a coordinate system for the multiverse.

Each combination of the four coordinates references an area of creation that groups together all Shadows that share those traits. So two Shadows that both have Low Magic, an Industrial tech level, a time rate 10 times faster than Amber, and no "weirdness" will be found at coordinates 3430. It's what Amberites call the "law of congruency of correspondences".

This doesn't mean they are exactly alike (they can be if they are reflections, slightly different versions of the same universe). One might be a Victorian Shadow where occultists ply their trade through the Royal Institute of Thaumatology, while the other is a Wild West reality where magic is virtually unknown.

Differentiating between two Shadows at the same coordinates can be done by name, Tags and a two- or three-line description. For example, the two Shadows above could be described as:

- **Albiona:** Victorian, Institutionalized Magic, British Earth; a Shadow where the 19th-century British empire rules over a significant part of Earth with the help of the *magi* from the Royal Institute of Thaumatology.
- **Conehill:** Wild West, Pleasure, Blue Humans; Conehill is the greatest city in the world of Azure and there you can find all sorts of delightful past-times, from the chemical to the sensual, but also a quick death.

TRIP DURATION

Each step in an axis represents one day of regular shadow

Merlin asks:

"Shouldn't Conehill be at least Weird 1, since it has blue humans?"

This is better explained in the Axes section, Merlin, but Conehill would only have a higher Weird rating if it was set in an Earth that had no difference from our world other than the fact that their inhabitants are blue. Since Azure is a different world altogether – history, geography, culture, etc. –, it doesn't count as weirdness.

walking, four hours of hellriding, or nine days of traveling the Royal Way. So, going from a Shadow at 3541 to another at 3563 would take 4 days, 16 hours or about five weeks, respectively; the difference between the two Shadows being four steps: two in the Time axis and two in the Weird axis.

Between Shadows at 0000 and Amber, or 9999 and the Courts of Chaos, there's only 1 step, not four. Yggdrasil, the intelligent tree that sits midway between Amber and the Courts of Chaos is just a few hours from 4444 or 5555 Shadows.

Moving between Shadows within the same set of coordinates should be substantially faster than regular shadow movement. And travel between reflections should be even quicker. Going from Albiona to Conehill, from the example above, should take hours of shadow walking, no more. Shifting from Albiona with a closed bakery to another version where said business is still open should take a minute, at most.

INTERPRETING SHADOW

Of course, this system depends heavily on interpretation. Two people can have different ideas on how to stat a given reality. For example, the Shadow that houses the Star Trek setting is clearly No Magic, Space Opera, x2 time rate, and has psionics (Weird 4). But it also has a plethora of near omnipotent entities, like Q. Someone might think it belongs in Weird 5, 6 or even 7.

If you are the only GM, that's not an issue, but if the master seat is rotatory, it can create problems. Try to discuss and reach a compromise. For example, all those ultrapowerful beings in Star Trek seem to be highly evolved species that transcended their physical form, not insanity-inducing cosmic monstrosities. So, in a way, they are the result of the Thematic Powers Weird level.

Someone might argue that, in this case, maybe Tech should be bumped up to Singularity, but it's always better to stat a Shadow based on the traits of its most prominent area of interaction. Star Trek is not a setting where people are running around ascending into higher dimensions or rebuilding star systems. These things exist (a Shadow is a whole universe, after all), but are not the *norm* in Star Trek. Thus, the appropriate Tech level is Space Opera.

Note that a reality's subrealms are not different Shadows. The D&D world of Oerth (from Greyhawk) is a Shadow that includes the Prime Material Plane and all the other dimensions, like elemental planes, the Happy Hunting Grounds, the Abyss etc. It's up to the GM if shadow walking or shadow shifting allows a character to move between these subrealms.

USING THE COORDINATE SYSTEM

This coordinate system is purely a metamechanism. No one in *Chronicles of Amber* refers to shadow travel by these axes. This is just a way to facilitate the GM's job. However, nothing prevents characters that come from highly scientific Shadows that are aware of other realities from having a system just like this for dimensional navigation.

Merlin asks:

“Days as the basic unit of shadow walking seems awfully long, when compared to my father’s story?”

The novels are a bit ambiguous about how long it takes to move between Shadows. Sometimes, it seems to take hours, in other cases, days. These rules go along with the official RPG, but if you feel that's not a good measure, you can use the following units for each step:

Shadow walking: 1 hour

Hellriding: 10 minutes

Royal Way: 10 hours

With these new units, going from Amber to the Courts of Chaos will take 42 hours (almost two days), 7 hours or 17.5 days (a little over two weeks), respectively. The multiverse will surely feel small.

Usually, though, players will not care about the coordinates. They have a goal and want their characters to reach it. As such, they will use a much a more organic approach to navigation. Instead of saying “I want Ambrose to go to Shadow 5345”, they will say he is going to:

- **a known Shadow:** “Ambrose’s going to Shadow Earth”;
- **a variant of a known Shadow:** “Ambrose’s going to a Shadow Avalon, where Lancelot is married to Guinevere and they use lightsabers, instead of steel swords”;
- **an original Shadow:** “Ambrose’s going to a Shadow where everybody’s green, knows magic and has left Earth to live in the asteroid belt”;

These all can be resolved with GM’s fiat, but if you want some structure to your decision, here’s how you can approach each case.

The first case is easy enough (assuming you have already mapped the more famous Shadows): just calculate the distance between where the character is and the destination.

The second case is simple as well. Lancelot being married to Guinevere is a cosmetic change that doesn’t affect the coordinates (but may be worth a Tag). On the other hand, the lightsaber bit does. Since the player didn’t describe any other technological changes, assume the Tech rating is the same, which makes the presence of lightsabers an anomaly, i.e., weirdness. It probably bumps up the Weird rating by at least one. Since lightsabers are such a jarring detail in the absence of the supporting tech, we’ll say it moves up the Weird rating by two degrees. So this Avalon -- I’m not calling it a reflection, because I’m using this term to represent versions of the same Shadow that have cosmetic differences only -- is two steps removed from the original Shadow. Now that you know where it is, calculate the distance.

In the third case, it’s just a matter of translating the information provided into coordinates. Everybody is green, but the planet is Earth, so this is at least Weird 1. Everybody knows magic means that magical energy is abundant enough that anyone can (and does) learn it. Let’s make it High Magic (Magic 5). People have abandoned Earth to live in the asteroid belt, but the player hasn’t specified if this exodus is magically or technologically powered. You can ask her or decide by yourself, as long as you don’t contradict anything the player said. Hmm... We choose Tech 7 (Near Future), because the play between high tech and magic seems more interesting. The player didn’t say anything about time, so we assume it’s the same as the Shadow where the character is now: x2 or Time 1. We end up with 5711. Now, we calculate the distance.

FINDING THINGS IN SHADOW

But what happens if the player wants the character to find someone/something/a situation in Shadow? For example:

“Ambrose wants to find his father/the perfect gift for the queen/a chariot race in which the bets are made in gold coins and he has a big chance of winning”.

Merlin asks:

“Do Shadow coordinates change?”

The simple answer is: no. This system is meant to make the GM’s life easier. If she had to track where all the Shadows were drifting to, she’d go crazy. So, once established, the coordinates are permanent.

The complex answer is: maybe. As the tech evolves, mana is depleted, etc., the Shadow drifts along the proper axis. In this case, Time becomes an even more important axis, because it regulates the pace of this drift. GMs wanting to use this option, but avoid insanity may rule that there always is a similar Shadow at the original coordinates and that’s where the characters always return.

Shadowstorms and powerful Amberites able to control a reality’s destiny and/or timestream may also change a Shadow’s coordinates, but these tend to be one-time alterations – the Shadow doesn’t keep moving after that.

How do you go about it? Well, as always, you can just use GM fiat, but here's a mechanical way to handle that.

The main idea is: the more specific the person/object/situation, the longer it takes to find in Shadow. The categories below are measured in coordinate steps. Remember to factor things like required tech level. If the character wants a motorcycle, but is in a Shadow with Stone Age tech, she will need to move at least 3 steps to find Shadows with enough technological development to produce that vehicle. Also, common items in the character's current Shadow don't require travel, just some shifting.

Steps can represent weeks, days, hours, minutes or seconds, depending on the type of shadow movement and the origin and destination of the character.

- **Common class of person/object/situation:** 1d6 steps (parents of Amberites, swords, battles)
- **Uncommon class of person/object/situation:** 1d8+2 steps (fathers of Amberites, broadswords, Earth battles)
- **Rare class of person/object/situation:** 1d10+4 steps (fathers of Ambrose, magic broadswords, English battles)
- **Very rare class of person/object/situation:** 1d12+8 steps (Shadows of Ambrose's real father, Excalibur, Battle of Agincourt)
- **Unique class of person/object/situation:** 1d20+10 steps (Ambrose's real father, a specific Excalibur, a specific Battle of Agincourt)

By specific, I mean one individual person/object/situation within a multitude. For example, there's probably an infinite number of Excaliburs in Shadow, but if the character is after the one used in the Arthurian Shadow where he spent 20 years as a court mage, then it's an unique object. If he can settle for a Shadow of that sword, then it's just a very rare Excalibur. Real people or objects, those with Substance, like Amberites or the Jewel of Judgment, are always unique.

If the target of your search has Pattern Imprint and is trying to hide, finding him or her may require one or more opposed Wisdom checks.

As explained in the third case example, you can't contradict what the player has declared about what she's searching; after all, it's the character's consciousness that is shifting Shadow. But this means that the Amberite usually doesn't care about the rest of the details, as long as she gets what she wants. So everything else not covered by the player's description is fair game.

Of course, I'm not saying you should use this to screw the player, as if he was making a badly worded wish. You should use it to make things interesting: insert foreshadowing, introduce new characters or elements, etc. Remember to use the character's background, story, and game deeds. Imagine how his subconscious is processing all that and also projecting stuff into the Shadow.

Or not. If it's just a quick Shadow trip that's not that important for the game, just say "you shift into Shadow and after x seconds/minutes/hours/days/weeks finds what you are looking for".

Some players may try to prevent any kind of uncontrollable factor by overdetailing what her character is searching. This is fine, but the more detailed the description, the longer it will take to find it, i.e., bump up the category of the desired goal and use that die code to find the Shadow distance.

THE AXES

This section explains what each step in the axes means. Most are straightforward, with only Weird being more open to interpretation. Still, readjusting the steps in the axes if you want a different distribution shouldn't be problematic.

The notation for the axes isn't difficult to remember: Magic, Tech, Time and Weird, or MTTW (kinda like *Matthew*). Magic and Tech are the two most common parameters to describe worlds in RPGs, so they come first. This way, you know the second T has to stand for Time.

	Magic	Tech	Time	Weird
Amber				
0	No	Stone Age	x1	None
1	Trace	Bronze Age	x2	One Feature
2	Very Low	Medieval	x5	Significant Detail
3	Low	Renaissance	x10	Paranormal
4	Normal	Industrial	x20	Thematic Powers
Yggdrasil				
5	High	Early Modern	x50	Superabilities
6	Very High	Modern	x100	Metahumans
7	Ubiquitous	Near Future	x200	Cosmic
8	Wild	Space Opera	x500	Mythoic
9	Omni	Singularity	x1,000	Cross-Shadow
Courts of Chaos				

Here's a quick description of what each axis and their steps mean.

MAGIC

This represents the abundance of magic in a Shadow. The more widespread the magical energy in a reality, the more probable it's that its manipulation is known and employed. This correlation, though common, isn't *necessarily* true. Two Shadows, one with an open war between mystical factions and another where magic is secret and practiced by covert groups, can both have a Normal Magic level. On the other hand, there can exist a No Magic Shadow in which the inhabitants *believe* magic and its effects are real, and so perform spells and rituals (ineffectually).

Magic tends to be Shadow-specific: traditions from one reality don't work in another, unless it's a reflection or a very similar Shadow. For example, *Harry Potter* magic doesn't work in Middle-Earth, and Arda's magic has no power in *Shadowrun*'s Sixth World. There can be versions of these Shadows that allow extraplanar traditions to work normally, but these will have a higher Weird than the original.

Magical energy is, usually, inexhaustible, but in some Shadows it is a finite resource. Casting spells, enchanting artifacts and any other uses will deplete magic. Such realities will have a higher Weird rating too.

Mechanical effects of the magic level in a Shadow are left to the GM, but can be plundered from her favorite RPG systems. The ones listed below, like special traits for magic-users and recharging rates, are just examples and may be absent, higher or lower, as desired.

- **No:** this Shadow lacks magical energy. Magic items don't work (a +2 sword is just a sword) and creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive die.
- **Trace:** there's a minuscule amount of magic and accessing it may require a special trait. It takes years, maybe decades, to harness enough energy for even a minor effect. Magic item

abilities may not work or do so almost imperceptibly, and recharging may be impossible or take a very long time (x1,000). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive will wither and, eventually, die. Some may be able to survive in a very weakened and painful state.

- **Very Low:** magical energy is extremely low, but usable. Accessing it may require a special trait. Casting spells and enchanting are strenuous activities that take time. Magic items function at a very reduced efficiency and recharging takes a long time (x100). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive can live, but are weakened.
- **Low:** magic level is not optimum, but allows regular practice, so that sorcery becomes a “profession”. Wielding magical energy may still require a special trait. Casting spells and enchanting are difficult activities that take time. Magic items function at reduced efficiency and recharging may take longer (x10). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive live, but are not at full power.
- **Normal:** the “regular” level of most magical Shadows. Magic is abundant enough that sorcery is another common activity in society, though its practice may require some special trait. Casting spells and enchanting function at the appropriate level of difficulty and exertion of the tradition. Magic items, as well as recharging, operate normally. Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive exist without any problem.
- **High:** magical energy is so abundant that most everyone can perform it, even if they lack any special trait. Casting spells and enchanting are easier. Magic items may perform better and recharging is faster (x10). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive may be strengthened and/or feel inebriated.
- **Very High:** magic is so prevalent, anyone can use it. At this level, technological development may be impaired, since most everyone relies on magical solutions. Casting spells and enchanting are very easy. Magic items operate at higher levels of ability and recharging is incredibly fast (x100). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive have their powers enhanced and may be in an almost permanent high.
- **Ubiquitous:** magic is everywhere. If magical energy were water, this Shadow would be the abyssal depths of the ocean. Not only everyone can use magic, but most fauna and flora may also be magically active. Casting spells and enchanting are almost effortless and can have flashier results, be they successful or not. Magic items operate at far higher levels of ability and recharging is almost instantaneous (x1,000). Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive become extremely powerful and may feel overconfident or even megalomaniacal.
- **Wild:** like a Ubiquitous Shadow on steroids. The roaring maelstrom of magical energy makes magic easy, simple and unpredictable. Casting spells may be as easy as speaking and can have far-reaching consequences; using a common object in an emotionally significant manner may create powerful artifacts. Creatures made of mystical energy or dependent on magic to survive become godlike and may change completely in psychological terms. Some may not survive, unable to handle the powerful energies present.
- **Omni:** this Shadow not only has Wild magic, but is also permissible to all magical traditions in the multiverse. *Any* sorcerer or witch from *any* Shadow can perform magic here. Some Shadows at this level are nothing more than vast reservoirs of magical energy that can be tapped from other realities.

tech

This refers to the technological advancement found in a Shadow. Low tech, up to Medieval level, tends to be multiversal: a plough pulled by oxen, a bow and a miller’s wheel will function in any Shadow. There’s a reason Amberites use swords and horses, instead of disintegrators and flying cars.

As tech level rises, incompatibilities based on physical laws appear, getting more prevalent with each step. For example, gunpowder doesn't burn in certain Shadows, but FTL systems are almost completely Shadow-specific. Usually, things start getting complicated at the Near Future level.

Like in the Magic axis, Shadows that are permissive to non-native technologies have a higher Weird rating – unless the GM considers that the technology still works, but differently and in accordance to the new Shadow's laws. For example, in a *Traveller* Shadow, Star Trek's warp drive may not operate by creating a warp bubble and propelling the ship through normal space, but behave as a jump drive. This may warrant a one-level bump in the Weird axis.

- **Stone Age:** pre-agriculture, hunter-gatherers, flint weapons;
- **Bronze Age:** agriculture, cities, metal tools and weapons; Babylonia, Ancient Egypt;
- **Medieval:** iron-working; Roman Empire, Middle Ages;
- **Renaissance:** gunpowder, printing press; Earth's 15th-19th centuries;
- **Industrial:** steam power, railroads, telegraphs, ironclads, cartridge weapons; Victorian Era, Wild West;
- **Early Modern:** airplanes, assault rifles, atomic bombs, radars, radios; Roaring '20s, World War II;
- **Modern:** computers, electronics, biotechnology, television, jet planes, spacecrafts; late 20th to early 21st centuries;
- **Near Future:** advanced genetic engineering, bionics, supercomputers/AIs; Cyberpunk, Solar System exploration/colonization;
- **Space Opera:** androids/bioroids, beam weapons, FTL travel, teleportation, transhumanism, uplifting; Interstellar civilization;
- **Singularity:** ascension, cosmic engineering, Dyson spheres/ringworlds; Ancient/highly evolved civilizations.

TIME

This axis concerns the rate of time flow in relation to Amber. In Shadows at level 0, time passes at the same speed as in Amber. In those realities at higher Time ratings, time flow can be faster (fast time) or slower (slow time).

The multiplier for each degree shows the difference in rate. At a Time 2 Shadow, time flows five times faster or slower than in Amber. In the first case, five days go by for every Amber day. If it's a slow-time Shadow, then it's the opposite: every Shadow day corresponds to five Amber days.

Fast-time Shadows tend to be more common or, at least, more interesting to Amberites, so the default assumption for Shadows of Time greater than 1 is that they are fast time. If that's not the case, then a Slow Time Tag should be included in its description.

WEIRD

This measures the chaotic anomalies that differentiate Shadows from similar ones. It means a Shadow is closer to the Courts of Chaos than it should be given its traits. The Weird rating should be based on the most prominent/powerful anomaly. If the Shadow has two discrepancies of equal level, then it can be bumped to the rating above.

Merlin asks:

“Are the Courts of Chaos fast time or slow time?”

In the novels, this is a bit confusing. Characters raised in the Courts, like you, age faster, which is consistent with fast time. Certain remarks made by Amberites reinforce this notion. However, even short stays there correspond to vast amounts of time in Amber, as if the Courts were slow time. In *Patternbound*, the default assumption is that it behaves in a fast time manner.

Details covered by Tech or Magic don't justify a Weird rating greater than zero. For example, zombies are not an unusual thing to have in a magical world, so no Weird. In a modern Earth with no magic, though, such as *The Walking Dead* setting, they are, especially if the technological "explanation" is clearly handwaving. Seers or people with the Sight don't merit a Weird rating if the origin of their power is magical.

Shadows located between Yggdrasil and the Courts of Chaos (see the *Merlin Asks* sidebar in the next page) tend to have strange physical laws, even if their Weird rating is zero. Examples include anomalous gravity, chemical oddities, cosmic aberrations and so on.

The names of the level are just examples of conditions for that step.

- **None:** there's no anomaly in this Shadow. It behaves exactly like expected.
- **One Feature:** there's one thing that's different in this Shadow when compared to other reflections: colors (people, sky, sun, etc.), languages, existence/inexistence of a minor technology or feature.
- **Significant Detail:** there's one major anomaly or a few minor ones: species (lizardmen instead of humans), existence/inexistence of a major technology or feature (gunpowder doesn't ignite, zombies in an otherwise normal world, lightsabers in an Arthurian Shadow).
- **Paranormal:** this Shadow features a single paranormal ability (precognition, supersense of smell, world jumping, etc.); the existence/inexistence of a technological field, school of magic or features.
- **Thematic Powers:** there's a group of thematically linked abilities with a single origin (psionics, supernormals, etc.); the Shadow is permissible to a technology or magical tradition from another reality.
- **Superabilities:** there are various different abilities, but they all stem from a single origin (virus, genes, exposure to a substance, etc.). "People with powers" realities are usually found in this level.
- **Metahumans:** this Shadow features several different superpowers from a myriad of origins. It's the Weird level of most super-hero worlds. Here you can also find Shadows that are permissible to a group of technologies or magical traditions from another reality, or one technological field or magical tradition from several Shadows.
- **Cosmic:** Shadow-wide or even inter-Shadow conflicts and cataclysms, "relatable" cosmic entities, and almost constant timeline rearrangement are the province of this level. Shadows that are permissible to all technologies or magical traditions of another reality, or a group of technologies or magical traditions from several Shadows belong here as well.
- **Mythic:** insanity-inducing, dimensional-bending cosmic monstrosities can be found here.
- **Cross-Shadow:** these Shadows are so close to the Courts of Chaos that the boundaries between realities are tenuous. You can find worlds that are a patchwork of different Shadows. Cynosure, Sigil, Nexus and such exist at this level. Here you also find Shadows that are permissible to all technologies and/or magical traditions from other realities.

PERSONAL SHADOWS

It's not uncommon for Amberites to find a Shadow that caters to their desires. Maybe it has the perfect landscape, or the perfect people, or some other perfect quality. Maybe it's all these together. The fact is that the Amberite feels *almost* at home there (only Amber feels like home!).

Characters can start the game with personal Shadows. The player needs only choose its coordinates and Tags, and describe it. Then, she pays 1 point of Substance. The personal Shadow now is more real than the other Shadows and more difficult to manipulate. Any Pattern-imprinted character, other than the Shadow's owner, that tries to shift Shadow there incurs a -4 penalty.

Additional Substance investment allows the personal Shadow to be “upgraded” (Am 73).

- **Primal Shadow (1 point):** the Shadow has so much Substance, it starts casting Shadows of its own; shifting Shadow has a -8 penalty for all except the owner.
- **Communication Barrier (1 point):** the owner can block incoming or outgoing communication, no matter the medium -- Sorcery, Trumps, etc. This isn't selective: the owner blocks everything or nothing.
- **Content Control (1 point):** the owner can alter the Shadow's elements easily and at will.
- **Restricted Access (2 points):** entrance to this Shadow requires a particular type of trait, location or behavior.
- **Time Flow (2 points):** the owner can speed up or slow down time flow in the Shadow relative to Amber.
- **Hidden/Concealed (3 points):** it's practically impossible to find this Shadow. Searching for it requires a Wisdom check with -12. Failure indicates the character spends the amount he failed the roll by in days looking before realizing he's hit a dead end.
- **Destiny (4 points):** the owner can set the Shadow up so that is in the way of shadow travelers. This can be a set condition (“All those searching for the Blue Rose will come to my realm”) or an active command (“I know Ambrose is setting forth from Amber. He shall come to me”). Unknowing characters can't prevent this, but those who know of the Shadow's existence can try to avoid it. This requires an opposed Wisdom check between the traveler and the Shadow's owner.
- **Guardians (4 points):** the Shadow has gatekeepers. Their nature and abilities can be created by using the rules in the *Artifacts & Creatures* chapter (see below). Alternatively, the GM may employ the Shadow block rule in the Powers chapter, granting +12 to the owner's roll.

sample shadows

Here's a short list of some possible stats for named Shadows from the books. I have also included write-ups for famous settings in the genre media.

ARCEM (from *Godbound*)

Coordinates: 6315 (Very High, Renaissance, x1, Superabilities)

Tags: Broken, Demigods, Chaos attack

Description: this Shadow has been sundered by divinely powered conflict. It's also under attack by Chaos forces using Black Roads, called Night Roads locally.

Notes: there's so much magical energy in Arcem, its

Merlin asks:

“How do you determine which Shadow is closer to Amber or the Courts?”

For this, you just need to flatten the four dimensions into one. If you add the four axial values, you get a number between zero and 36, with Amber and the Courts at either extreme (think -1 and 37). In this scheme, Yggdrasil is found at 18. Now, calculating this total for each Shadow allows you to map it onto this scale. Realities below 18 are closer to Amber, they are “northern” realities; those over are nearer the Courts (“southern”). Examples:

Amber

5 Avernus

6 Avalon

7 Earth

8 Middle-Earth

10 High Castle, Lorraine

13 Federation, Republic

15 Arcem, Arkham (if Weird 0)

18 Yggdrasil

20 Earth-616, Metropolis

23 Arkham

Courts

This also illustrates the effect of the Weird axis. Without its Weird rating, Arkham, given its traits, should be at 15, closer to Amber than the Courts.

Don't use this system to calculate Shadow distance – it doesn't work. Avalon and Earth are both at 6 and 7, respectively, but it takes nine days to go from one to the other: four to go “down” to No Magic, four to go “up” to Modern Tech, and one to go “up” to double Time.

inhabitants were creating artificial gods and transhuman bloodlines a thousand years ago. Also, more than one nation has advanced clockwork mechanisms, hence the Renaissance Tech level. And I chose to treat godbound as paranormals, instead of an aspect of the magic level.

ARKHAM

Coordinates: 4568 (Normal, Early Modern, x100, Mythoic)

Tags: Cthulhu, Roaring '20s, Slow Time

Description: the Shadow where the stories crafted by Lovecraft's and friends take place, always circa 1920s.

Notes: this is an example of how you can play with the coordinate system to create any universe you want. The Slow Time ensures there will always (for game purposes) be the '20s. However, it also means that spending one day there will mean more than three months have gone by on Amber and about a month and a half on Earth.

AVALON

Coordinates: 4200 (Normal, Medieval, x1, None)

Tags: Arthurian, Corwin/Benedict, Personal Shadow

Description: Corwin's personal Shadow, where he was sorcerer-lord; also, a reflection of the original, where Benedict is the Protector. Both have jeweler's rouge.

Notes: in the absence of information on the time differential, I opted to make Avalon a Time 0 Shadow.

AVERNUS

Coordinates: 3200 (Low, Medieval, x1, None)

Tags: Warm, Amberites as Gods, Bleys' Army

Description: the home reality of the troops that Bleys uses in the failed attack at Amber.

Notes: not much to go on here, but seems about right.

EARTH

Coordinates: 0610 (No, Modern, x2, None)

Tags: Earth, Modern Day, Corwin/Flora

Description: our world in the "present" and where Corwin spent 400 years. It was also Flora's personal Shadow for a while.

Note: I chose a No Magic Earth, but I can see up to a Low Magic one, as they use it on GURPS. Note that Earth is considered Flora's personal Shadow, although Corwin spent a long time here. According to *Sign of the Unicorn*, one Amber day is 2.5 Earth days. So I chose to use Earth as the basis for the time flow of the Shadows based on genre media, i.e., most of them are Time 1.

EARTH-616/METROPOLIS

Coordinates: 4637 (Normal, Modern, x10, Cosmic)

Tags: Marvel/DC, Super-Heroes, Slow Time

Description: the main comic book Marvel or DC Earth, where times seems to run slower than normal.

Note: these Shadows are Slow Time to represent the "compressed timeline" aspect of these comic book universes. The cinematic versions of these may have lower Weird.

Merlin asks:

"If Lorraine is a Shadow of Avalon, why do Corwin and Ganelon take over a week to go from Lorraine to Avalon?"

Two reasons. First, Lorraine was put in Corwin's way by Oberon, so it wasn't in its proper coordinates. Second, it had already been established by the GM, Roger, that the original Avalon had been destroyed, so Corwin couldn't return to it. Still, he desired a Shadow as close as possible, because he wanted to make sure the Shadow jeweler's rouge would work the same as the original. So, what he truly wanted was the jeweler's rouge. Roger decides then that he'll use the *Finding Things in Shadow* rules. Since Corwin wants a jeweler's rouge that burns in Amber, Roger considers that a unique object and rolls 1d20+10. Luckily, for Corwin, the die comes up 1. It takes him 11 days to find the new Avalon.

FEDERATION/REPUBLIC

Coordinates: 0814 (No, Space Opera, x2, Themed Powers)

Tags: Star Trek/Star Wars, Psionics/The Force

Description: the Shadows where you can find Kirk, Spock, Picard and company; and Jedi, Sith, lightsabers, hyperspace, and Old and New Republics, respectively.

Note: there may be a case for Republic to be Weird 5, given the vast array of abilities the Force provides.

HIGH CASTLE

Coordinates: 0613 (No, Modern, x2, Paranormal)

Tags: Earth, Nazi World, World Jumpers

Description: a Shadow Earth in the '60s where the Axis won the Second World War. Certain people have the ability to jump back and forth to an Earth with a history similar to our own.

Notes: this is the setting of *The Man in the High Castle* TV series, an adaptation of the eponymous book by Philip K. Dick. Note that the "regular" Earth they jump to is not the Shadow Earth described above, because this one has world jumpers, so it's also Weird 3.

LORRAINE

Coordinates: 4240 (Normal, Medieval, x20, None)

Tags: Arthurian, Oberon, Chaos Attack

Description: a Shadow of Shadow Avalon, complete with a Shadow of Corwin in its past. It's been manipulated by Oberon and is under Chaos attack in the form of the Wardens of the Circle.

Note: Oberon mentions having altered the time rate to give him time to plan. Time 4 seems enough, but it might be higher. Also, remember he also manipulated its destiny so as to put it in Corwin's way, so the coordinates may not mean much anymore.

MIDDLE-EARTH

Coordinates: 5210 (High, Medieval, x2, None)

Tags: Tolkien, Third Age

Description: Arda circa the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Note: First- and Second-ages Arda may have even higher levels of magic; for these cases, Magic 6 doesn't seem off.

ARTIFACTS AND CREATURES

Amberites can find whatever they desire in Shadow and many of them do exactly that, searching the multiverse until they zero in on wondrous creatures or exotic servants. Besides this, the royal family of Amber has access to mystical artifacts of great power that far surpass what Shadow can produce in terms of magical items.

ARTIFACTS

By artifacts, I mean those items of power that are of interest to Amberites. A simple Shadow walk will lead a character towards a treasure trove of “mundane” magical items that can be extremely powerful in their native Shadow, but are useless to those who can traverse the multiverse and may find themselves in lands of different magical tradition.

Still, it’s not inconceivable that, given time, an Amberite can find a minor magic item that functions across Shadow. In this case, use the *Crafting Minor Magics* guidelines from *Godbound* (Gd 183), substituting Dominion for Substance.

One way to make magic items function in any Shadow is to have a section of the Pattern engraved on it. This adds 2 Substance to the cost of the item. For example, the player wants his character to have a sword with a +2 bonus that works in every Shadow. This would cost 4 Substance: 2 for a minor permanent item and 2 for Pattern Engraving.

Gifts and Effort may be part of an artifact as well, if the GM agrees. Crafting true artifacts, in the *Godbound* sense, such as the Jewel of Judgment, can only be accomplished by skilled artisans, such as Dworkin. A character may use a Fact to establish that he trained under Dworkin or another artificer, but the GM may require, as a pre-requisite, that he buys the Artifice Word bond as a Talent.

Trump creation is covered by the *Trump Artistry* Heroic Talent and is described below.

Here’s a short list of some of the artifacts that appear in the novels.

GRAYSWANDIR

Effort: None **Creation cost:** 4 Substance

Corwin’s sword was forged on the first rock that leads to Tir-Na Nog’th. This allows it to mediate contact between the wielder and inhabitants of that ghost city when the blade is laid crosswise between them or touches the intangible beings. Grayswandir is also able to wound the apparitions of Tir-Na Nog’th, doing 1d8 of regular damage. It is unclear if this property is a result of its crafting or due to the Pattern engraving in its blade.

PATTERN ENGRAVING

Effort: Not applicable **Creation cost:** 2 Substance

By inscribing a section of the Pattern into an artifact, you can guarantee it will work in any Shadow, not only its native one. On a blade, bullet, arrowhead, etc. Pattern engraving allows the weapon to deliver straight damage against Chaosians. Only metal is strong enough to receive the engraving.

TRUMP

Effort: None **Creation cost:** 1 Substance

Creating a Trump requires a live model, two days of dedicated work and the commitment of one Effort for the day each day. Working without a model will double or triple this time. And basing the work on description can result in a link to a Shadow version of the subject (the GM may require an

Intelligence check to prevent this). A Trump Sketch takes about half an hour. At the end of the process, the artist pays the Substance cost, activating the Trump.

TRUMP DECK

Effort: None **Creation cost:** 8 Substance

A full Trump deck with cards for Oberon, his children, Amber, Amberite PCs in the campaign, if they are known, and whomever else the GM deems fit. Note that this is a bargain price for starting characters. Since Trumps cost 1 Substance apiece, the deck above, without the PCs, would cost 15 Substance. After the game starts, the only way to acquire a deck is by stealing, someone gifting you one, or by creating your own.

JEWEL OF JUDGMENT

Effort: Unlimited **Creation cost:** Not applicable

The symbol of Amberite royalty is a large blood-red gem (a 40- or 50-carat ruby) that contains a three-dimensional version of the Pattern and a multitude of powers, the most potent being the ability to inscribe a new Pattern, although the most used one is weather manipulation (treat as having Effort-free versions of *The Clouds Below*, *Rain of Lightning*, *Windsinger* and *Fury of the Heavens Sky Gifts*, GD 50).

The jewel can also be used to paralyze an enemy. This is a short-range ability, only effective up to 20 feet away, but can affect groups. Lesser foes are automatically affected; Worthy foes get a Spirit save, but must roll a new save each round they are in range. Failure means the target is paralyzed.

Wielders can count with the protection of the Jewel of Judgment. The artifact will protect them from death (by teleporting them to a safe place, for example), but the aggression must originate from close quarters -- ranged attacks don't trigger this effect. The jewel is fast, but not much, so surprise attacks or really fast opponents can get past it. The jewel will always be the second to act in a round.

Other powers include a Trump-like gate effect and the ability to simulate a hellride. There are probably many others, but finding them out requires extensive study of the jewel or training with a more experienced user.

To use the jewel, the character must attune itself to it by walking the Pattern and, at the end, projecting his consciousness into the three-dimensional Pattern within. Then, the character *spends* one point of Effort -- meaning it's gone for good -- and the attunement is complete.

Each hour of constant use (wearing or carrying the jewel around is considered use) drains the Amberite of one point of Effort. The user does not notice this draining. When all Effort is gone, the jewel starts siphoning off hit points at the same rate. At this point, the user will become aware of an alteration in his time sense -- the rest of the world seems slower (he gains an Effort-free version of the Alacrity Gift *The Storm Breaks*, Gd 30) -- and of the pulsing of the jewel in synch with his heart. Upon reaching zero hit points, the wielder falls unconscious and, if still in possession of the Jewel of Judgment, will die in the next hour. By removing contact with the jewel, the user stops the draining and recovers normally.

It's possible to summon strength from the artifact. This doesn't stop the loss of hit points, but gives the wielder more time. The first summoning will put the character at full hit points. Further uses will be less efficient: the second time, the jewel puts the character at 75% hit points; the third, half the total; the fourth, 25% of hit points; and the fifth and final time, 10%. Always round up.

When helping someone attune, the wielder can drain strength from him or her at a 1:1 ratio.

CREATURES

Fanatic warriors dedicated to your cause, loyal hellhounds able to pursue automobiles, horses with endless stamina -- these are just a few examples of what can be obtained in Shadow.

If a player wants her character to have such creatures or servants, she should talk to the GM and use the *Empowering and Creating Beings* guidelines (Gd 131). The base cost, however, depends on the availability of the creature in Shadow. The table below substitutes the one in *Godbound* (Gd 129) for determining initial cost and is based on the one from the Amber RPG (Am 71).

Quantity	Cost	
Unique	1	Only one exists
Name & Numbered	2	Limited number
Horde	4	Particular location in a particular Shadow
Shadow Wide	8	Everywhere in a Shadow
Cross-Shadow	16	In every Shadow that contains a particular environment
Ubiquitous	32	Can be found anywhere in Shadow

Decide what kind of change -- actually, in *Patternbound*, this is a measure of how long an Amberite needs to search in Shadow for the creature -- the final stats represent. Here are some suggestions:

- **Plausible [x1]:** regular soldiers, top animal specimens
- **Improbable [x2]:** elite soldiers, animals with low-level superattributes or abilities
- **Impossible [x4]:** supernatural warriors, animals with superabilities

You can use the Qualities listed in the Amber RPG (Am 67) as guidelines to what falls in each category.

After determining the stats of the creature, decide if it will have some sort of autonomous Shadow movement. This ability has a cost of its own:

- **Shadow Trail [1 point]:** can follow someone else moving through Shadow;
- **Shadow Path [2 points]:** can find a path to any Shadow it knows well; if backtracking through a known route, it can move at hellride speed;
- **Shadow Seek [4 points]:** can move towards a person or item in Shadow;

At the GM's discretion, instead of charging for Shadow movement, each level can be assigned to a change type: Shadow Trail is Plausible, Shadow Path is Improbable, and Shadow Seek is Impossible. Alternatively, any sort of Shadow movement ability can automatically qualify as an Impossible change.

Use the multiplier on the base cost to find out the final Substance price.

As an example, let's take Julian's hellhounds. They fall under Horde, because they are only found in the Forest of Arden specifically. Since they don't have any sort of Shadow movement power, their base cost is 4. Hellhounds are capable of pursuing a car and biting through metal. We'll put that under Improbable, because it's an enhancement of a dog's natural abilities. So the base cost is multiplied by 2, for a final cost of 8 Substance points. The stats might look like this:

Hellhound: AC 7, HD 2, Attack +3, Damage 1d8, Move 120', Save 13, Morale 9, Effort 1

APPENDIX

Here you will find some optional systems for use in your game.

WALKING THE PATTERN

This system was adapted from the one found in [GURPS Amber](#).

In order to traverse the Pattern, the character must succeed in a series of Constitution or Wisdom checks (whichever is lower). Failure doesn't mean immediate death, only that the character slowed down. He needs to repeat the roll with a -2 penalty. If he fails again, the procedure is the same, now with -4 and so on. This cumulative penalty is only valid for the section the character is trying to cross (e.g., the First Veil). After he's successful, it resets. Effort can also be committed for the day to succeed in the check.

Every failed roll does 1 hp of fatigue to the character. If the character reaches zero hp, he falls unconscious on the Pattern and is torn to primordial shreds.

The First Steps: +4

Taking the first step on the Pattern is a frightening process. It is also difficult to just get started. As one begins blue sparks begin to leap up around him. These get more intense in the more difficult areas.

The First Veil: 0

This is just the warm up part of the Pattern. It gets worse.

The Second Veil: -8

This is the most difficult region of the Pattern. If you make it past this reasonably intact you should be able to survive the rest of the procedure.

The Grand Arch: -4

The Grand Arch isn't the most difficult part of the Pattern, but it is long and strenuous. The character *must succeed three times* at this roll in order to pass.

The Final Veil: 0

This is the last roll you need to make. Consider it a cooling down exercise. Once you succeed at this roll you finish the Pattern walk.

Amberites who have already walked the Pattern can give aid by advising the characters. A success in an Intelligence check grants a +2 bonus to the walking character. However, the helper can intentionally mislead. This turns the bonus into a penalty. An ally can also "donate" Effort. This requires a Wisdom check by the donor. Success allows the recipient to recover committed Effort equal to half the donated Effort.

Ambrose is about to walk the Pattern for the first time. He has Constitution 18, Wisdom 15, 6 hp and 2 Effort. Ambrose ingratiated himself with Bleys, who will help him in the ordeal. Bleys makes an Intelligence check, granting Ambrose +2 throughout the process. Ambrose steps onto the Pattern, making his Wisdom check with a total bonus of +6 (+4 for First Steps, +2 for Bleys' help), and succeeds. Next, he gets to the First Veil, rolls again and succeeds once more. So far, so good, but now Ambrose reaches the Second Veil, the most difficult part of the Pattern. He rolls with a total penalty of -6 and makes it through. All the while, Bleys is talking to him and advising him on what to do. A little more confident, Ambrose arrives at the Grand Arch. However, here, he fails his roll, stumbling and losing 1 hit point. Encouraged by Bleys, Ambrose keeps moving. He rolls again,

now with a -4 penalty (-4 for the Grand Arch, -2 for an extra attempt and +2 for Bleys' advice). He fails again, losing another hit point. Ambrose concentrates and summons his inner strength. He commits one point of Effort, succeeding. Still in the Grand Arch, Ambrose succeeds at the second roll. At the final stage of the Grand Arch, Ambrose fails and loses the third hit point. He commits his second point of Effort and succeeds. At this point, Bleys decides to boost Ambrose's endurance. Making a Wisdom roll, he commits 2 Effort so that Ambrose recovers one of the committed points. At the Final Veil, Ambrose succeeds at his last roll and finishes the Pattern. Ambrose is drenched in sweat, has lost half his hit points, and committed half his Effort, but he has acquired the Pattern Imprint Power. He also owes Bleys a big favor, since without his help, walking the Pattern would have been even more difficult.

LINEAGE TABLES

In the manner of Sine Nomine Publishing games, I've included some tables for you to randomly determine a character's parentage.

PARENT GENERATION

This table lets you find out the generation of your character's Amberite parent. I adjusted the probability to make it more likely that new character are the grandkids of the princes and princesses in the novel. If you want an equal chance for all categories, just roll a d6.

D12 Parent Generation

1	Oberon
2-4	Second generation
5-8	Third generation
9-10	Fourth generation
11	Fifth generation
12	Later generations

LEGAL STATUS

Is your character born out of wedlock?

D6 Legal status

1-2	Bastard
3-4	Bastard, recognized
5-6	Legitimate

OTHER PARENT

Who was your character's non-Amberite parent? Again, the odds have been adjusted, but if you want equal chances, just roll a d6.

D8 Other parent

1-2	Amber noble
3	Amber commoner
4-5	Golden Circle noble
6	Golden Circle commoner
7	Shadow dweller
8	Chaosian

SECOND GENERATION PARENT

Here you can find which of Oberon's children sired your character.

D20	Second Gen. Parent
1	Benedict
2-3	Bleys
4-5	Brand
6-7	Caine
8-9	Corwin
10	Deirdre
11-12	Eric
13	Fiona
14	Flora
15	Gerard
16-17	Julian
18	Llewella
19-20	Random

CORWIN

This is Corwin at the start of *Nine Princes in Amber*. I figure he should be level 8 (a nice 1 level per 100 years of age), but his 400 hundred years on Earth have slowed his progression a bit.

Heroic Mortal 6

Str 16 (+2) [5]
Dex 13 (+1) [8]
Con 18 (+3) [3]
Int 15 (+1) [6]
Wis 16 (+2) [5]
Cha 15 (+1) [6]

HP: 28

AC: 8

Effort: 4

BAB: +6 (Greyswandir +8/1d8+1 damage)

SAVES

Hardiness 7
Evasion 9
Spirit 8

FACTS

Son of Oberon (Blood of Amber)
Prince of Amber
Poet/Lyrics writer
Rivalry with Eric
Greyswandir & Shadow Avalon
Sorcerer-Lord of Shadow Avalon
Soldier
Combat Medic
400 years of Shadow Earth

TALENTS

Toughness
Pattern Imprint
Hardened Combatant
Diehard Will
Professional Expertise: Soldier
Heroic Flurry of Blows
Blessed Luck