



UNISYSTEM Amber

by
Fred Furtado

FOREWORD

I love Roger Zelazny's *Chronicles of Amber* novels and am always trying to adapt roleplaying games (RPG) to run it. Back in 2004, I published notes for converting Amber to classic Unisystem, the original Unisystem Amber ([still available](#)). I used it for a short campaign in 2008, but when I revived the game in 2016, I tested my [Patternbound](#) adaptation.

A couple of months ago, I once again became interested in Amber gaming. I got a play-by-post set up at [Roleplaying Online](#) and decided to return to Unisystem. This time, however, I opted for the cinematic version and adapted my earlier notes accordingly. This document is the result of this adaptation and includes everything you need to start an Amber campaign. I mean, an Amber game mostly based on the Corwin cycle. I have yet to reread the Merlin books, so I don't think I can do justice to all the new things in them, when translating to this system. I do include Logrus Mastery, though.

Bear in mind that this is my interpretation of the Amber setting and you may need to fine-tune – or overhaul – it for your games. For example, the *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* states that a shapeshifter's Chaos form offers no Attribute advantages. I find that too conservative and not necessarily upheld by the novels. So I included bonuses.

Shadow & Trail

Although I like the Amber novels, I find I'm not so keen on the PvP nature of games based on it. I also felt constrained by canon when running it, even with the expanded concepts of the Merlin cycle. That is why I have set my current game in the far future, after Amber and the Courts of Chaos succeeded in annihilating each other. That allowed me to have a clean slate, NPCwise, and tweak the setting a bit. I also incorporated elements from other RPGs I like, such as *Fringeworthy* (which also has [conversion notes for Unisystem](#)) and *Nexus: The Infinite City*, increasing the gonzone, if that is possible.

This extra material is not presented here. I wanted a basic document with only the essential information for running an Amber game with Unisystem. However, I intend to release a companion to Unisystem Amber collecting these ideas. Having said that, there is something new here – a system-agnostic Shadow navigation mechanic to help game masters (GM) map the omniverse of their games. I first wrote it for *Patternbound* and there's an online version – [Map the Multiverse](#) –, but I thought it only logical to include it here.

Finally, there are spoilers in here. If you haven't read the first five novels, I suggest you go do that before reading 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 Unisystem Amber!

On the shoulders of hill giants

Like many conversions, Unisystem Amber is not only inspired by the source material, but also by the official RPG, 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](#).

It also incorporates or references material from other Unisystem products, both classic and cinematic, as well as from [Exalted vs World of Darkness](#), by Holden Shearer.

Here's a list of all the sources with the abbreviations used when giving page numbers.

Abomination Codex (AB)
Amber Diceless Role-Playing (AD)
Angel Roleplaying Corebook (AC)
Buffy TVS Corebook (BC)
Exalted Versus WoD (EX)
Ghosts of Albion (GA)
Mystery Codex (MC)
The Magic Box (MB)



THANKS

When I was writing Unisystem Amber, I needed help with the Faction rules, so I turned to [RPGnet](#) and the [Unisystem Game Fans Facebook group](#). There, I received invaluable help from PaulK, Arkat, Charlie Von Eschen and John Ickes.

ART

I found incredible illustrations to spruce up Unisystem Amber.
Here's the list of artists featured in this document:

[Boris Vallejo](#)
[Donato Giancola](#)
[Ekaterina Maximovich](#)
[Florence Magnin](#)
[Jean Pierre Targete \(JP Targete\)](#)
[Jonas De Ro](#)
[Joya-Filomena](#)
[Michael \(Firsin\)](#)
[Michael Kucharski](#)
[Michael Turner](#)
[nebezial](#)
[Olga Sluchanko](#)
[René Campbell](#)
[Rob Joseph](#)
[Sergey Krutskikh](#)
[Stephen Hickman](#)
[Tatyana \(Solea-ru\)](#)

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CHARACTER CREATION

Starting characters in an Amber game can be created with the following point-spreads:

	Young	Middle	Elder
Attributes	25	30	35
Qualities	20	30	40
Drawbacks	up to 10		
Skills	30	40	50
Drama Points	10		

The first one will provide relatively young or not so experienced characters, but ones that can still hold their own. More powerful Amberites can be obtained with the second and third, more generous, point-spreads. More experience can also come through judicious use of the Age Quality.

Player characters (PC) should also receive for free one of the Blood Qualities below. If the premise of the game is that all characters are from Amber and/or Chaos, there isn't much point in charging for one of these Qualities. The cost is still included in case you are running a crossover campaign with other settings.

Blood of Amber

13-point Quality

The character belongs to the royal family of Amber, being a child of Oberon, his children or their descendants. The Pattern is their legacy and this Quality is a prerequisite to walking it, which also triggers the PC's immortality. Those of the Blood of Amber are more powerful physically and psychically than Shadow dwellers, gaining +4 STR, +2 CON, +2 PER, +2 WILL, and +30 Life Points. They also heal faster and regrow lost limbs (p.2). Characters with this Quality have the ability to cast a Blood Curse. This can only be used when the PC is at -10 Life Points and is equivalent to the Accursed Drawback at level 10. If the Amberite survives, they will suffer from the effects of their own curse, needing an enormous sacrifice to expunge it.

Blood of Chaos

8-point Quality

The character belongs to one of the noble houses of the Courts of Chaos. The Logrus is their legacy and this Quality is a prerequisite to traversing it, but doing so without knowing Shapeshifting as well will result in death. Those of the Blood of Chaos are more powerful physically and psychically than Shadow dwellers, though not as much as Amberites, gaining +3 STR, +2 CON, +1 PER, +1 WILL, and +10 Life Points.

In campaigns where characters are direct descendants from Oberon or nobles form the Courts, but so far removed in generations they don't have the same physical characteristics, the Blood of Amber and of Chaos Qualities cost only 2 and 1 points, respectively.

Merlin asks:

"Isn't 30 extra LP for Amberites excessive, especially given that their STR and CON bonuses already mean 24 additional points?"

The Royals are tough, but the novels make it clear that bullets or well-placed daggers are real dangers for them. However, given Unisystem's lethality, I feel the extra LP are justified. Think of them as "toughness FX" that allows an Amberite to last a bit longer in combat, but will not make them impossible to defeat.

If you rather not have it, just drop the extra LP from the Blood Qualities. The Amber one will cost 10 points; and the Chaos one, seven.

If you want to start with shadowwalking characters, but still use the point-spread above, you might have to consider giving Pattern Imprint (p.7) for free as well. Starting characters can buy it, but will use all of their Quality points and half their Drawback allotment, leaving few points for anything else.

Optionally, you could break down the cost of the Powers, allowing characters to buy individual abilities. The *Appendix* lists a possible cost breakdown for use with this option (p.34).



ATTRIBUTES

Attributes follow the usual Unisystem rules. Those players and GMs familiar with *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* and/or wanting to convert can check the guidelines in the *Appendix* (p.33).

High-Level Attributes

In an Amber game, Attributes at level 8 or more *may* provide additional benefits. Below are suggestions on how to handle these effects.

Constitution

This Attribute governs an Amberite's rapid healing and even lower levels confer some advantage.

Level 7-8: heals 1 LP/4 hours.

Level 9-10: heals 1 LP/2 hours.

Level 11+: heals 1 LP/hour.

Amberite regeneration is supernatural in origin, but depends on the body's health. Medical care doubles the healing rate, but physical stress may impair regeneration and even stop it.

Perception

High levels in this Attribute expand the character's perceptive capabilities beyond the normal human spectrum.

Level 8: the character has a psychic sensitivity akin to the Psychic Vision Quality (AC54). At level 10, it may progress to Supernatural Senses (Fortune Telling) (AC58), at the GM's discretion.



Level 10: the character can detect emotions as if having the Supernatural Senses (Empathy) Quality (AC58).

Level 12: the character can communicate telepathically as if having the Telepathy Quality (AC59). Trump contact is another way to read someone's mind.

Willpower

High levels in this Attribute allow the characters to exert their will upon others. The GM may stipulate these powers function at a lower effective level of Willpower (e.g., WILL-7).

Level 10: the character has the equivalent of the Gaze Into My Eyes level of the Hypnosis Quality (AC52).

Level 12: the character has the equivalent of the Come to Me level of the Hypnosis Quality (AC52).

QUALITIES

There are a few new Qualities for Amber games, beside the Blood ones.

Artifacts & Creatures

Variable Quality

The character found, stole or was gifted items and/or creatures of power. These are not regular magic swords or flying horses, for these would probably have their abilities limited to their native Shadows. The artifacts and creatures covered by this Quality can exist across Shadow and, as such, provide their benefits almost everywhere.

Artifacts and creatures need to be worked out with the GM. Note that as technological complexity rises, the ability to have an artifact function everywhere in creation becomes progressively hard. The same applies to creatures in regard to their biological uniqueness. There is a reason Amberites use swords and horses, instead of disintegrators and nightmares. The rules for building artifacts and creatures are on the eponymous chapter (p.27).

Contacts

Variable Quality

Characters can have allies, like friends, mentors, parents, or even rivals. The categories below replace the ones from the Contacts Quality (AC32). The player chooses the identity and general demeanor of the ally, but the GM decides everything else, including secret agendas. Nothing in Shadow is certain, and those who present themselves as loyal friends may in fact be deadly enemies, while someone who seems hostile may be a close, but unknown relative. If the player wants to leave the identity of the contact – and its revelation – in the GM's hands, knock one point off the Quality's cost.

Amber: Royals, nobles, court retainers, Golden Circle royalty, servants, military officers, etc.

Courts of Chaos: Royal House members, lords and ladies, demons, servants, etc.

Shadow: professionals, criminals, military officers, supernatural beings, government officials, etc.

Jewel of Judgment Attunement

5-point Quality (PR: Pattern Imprint)

The character essayed the three-dimensional Pattern inside the Jewel of Judgment (also known as the Left Eye of the Serpent) and now can wield this powerful – and dangerous – artifact, the traditional symbol of Amberite royalty. When nearby, attuned characters can sense the presence of the Jewel with a PER doubled or PER + Notice roll, whichever is higher. The abilities of the Jewel of Judgment are listed in the *Artifacts and Creatures* chapter (p.27).

Personal Shadows

Variable Quality

A character has claimed a Shadow as his “home”. A Personal Shadow can be found after the game has begun, but acquiring it through this Quality gives more control to the player. A personal Shadow bought with points becomes part of the character's portfolio, entwined with his fate and the campaign.

Two or more players can jointly create a Personal Shadows. Just pool their points together. The character that has invested more points gains greater control over the reality.

The cost of a Personal Shadow depends on its Type, Security and Control (AD73). Add the values together to find the total cost.

Type

Personal Shadow (1 point): the Shadow is more real than others and more difficult to manipulate. Any Pattern-imprinted character other than the Shadow's owner has -2 to shift Shadow.

Shadow of the Realm (2 points): the Shadow is close to Amber or the Courts of Chaos. It might be located in the Golden Circle or Black Zone. Amberites and Chaos denizens know about the Shadow. The same Shadow-shifting penalty as Personal Shadow's exists.

Shadow Barrier

Communication Barrier (1 point): blocks one or more communication methods, including Powers. The barrier can be one-way or two-way, but must be total (no exceptions such as “blocked to all Sorcery but mine,” for example).

Restricted Access (2 points): entrance to this Shadow requires a particular type of trait, location or behavior.

Hidden/Concealed (3 points): it's practically impossible to find this Shadow. Searching for it requires a WILL/PER + Shadow check with -6. Failure indicates the character spends the amount he failed the roll by in days looking before realizing he's hit a dead end.

Guarded (4 points): entrance into the Shadow is constantly guarded. Use the Shadow blocking rules (p.7), granting +8 to the Shadow's owner.



Control

Contents (1 point): control over history, cultures, people, creatures, environment, etc. The owner must be within the Shadow to control its contents.

Time Flow (2 points): control over the flow of time in the Shadow, causing it to speed up, slow down, or even practically stop. The owner must be within the Shadow to influence the flow of time.

Destiny (4 points): the owner can set the Shadow up so that it is in the way of Shadow travelers. This can be a set condition (“Those searching for the Golden Plough will come to my realm”) or an active command (“I know Ambrose is setting forth from Earth. He shall come to me”). Unknowing characters cannot prevent this, but those who know of the Shadow's existence can try to avoid it with an opposed WILL + Shadow check against the Shadow's owner.

See the *Shadows* chapter for rules on navigation (p.18).

Powers

Variable Quality

Amberites have access to different Powers, listed below. For the appropriate rules, see the *Powers* chapter (p.7).

Pattern Imprint (25 points): the ability to walk in Shadow and alter it.

Logrus Mastery (20 points): the ability to manipulate the Logrus (requires Shapeshifting).

Trump Artistry (18 points): the ability to create Trumps.

Shapeshifting (15 points): the ability to change form.

Sorcery (10 points): magic-use that works across Shadow.

Power Words (5 points): minor magical effects.

Resistance (Shadow Editing)

1 point/level Quality

This Quality allows Shadow dwellers to resist the effects of Shadow Editing on themselves, and is usually gained by a long association with a being of Substance, like an Amberite. The Resistance's level is subtracted from any Shadow Editing roll that targets the character. The maximum level of this Quality is up to the GM.

skills

Thanks to their immortality and potential to find any teacher and/or training they want, Amberites are very skilled. Their abilities are both wide and thorough, in that not only do they possess diverse skills, but also because they are masters of their fields. This is represented in game by the cinematic skill list.

Characters don't have to buy Hand Weapons (Swords), Hand Weapons (Axes) and so on – they have Melee and know how to wield all weapons covered by that skill. If they have Technology, they can design, operate or repair anything tech-related, from basic mechanisms to sophisticated systems.

Skills can have specializations. So Melee could have Swords as a specialty, while Computers could be one for Technology. Specializations costs 1 skill point and provides +2 for tests using the specialty. Melee 5 with the Swords specialization would read Melee (Swords) 7.

GMs may want to set a skill level cap, including specialization, for character generation – for example, maximum level of 8. So Melee 8 or Melee 6 plus the Swords specialty would be okay. Melee 8 plus the specialty, on the other hand, would not.





Skill List

Unisystem Amber uses the following 19 skills:

Art: dancing, playing, painting, etc.
Athletics: running, dodging, swimming etc.
Beasts: riding, training, veterinary, etc.
Brawling: hand-to-hand combat.
Craft: farming, carpentry, baking, etc.
Crime: picking locks, stealth, streetwise, etc.
Influence: persuading, deceiving, seducing, etc.
Knowledge: general lore, humanities, etc.
Medicine: first aid, surgery, treating, etc.
Melee: fighting with melee weapons.
Notice: listening, noticing, seeing, etc.
Occultism: knowledge, Sorcery, Power Words, etc.
Outdoor: hunting, foraging, tracking, etc.
Piloting: driving, piloting, sailing, etc.
Science: biology, physics, chemistry, etc.
Shadow: knowledge, navigation, shadowfinding, etc.
Shooting: using ranged weapons.
Technology: building, repairing, operating, etc.
Warfare: tactics, strategy, logistics, etc.

There are also two skills associated with the major Powers that can only be acquired by those initiated in them:

Pattern: anything associated with the Pattern
Logrus: anything associated with the Logrus

Those characters, who don't have Pattern Imprint or Logrus Mastery, but know lore about these Powers, can

simulate that by buying a Knowledge specialization in Pattern or Logrus.

Optional Skill System

For a more granular system, combine the classic and cinematic skills. In this option, cinematic skills cost 2 points/level until level 5 and 5 points/level thereafter. So Melee 4 costs 8 points; and Melee 6, 15.

But now players can buy the classic versions as "subskills". Classic skill levels cost 1 point/level until level 5 and 3 points/level thereafter, but their starting level is based on the cinematic one.

Example: Felix buys 5 levels of the Melee skill for his character, Ambrose. This costs 10 points (2/level until level 5 for cinematic skills). He decides that Ambrose has had extensive training with swords in general, so he buys 3 levels of that skill. Since this would effectively be level 8 (5 + 3) of the Hand Weapons (Swords) skill, it costs 9 points (3/level after level 5 for classic skills). So Ambrose has Melee (Swords) 8, costing a total of 19 points.

If you don't mind the extra bookkeeping, you can also use specializations. Note that in this optional system, specialties become narrower – it is Rapier or Katana, instead of Swords, for example.

Example: Ambrose has a thing for rapiers and Felix decides to spend another point and further specialize his character in them. For 20 points, Ambrose ends up with Melee 5/Swords (Rapier) 10 (he still has 8 levels with swords, he's just better with rapiers).

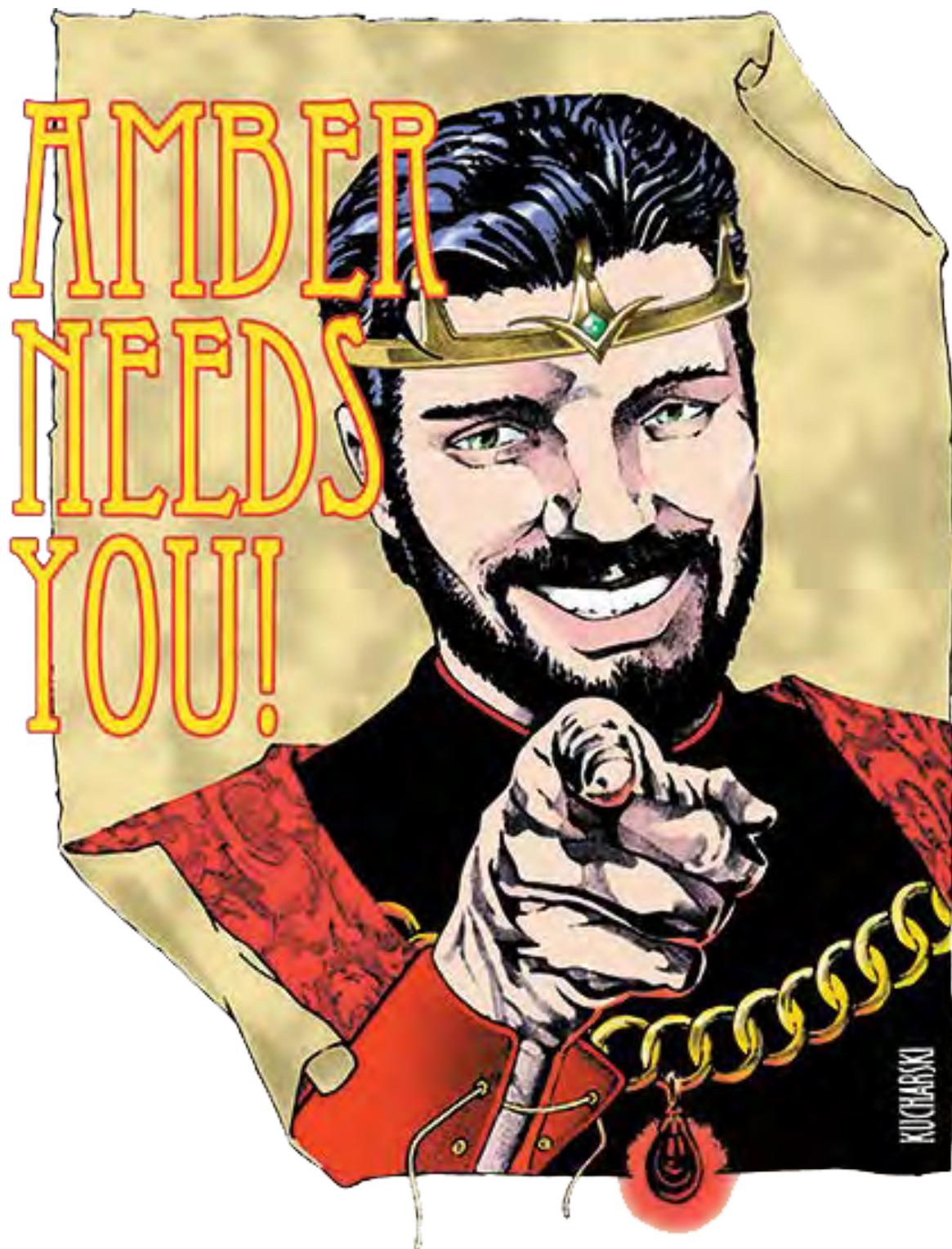
DRAMA POINTS

Besides the common uses of Drama Points (DP), Unisystem Amber includes two new applications.

Fast-time Learning: given their immortality and ability to find Shadows where time flows at a faster rate, Amberites can remove themselves for a brief while to learn a new skill or improve an existing one and return to the game. This costs 1 DP and an amount of downtime decided by the GM – a couple of hours or one scene, for example. Skill levels already possessed by the character can be redistributed to increase one

skill. Points from 6+ skills count as 3 for raising another skill to level 5, but count as 1:1 if the receiving skill is already at 5.

Power Surge: when Amberites need that energy burst to change shape, or cast a prepared spell *right now*, or employ a Power without being fatigued, or do anything else that would require time or additional effort, they can spend a DP to perform the action immediately or without an energy cost. The GM can raise the cost if he deems the action too powerful.



powers

Amberites have access to special powers intrinsically connected to the very fabric of reality. The GM may require in-character developments to justify learning new tricks, like finding a tutor.

PATTERN IMPRINT

Birthright of every royal Amberite, this Power is acquired by essaying the Pattern, though not necessarily the one in Castle Amber. The Pattern is an oval design 150 by 100 yards, similar to a Celtic knot work. Walking the Pattern is a grueling process that is not done lightly. It unlocks the Shadow-manipulating abilities of the character.

Moving through Shadow

The foremost ability Amberites receive from the Pattern is moving through Shadow under their own power. There are three ways to do it.

Shadowwalking: by moving and willing minor details in the environment to change – the more probable the change, the easier it is –, a royal Amberite can travel through Shadow. This is slow, but two weeks of *constant* movement will, on average, take someone from Amber to the Courts of Chaos (six weeks, if traveling 8 hours/day). Shadowwalking doesn't usually require a check – the GM calculates the travel time (p.XX) and informs the player. However, if two characters are racing to a Shadow, opposed WILL + Shadow checks may be used to determine who arrives first. Also, if Amberites don't know or can't visualize exactly where they want to go, a roll may be in order. A failed one leads the characters astray or leaves them somewhere that seems like the right place, but it's not.



Hellriding: those in a hurry, for whom shadow walking is too slow, can hellride. The process is similar to shadowwalking, 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 half a week. However, the process is extremely strenuous. Each hour spent hellriding requires a CON check with a cumulative -2 after the first roll. Failure means the character is exhausted and must rest.

Royal Way: sometimes, Amberites may want to travel only through Shadows that have a common element. Maybe they want elms lining every road or decide to sail all the way to their destination, staying only in Shadows with large bodies of water. This makes the trip significantly longer – it takes seven months to traverse the Amber-Courts of Chaos distance. Using the Royal Way is impossible if the wanted feature 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 will need to land somewhere and make the final leg of the trip by land (or air).

No matter the type of Shadow movement, Amberites can take others along for the ride. As long as travelers have their Pattern-imprinted guide in sight, they will move along. This work for large groups as well, provided everyone can see someone ahead, all the way to the one who is in visual contact with the Amberite.

Shadowfinding

By traveling through Shadow, Amberites can find intangibles, such as "the Shadow of your desire", a place that exactly fits their needs. This ability also allows one to find individuals, items and situations, as long as a clear impression of the subject is known and kept foremost in mind during the ride.

Shadowfinding is performed with a PER + Shadow roll. The *Shadows* chapter includes rules for the GM to mediate this ability (p.20).

Tracking and Sensing Movement

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

Shadow movement also causes ripples that can be sensed by those with Pattern Imprint, requiring the same check. The larger the force 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 shadowwalker or simply wants to make entry

into Amber or a particular Shadow harder, they can raise obstacles in the traveler's path. This requires an opposed WILL + Shadow check between the blocker and the shadowwalker. If the traveler wins, they make it through.

If the blocker wins, the traveler must give up or take another route that will add a number of hours equal to the blocker's extra successes. At the end of this detour, a new opposed WILL + Shadow check is rolled with the same consequences.

Characters can only maintain a number of blocks equal to their INT.

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.

Shadowshifting is mediated by an INT + Shadow check, modified by how improbable the adjustment is. This mechanic should only be used for significant stuff. Allowing the character to have Shadow-appropriate pocket change should be automatic.

Pattern Defense

By concentrating on a mental image of the Pattern, characters can invoke its power for defensive purposes. Pattern Defense makes characters extremely resistant to the Logrus, Trump, magic and psychic abilities.

Maintaining Pattern Defense requires total concentration – characters can't do anything else. If they do, the Pattern dissipates. While activated, this ability gives a penalty equal to the character's Will doubled or WILL + Pattern, whichever is higher, to anyone trying to use magic, Trumps, the Logrus or psychic abilities on the character.

Walking the Pattern

In order to gain the Pattern Imprint Power, someone of the blood of Amber has to walk the Pattern. The following rules, adapted from the ones found in [GURPS Amber](#), cover the ordeal.

In order to traverse the Pattern, the character must succeed in a series of CON or WILL checks (whichever is lower) with the appropriate modifier for each section. Failure means the character has slowed down and needs to repeat the roll with a cumulative -2 until they succeed. This penalty resets after a successful roll. DP can be spent to succeed in the check.

Every failed roll does 10 LP of fatigue damage to the character; a successful one does 5 LP. If the character reaches zero LP, he falls unconscious on the Pattern and is torn to primordial shreds.



The First Steps: +2

Taking the first step on the Pattern is a frightening process. As one begins, blue sparks leap up around them. 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: -2

This is the most difficult region of the Pattern. Making it through is a good indicator of success.

The Grand Arch: -1

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 section in order to pass.

The Final Veil: 0

This is the last section. Once you succeed at this roll you finish the Pattern walk.

Amberites who have already walked the Pattern can advise the character. Successes generated in an INT + Pattern roll become a pool that can be used as if the character has the Luck Quality. However, the helper can intentionally mislead someone. In this case, the GM can use the pool as the Luck Drawback.

Sometimes, a character will not be able to finish the Pattern. His only chance resides in being physically pulled off it. Physically pulling someone off the Pattern automatically causes 5 damage times the number or

rolls completed (e.g., 10 and 25 after the First Veil and the second roll of the Grand Arch, respectively) to both the walker and the helper. In addition, both characters must make a simple CON or WILL roll (whichever is lower) with a -3 penalty. Failure results in the character being consumed by the Pattern. If the helper is consumed, then the walker must make a simple DEX roll or also be destroyed. Regardless, the walker is left in place if his helper does not survive the rescue attempt.

These rules assume that the helper can fly or use some sort of ranged power. They also apply if the helper walks the Pattern, *then* physically carries the original walker off the Pattern (by getting to the center). The original walker does not count as having walked the Pattern in this case.

Trumps can be used to pull someone off the Pattern. This is done by initiating contact with the walker's Trump and making a simple WILL roll. If successful, the walker has been pulled free. Both individuals take damage as above and the Trump is destroyed. The walker must also make a Survival roll. There are no additional penalties on this roll and the helper does not run the risk of obliteration. If the helper's WILL roll fails, then both take 3 damage times progress, as above, and the Trump is destroyed, with no further side effects.

Finally, one can Trump off the Pattern. The walker activates a Trump and makes a simple CON or WILL (whichever is lower). If this roll fails, the character is destroyed. If it succeeds, he Trumps off, but takes 3 damage times progress and the card is destroyed.



Example: Ambrose is about to walk the Pattern for the first time. He has CON 6, WILL 5, 104 LP and 6 DP. Ambrose ingratiated himself with Bleys, who will help him in the ordeal. Bleys makes an INT + Pattern check, granting Ambrose 4 Luck points.

Ambrose steps onto the Pattern, making his WILL check with +2 for the First Steps and succeeds, losing 5 LP. Next, he gets to the First Veil, rolls again and succeeds once more, losing another 5 LP.

So far, so good, but now Ambrose reaches the Second Veil, the most difficult part of the Pattern. He rolls with -2 and fails by 2. Luckily, Bleys is talking to him and advising him on what to do, so Ambrose spends two Luck points and makes it through, losing just 5 LP.

A little more confident, Ambrose arrives at the Grand Arch. Here, he fails by 3, though, so Luck is no use. Encouraged by Bleys, Ambrose keeps moving – he loses 10 LP and rolls again, now with -3, (-1 for the Grand Arch, -2 for the extra attempt). He fails again, losing 10 more LP. Ambrose concentrates and summons his inner strength. He spends a DP, succeeding and losing 5 LP.

Still in the Grand Arch, Ambrose succeeds at the second roll (5 LP). At the final stage of the Grand Arch, Ambrose fails and loses 10 LP. He rolls again and spends his last two Luck points to succeed (5 LP).

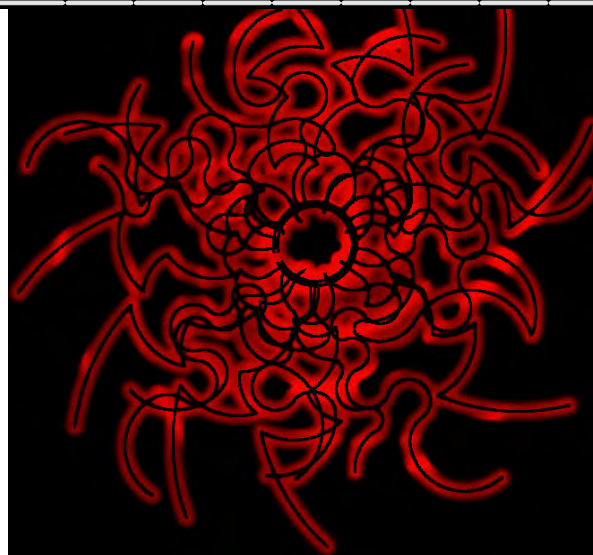
At the Final Veil, Ambrose succeeds at his last roll and finishes the Pattern. He is drenched in sweat and has lost more than half his hit points, but he has acquired the Pattern Imprint Power. He also owes Bleys a big favor, since, without his help, walking the Pattern would have been even more difficult.

Walking the Pattern cleanses the character of lesser magical effects, diseases, and poisons. It can also cure some mental or neurological problems, such as amnesia and many kinds of insanity. The Pattern is intelligent and capable of distinguishing between a beneficial effect and a harmful one – it will generally not remove the former.

This cleansing does not apply to injuries. In fact, it aggravates them: walking the Pattern doubles already existing damage.

Completing the Pattern also allows characters to transport themselves to virtually any location they choose.

There may be other uses for walking the Pattern. These will likely be discovered or invented during the game. For example, during the course of the Amber books, Corwin discovered that one needed to walk the Pattern in order to attune oneself to the Jewel of Judgment.



LOGRUS MASTERY

The major Power associated with the Courts of Chaos is obtained by traversing the Logrus, an always-shifting three-dimensional design. Negotiating the Logrus without Shapeshifting will result in a painful, but interesting, death.

A successful attempt leaves the character with 1D10 points of Mental Problems that can be bought back, but only after at least a week.

The Logrus also functions as a spell rack, unlike the Pattern.

Logrus Sight

Summoning the Sign of the Logrus grants enhanced sensory abilities that function as The Sight modality of the Supernatural Senses Quality (AC58), but expanded to detect Pattern, Logrus, Trump and other energies as well. The Logrus Sight will also reveal, with the appropriate number of successes, if someone or something is of Shadow, Amber or the Courts of Chaos. PER rolls with this ability use Logrus instead of Notice.

Tendrils of the Logrus

While having summoned the Sign of the Logrus, a master can manifest the Tendrils of the Logrus. They may shape its force into extensions far more powerful and flexible than Shadow matter. The Tendrils operate with an STR equal to the WILL of the Logrus Master. Combined with Logrus Sight, touching a target with the Tendrils will reveal whether they are shapeshifted, possess magical power, and the general level of the subject's WILL, health, and mental state.

The Tendrils of the Logrus can also be used to deactivate magical spells (INT + Logrus) or send a raw-power feedback along a mental or magical contact (WILL + Logrus). Touching things of magic with a Tendril (PER + Logrus) usually tells what type of spell

it is; or the exact one, if it is a common one or known by the character.

Tendrils can open inactive magical gates (INT + Logrus) and insinuate themselves into a magical “sending”, backtracking it to its origin (PER + Logrus). A Master can cast spells out along the tendrils and send them into Shadow.

Shadow Travel/Finding

A Logrus Master can use the Tendrils to reach through Shadow, or to reach things at a distance on the current Shadow. When reaching through Shadow, the Tendrils can be made to seek and grab a suitable anchor, and draw the master to the object (WILL + Logrus). This is usually the manner in which a Logrus Master travels through Shadow.

When Shadow Finding, the Master casts the Tendrils in search of something. Use the *Finding things in Shadow* rules (p.20). Common items should be quick to find, unless the GM rules that the character is in a Shadow too far away from where the item could be found. Steps should be measured in turns. Uncommon steps are minutes, while rare are 15-minute blocks or hours, depending on how the GM wants to scale things up.

Logrus Defense

There are two ways in which the Logrus can defend a Master. These techniques cannot be used at the same time – the Master must choose one to activate. The first works in the same way as Pattern Defense, only

inverting Pattern for Logrus and using the appropriate skill.

The second employs the Logrus as a physical shield effective against physical, energy and most direct magical attacks, like a lightning bolt. The character concentrates and gains an AV equal to Will doubled or WILL + Logrus, whichever is higher, multiplied by 10, and a DC equal to AV x 5. If the shield is destroyed (DC reaches zero), the Master loses concentration and must summon the Sign again.

TRUMP ARTISTRY

By taking this Power, the character acquires the ability to create Trumps – images that establish a link to a being or place. 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.

When properly crafted, a Trump is an indestructible artifact that is permanently imbued with power. It is 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 Trumps

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 contact by doing nothing else but stilling their thoughts and letting his mind go blank. Most callers will persist in the attempt for 1d10 turns.

The identity of the caller can only be ascertained after the call is accepted. However, Trump artists can know who is calling before accepting, if they have their card, because it will be active. 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 can allow a character to use a DP Power Surge to activate a place Trump and gate there in the same round.

Trump sketches function in the same way as cards, but their cruder state requires a greater energy input. Activating them takes 1d10 turns.

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 requires opposed WILL (doubled) rolls from the contestants. The one who reaches five net successes first can inflict damage to the CON of his opponent equal to the extra successes of his last roll, step through the Trump gate without the consent of the loser or break contact.

If contact is maintained and the winner has not stepped through, the contest begins anew. At the GM's discretion, innovative tactics based on emotional background, knowledge of the opponent and such can provide bonuses to the contest rolls.

Creating Trumps

It takes two days of dedicated work and three successes on a DEX + Art roll to create a Trump card (other media may require more time). Fewer successes may link the Trump to a Shadow of the depicted subject; fail to make it permanent, meaning it only has a few uses before losing power; or have some other effect up to the GM. This can also happen if the artist has never observed the subject in person.

This assumes the artist is working with a live model or able to observe the place being represented. If that is not the case, creating the Trump can take up to a week.

Trump sketches are quicker to create, requiring about half an hour and one success in the DEX + Art roll. However, if the subject changes or moves through



Shadow, the sketch will stop working. Trump sketches can decay, losing their power eventually.

Only Trump artists can create artifacts with Trumps.

Sensing Trump

Trump Artists can sense the power of Trump, being able to distinguish between a regular object and a Trump.

Trump Defense

By concentrating on a Trump card (preferably, theirs), characters can invoke its power for defensive purposes. Trump Defense protects characters from intrusions from the many Powers.

Trump Defense requires total concentration – characters cannot do anything else. If they do, the Trump power dissipates. While activated, this ability gives a penalty equal to the character's CON doubled to anyone trying to use supernatural influence on them.

Against the Pattern or the Logrus, Trump Defense is more difficult. Defending against these Powers works like a Contest of Wills.

shapeshifting

Shapeshifters have three natural forms – Human, Chaos and Avatar –, but can also assume the shape of any person or creature they see, from a house cat to a tiger, sizewise. The transformation is total: size and weight are affected. Natural abilities (claws or natural flight, for example) will carry over to the transformed character, but not magical abilities. The character will feel clumsy in non-familiar shapes and will have -2 penalty for most actions.

Attributes can be increased by the shape. This increase cannot exceed three levels for STR or 1 for all other Attributes. They do not decrease, but small forms (like birds or rats) will take double damage from physical attacks, and tiny forms (insects, for example) take quadruple damage from physical attacks. Imitating a human being results in a perfect facsimile in body shape and voice. Imitating the person's mannerisms and character requires study and practice, and the Art Skill.

Shapeshifting takes time. The fastest changes are to natural forms, taking 7 - CON rounds (minimum 1) for the Human one and 10 - CON rounds (minimum 1) for Chaos and Avatar. Familiar forms take 7 - CON minutes to change into. Double these times if the character is tired, hungry or injured. If starved, exhausted or in otherwise bad condition, shapeshifting will be arduous, even impossible.

Shapeshifting is also draining. Characters can shapeshift CON/3 times per day, round down (up to CON 6, after that every point of CON doubles the amount) without penalty. Additional changes inflict a

cumulative -2 penalty to *every* roll until the character can rest.

Shapeshifters face many dangers. They can lose their personality if they stay longer than WILL hours in one form, except the Human one, or attempt to imitate an extremely exotic or psychically powerful being. They can also lose the ability to control their shifting or even the Shapeshifting power itself. And if they abuse their Power, pushing it repeatedly to the limit, shapeshifters may find themselves suffering from a terrible form of cancer.

Abilities

Shapeshifting abilities include:

Natural Forms:

Human: the primary form for any character

Chaos: a “battle” or “demon” form; a thing of scales, claws and fangs that is optimized for combat;

Avatar: usually an animal form

Shapeshift Wounds: using this power to heal open wounds allows the character to heal WILL x 2 Life Points, but requires concentrating for a full round and only applies once for each set of wounds.

Partial Shifts: allows the character to change parts of his body, like facial features, sprouting claws, etc., but requires full concentration

Automatic Shapeshifting: in life-or-death situations, the character can let go of his conscious control, allowing his unconscious to tap directly into the Power and perform changes that will save the shapeshifter; it's *extremely* dangerous and may lead the character to lose himself



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Chaos form

When creating a Chaos form, the player chooses a template and two Aspects (based on Rage Forms, EX87). The form gains AV 10 (bash) and 30 LP. There are five templates to choose from:

Slasher: STR +5, DEX +1, CON +3

Skulker: STR +2, DEX +3, CON +2

Stalker: STR +3, DEX +2, CON +3

Seeker: STR +2, DEX +2, CON +1, PER +3

Smasher: STR +7, DEX -1, CON +5

And there are 25 Aspects with which to customize your Chaos form:

Body Spikes: the Chaos form is covered in spikes, quills, bony protrusions, or something similar. Anyone who directs an unarmed attack against the shapeshifter takes 2 x own STR stab damage. The shapeshifter's grapples inflict 2 x STR stab damage.

Bonesmasher: the Chaos form is equipped with blunt weapons such as a bony club, spiraling horns, or massive crushing fists. Its hand-to-hand attacks can inflict 4 x STR bash damage.

Camouflage: the Chaos form is adept at blending in with its environment. Stealth attempts gain +2.

Deadly Breath: the Chaos form can issue some deadly expulsion such as fire or corrosive gas CON times per day. This is an attack made with DEX + Athletics/Shooting, with an absolute range of 10 m, and inflicts 15 fire or corrosive damage.

Extra Limbs: the Chaos form possesses more than the normal compliment of arms and legs, or perhaps sports a prehensile tail or trunk. The shapeshifter gets +2 for



performing multiple actions.

Fins/Webbed Hands and Feet: the Chaos form can move through the water at twice its normal movement speed.

Flexible: the Chaos form can slither, squirm, or disjoint itself to gain great flexibility. All rolls to squeeze through tight spaces, escape from bonds, or gain control of a grapple *with the intent to immediately escape from it* gain +2.

Gills: the Chaos form is fully amphibious.

Hardiness: the Chaos form is immune to environmental or movement penalties and incidental damage from a certain type of harsh environment.

Horrible Odor: the Chaos form can project a nauseating stink, which inflicts a -1 penalty on all actions taken by anything with a sense of smell.

Keen (Sense): one of the Chaos form's senses (sight, hearing, or smell) is incredibly acute. Gain +3 on all Perception rolls using that sense.

Natural Weapons: the Chaos form is equipped with deadly natural weapons such as claws, fangs, or horns. Its attacks inflict 3 x STR slash damage.

Nightvision: the Chaos form can operate in the dark with no more difficulty than in broad daylight.

Poisonous Flesh: the Chaos form's flesh and blood are deadly if ingested. Anyone who bites the Lunar or drinks her blood suffers 15 damage.

Rugged Hide: the Chaos form is covered in some manner of natural protection: a carapace, thick fur, scales, or just a tough, leathery hide. Gain AV 10. Final AV can be 20 (bash)/10 or 15.

Sickening Slime: the Chaos form is coated in a glistening layer of disgusting slime. All grapple attempts against the shapeshifter have -8, and anyone who bites her loses their next turn retching.

Slayer: the Chaos form's natural attacks inflict vicious damage after armor. Increase the multiplier by 1, so bash damage does double; slash/stab, triple.

Stealthy: the Chaos form has footpads, dark coloration, and other adaptations to help the Lunar creep up on her prey. Gain +2 to all Stealth rolls.

Swift Stride: the Chaos form's movement speed and jumping distances are doubled.

Tentacles: the Chaos form has, if not actual tentacles, then at least some body parts of unusual length, such as a long prehensile tail, frog tongue, or very long neck. The shapeshifter can take appropriate actions against targets up to 5 meters away.

Terrible Grasp: the Chaos form gains +1 to all grapple attempts, and rolls to maintain control while grappling.

Venomous: the Chaos form may inject venom (STR 6) with one of its natural attacks (usually a bite, but more exotic options such as tail stingers are also available). Failing to resist with CON drains 1 Attribute point per net success. Paralyzing agents drain DEX; debilitating ones, STR. When the Attribute is reduced to zero, the victim is unconscious or incapacitated, and the poison starts draining CON. When CON reaches zero, the victim dies.

Wall Crawler: the Chaos form can climb up and cling to walls without the need of a roll.

Webbing: the Chaos form can project a sticky substance such as webbing or slimy glue, with a range up to 20 meters. Roll DEX + Athletics/Shooting to aim this projectile. Anyone struck by it suffers a -2 to all actions per coating until they spend an action and roll STR + Athletics to disentangle themselves. Webbed or otherwise “stuck” victims also slow their movement speed by half, or become entirely immobilized with two coatings.

Wings: the Chaos form is capable of flight at its normal movement speed.

SORCERY

There are two ways to run Sorcery in an Unisystem Amber game. The first and easiest is to import wholesale the magic system from *Buffy* and *Angel*. You can even plunder their books for premade spells.

The second, more complex method is to mix the cinematic magic system with the *Amber Diceless* Role-Playing one. This option is presented below.

Cinematic Amber Sorcery

The metamagical ability that Amberites and Chaos denizens wield can function on any Shadow, even those that have no magical energy available, unlike “regular” magic.

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 Storage power (p.28).

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. Undefined lynchpins use the maximum value for their aspect in preparation and casting.

Preparation: (lynchpin values x number of Sorcery components) x 5 minutes

Casting: (*undefined* lynchpin values x number of Sorcery components) full rounds

Spells prepared with all lynchpins defined can be Quick Cast.

Lynchpins

In Unisystem Amber, lynchpins are the same as the cinematic magic system’s spell creation aspects. More specifically:

Scope (MB61)

Duration (MB61)

Effects (MB62)

Spell Requirements: Restricted use and Way-restricted use (MB62)

There is also a new aspect:

Shadow Rules

One Shadow: works with a specific Shadow’s magical rules. No modifier.

Related Shadows: works in similar Shadows, like all Marvel realities. +1 Power Level.

Everywhere: works across Shadow. +2 Power Levels.

Components

It should be fairly simple to identify which components (AD64) make up a specific spell. The GM is the final arbiter on the feasibility of a spell.

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 casting transmutation, shapeshift and, in conjunction with Mind Touch, mind alteration spells; preparing items to store, use magical energy or hang spells; and creating magic wards, circles and barriers. 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, thus eliminating the respective lynchpin. Depending on which Power is invoked, other secondary benefits may be present.

Casting

To cast a spell, a sorcerer rolls WILL + Occultism and must score a number of successes equal to the spell's power level – the sum of the closed lynchpin values. If the roll fails (i.e, the total is less than nine), the spell doesn't work. If the number of successes is less than the spell's Power Level, something magical happens — but it may not be exactly what the caster intended. The spell's intent may be twisted or perverted, and the caster may be injured – or even killed – as the magic draws on their life force to fulfill their purpose (every +1 needed to succeed inflicts 5 LP on the caster).

Sample Sleep Spells

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

SLEEP (PL 2-7, Flexible)

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

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Noticeable [+1], Undefined [+3], Undefined [+2]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: 10 rounds/1 hour 10 minutes

SLEEP (PL 2-6, Flexible for use on Shadow Earth)

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

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Noticeable [+1], Undefined [+3], Earth [+1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: 6 rounds/1 hour

SLEEP (PL 3, against humans on Shadow Earth for a defined duration)

Puts one human on Shadow Earth to sleep for hours.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Restricted: human only [-1], Noticeable [+1], One hour/success [+1], Earth [+1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation, Mind Touch

Time: Quick Cast/30 minutes

Amber Diceless Spells

Here are a few of the spells listed in *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* (61) converted for Unisystem Amber. These are presented with defined lynchpins and so have casting time of Quick Cast.

CARDIAC ARREST (PL 4)

Causes a cardiac arrest.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Severe [+2], Long [+1], One Shadow [0]

Components: Mind Touch, Shadow Manipulation

Time: Quick Cast/40 minutes

INVISIBILITY (PL 2)

Turns cast invisible for [success] hours or until they attack.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Severe [+2], Very Long [0], One Shadow [0], Restricted [-1]

Components: Shadow Manipulation

Time: Quick Cast/10 minutes

MIND TOUCH (PL 1)

Establishes a telepathic link between the caster and the target, which can be resisted by WILL. Lasts for [success] minutes or until interrupted.



Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Minor [0], Medium [0], One Shadow [0]

Components: Mind Touch

Time: Quick Cast/5 minutes

QUELL (PL 2)

Puts a single target to sleep and lasts as long as the target is allowed to sleep.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Noticeable [+1], Instantaneous [0], One Shadow [0]

Components: Mind Touch, Shadow Manipulation

Time: Quick Cast/20 minutes

STONE BINDING (PL 3)

Makes target immobile for [success] days by slowing their time rate.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Severe [+2], Very Long [0], One Shadow [0]

Components: Mind Touch, Shadow Manipulation

Time: Quick Cast/30 minutes

STRENGTH DRAIN (PL 6)

Reduces the target's STR by [success] permanently.

Lynchpins: One Person [+1], Severe [+2], Permanent [+3], One Shadow [0]

Components: Mind Touch, Shadow Manipulation

Time: Quick Cast/1 hour

power words

Lesser magic used mainly for defense, Power Words (AD58) perform minor adjustments to the temporary state of things. They are less complex than actual spells and can be used instantaneously (without spending an action). Characters must simply utter the Word to release it and roll WILL + Occultism or WILL doubled, whichever is higher. Resisting a Power Word can be done with either roll as well.

Each time a Power Word is used, it drains the vitality of the caster. Characters can cast a number of Words equal to CON/2 (up to CON 6, after that every point of CON doubles the amount) without penalty. Additional castings inflict a cumulative -2 penalty to *every* roll until the character can rest.

Additional Power Words (called Cantrips) can be found in *Lords of Gossamer & Shadow*, a game that uses the *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* system. Power Words should never provide a modifier greater than 2 for a single roll.

Characters start with five Power Words.

Burst of Magic: creates a sudden pulse of mana, or magical energy, that can be used to boost (+2) another spell or magical power.

Chaos Negation: disrupts or stalls any Chaos-based effects on the user.

Defensive Luck: grants +2 to the caster's defense or -2 to an attack or offensive action against them.

Lifeforce: gives a sudden burst of Constitution (+2).

Light Strobe: offers a momentary burst of dazzling light, enough to fully illuminate a small or medium space.

Magic Negation: disrupts gatherings of magical energy, like spells.

Neural Disrupt: momentarily breaks target's coordination (-2).

Pain Attack: sends a quick burst of physical discomfort or actual pain to the affected body part.

Pattern Negation: disrupts or stalls any Chaos-based effects on the user.

Process Dampen: causes an existing process to momentarily dampen or falter in intensity, despite normal behavior.

Process Surge: causes an existing process to suddenly surge, or increase in intensity, despite normal controls or limitations.

Psychic Defense: gives a sudden surge of WILL (+2).

Psychic Disrupt: disrupts the concentration of the target.

Resume True Form: forces a person or thing to go back to their true form.

Shade: dims the light in an area momentarily, causing shadows to deepen and any available light source to become faint to feeble.

Spark: creates a single spark, like the one created by a match.

Thunder: creates the sound of a thunderbolt.

Trump Disrupt: disrupts an active connection.

Weaken: causes a sudden weakness or flaw in a physical item or object.

Merlin asks:

"No Conjunction?"

I never truly understood what was the function of Conjunction in the game. We don't really see it in the novels and it seems that Sorcery or Shadow finding could take over its supposed functionality.

For those who still want it, a quick and dirty system is to use the costs from the *Artifacts & Creatures* chapter as the difficulty for Conjunction (new skill) rolls. Alternatively, the Enchantment/Superscience rules (MB91) could take the place of Conjunction as well.

shadows

There's an infinite number of Shadows and *anything* can be found in them. 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 omniverse.

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

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.

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 8 hours of regular shadowwalking, one hour of hellriding, or five days of traveling the Royal Way. So, going from a Shadow at 3541 to another at 3563 would take 4 days (assuming an 8-hour/day pace), 4 hours or about 20 days, 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 an hour or so of shadowwalking 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 an hour of shadowwalking, 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 shadowwalking or shadow shifting allows a character to move between these subrealms.

Merlin asks:

"This basic unit of shadowwalking 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. If you feel that's not a good measure, you can use the following units for each step:

Shadowwalking: 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 (five days at a regular pace), 7 hours or 17.5 days (a little over two weeks), respectively. The omniverse will surely feel small.

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.

Usually, though, players will not care about the coordinates. They have a destination and want their characters to reach it. As such, they will use a much 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 is going to Shadow Earth".

A variant of a known Shadow: "Ambrose is going to a Shadow Avalon, where Lancelot is married to Guinevere and they use lightsabers, instead of steel swords".

An original Shadow: "Ambrose is 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, 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.

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 exists 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.

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”.

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 it 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 three 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, or 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 PER + Shadow rolls against their WILL + Shadow.

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 employ 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 her 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 their character is searching for. 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.

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

	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				

Magic

This represents the abundance of magic in a Shadow. The more widespread the magical energy in a reality, the more probable it is 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.

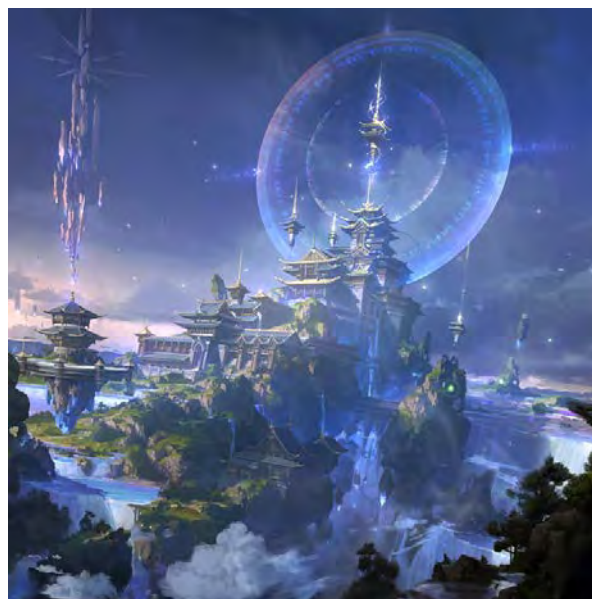
Mechanical effects of the magic level in a Shadow are left to GMs, but can be plundered from their favorite RPG systems. The ones listed below, like special traits for magic-users and recharging rates, are just examples and may be absent, higher or lower, as desired.

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 is 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 (1,000 times slower). 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 (100 times slower). 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 (10 times slower). 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 (10 times faster). 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 (100 times faster). 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 (1,000 times faster). 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 omniverse. *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 omniversal: a plough pulled by oxen, a bow and a miller's wheel will function in any Shadow.

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, while 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 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 represents the rate of time flow in relation to Amber. In Shadows at level zero, 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 is a slow-time Shadow, then it is the opposite: every Shadow day corresponds to five Amber days. A rating covers all the rates up to the next level. Earth time flows 2.5 times faster than Amber's, so Earth is Time 1, not Time 2.

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 zero is

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 Unisystem Amber, the default assumption is that it behaves in a fast time manner.

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.

Details covered by Tech or Magic don’t justify a Weird rating greater than zero. For example, zombies aren’t 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 either, if the origin of their power is magical.

Shadows located between Yggdrasil and the Courts of Chaos (see the *Merlin Asks* sidebar on page 26) 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 is 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 is 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 is 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 at this level.

Metahumans: this Shadow features several different superpowers from a myriad of origins. It is 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.

Mythoic: 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.

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, x2, 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 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.

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.

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 against 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.

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 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.

Merlin asks:

"How do you determine if a 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 each extreme (think -1 and 37). In this scheme, Yggdrasil is found at 18. 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.



ARTIFACTS AND CREATURES

Amberites can locate whatever they desire in Shadow and many of them do exactly that, searching until they zero in on wondrous creatures, exotic servants or magical items. But they also have access to mystical artifacts of great power that far surpass anything they can find Shadow.

By artifacts and creatures, it is meant those items of power and beings that are of interest to Amberites. A simple stroll in Shadow will lead a character towards a treasure trove of “mundane” magical items and exotic beasts. These can be extremely powerful in their native reality, but are useless to those who can traverse Shadow and find themselves in lands with different magical or physical laws.

For example, if a character has a demon sword that improves their fighting and drains the souls of their adversaries to make them stronger, but loses its power when away from its home Shadow, then what the character has is a wicked-looking, but ultimately *regular* sword.

Still, it is not inconceivable that, given time, an Amberite can find a magic item or a creature, which functions across Shadow. Even then, these artifacts and life forms tend to have simpler abilities and physiologies – skill bonuses, increased damage, higher stamina, etc. The flashier and more powerful an item or being, the rarer it is. For example, a horse that is as fast as a car would be more common than a pegasus.

The rules in this chapter presuppose that the artifacts and creatures being created function across Shadow by

default. However, GMs need not follow that and may require additional traits for it to be true, like the Pattern-engraving Quality described below. Or they can just exercise their fiat in saying which ability works in other Shadows.

STATS AND COSTS

To figure out the artifact’s or creature’s cost, players first need to determine its Attributes, skills, Qualities, Drawbacks, and Powers. This process should be performed together with the GM to prevent the creation of artifacts or creatures that might imbalance the campaign.

Attributes

Use the Enhanced/Reduced Attributes Quality/Drawback (AC51). It is possible to have zero or negative Attributes. For animal-level INT, use the Animal Intelligence Drawback (TP161).

Most items won’t have Attributes, but there are exceptions. Those that grant their abilities to the user, are intelligent, and/or can move on their own can have DEX, INT and so on.

Artifacts also need to pay 1 point for their materiality, like buying CON 1. This cost has no bearing on the material the item is made off – a velvet cloak and a steel sword pay the same.

If the GM would rather have more granularity, use the CON scale below. To have an artifact made of a



specific material, the player must buy CON up to the appropriate level.

CON 1: cloth, wood

CON 2: brick, stone

CON 3: bronze, lead

CON 4: iron, steel

CON 5: titanium, diamond

CON 6+: exotic materials

Qualities and Drawbacks

Add the appropriate Qualities and Drawbacks. For special abilities, use Supernatural Qualities from *Angel* (49), *Ghosts of Albion* (41) and other Unisystem products.

There are two new Qualities available to artifacts and creatures.

Increased Speed

1 point/level Quality

Every two levels of this Quality double a being's speed. Odd levels add half the value. For example, a creature with base speed 8 and four levels of this Quality, would have a final speed of 32. An additional level would raise it to 48. For artifacts, the first level grants speed 1 or half its DEX+CON (if it has these Attributes), whichever is higher, rounding down. The second level raises it to 2 or full DEX+CON. Additional levels function regularly.

Pattern-engraving

2-point Quality (Artifacts only)

The artifact has a section of the Pattern engraved into it, creating a link to that Power. On a blade, bullet, arrowhead, etc., Pattern-engraving increases the damage multiplier by one against Chaos denizens. It also increases the accuracy of an item (usually weapons), giving +1 to wield it. If the campaign does not employ the default assumption about Shadow-wide functionality, Pattern-engraving ensures the item has it. Even so, the GM can still restrict this Quality. For example, if the demon sword mentioned above had Pattern-engraving, the GM could still rule that only the attack bonus worked across Shadow, with the soul drain being too specific to be affected by this Quality. Only metal, stone or harder materials are strong enough to receive the engraving.

Skills

For simplicity, creatures have only two skills: Combat and Brains. They cost 1 point/level, regardless of level, but the GM may match their cost to the same as regular skills, meaning after level 5, they cost 3/level.

If the being has one area of expertise – e.g., rapiers, smell-based notice, computer hacking – the player can buy bonuses for it at half price (1 point per 2 levels)

and use the specific Attribute for calculating the Maneuver score for that action.

Powers

These are abilities related to the major and minor Powers.

Shadow Movement

The artifact or creature has limited Shadow movement.

Shadow Trail (2 points): can follow someone else.

Shadow Path (5 points): can find a way to any Shadow it knows well. If it knows the path, it goes as fast as a hellride. Otherwise, it is closer to the Royal way.

Shadow Seek (10 points): The item can move toward a person or item in Shadow. It tends to find the worst possible "hellriding" route.

Shadow Control

The artifact or creature has limited Shadow control.

Shadow Stuff (2 points): can change simple items and features.

Shadow Creatures (5 points): can affect inhabitants of a Shadow, such as making an animal friendlier.

Shadow Reality (10 points): can actually affect the environment, such as making magic more difficult in a certain Shadow.

Shapeshifting

The artifact or creature can change form. Shapes must be determined at creation.

Alternate Form (2 points): two forms.

Multiple Alternate Forms (5 points): up to 12 forms.

Limited Shapeshift (10 points): can change to anything of similar size and mass, without powers, personality, or other shapeshifting abilities.

Spell Storage

The artifact or creature can store spells.

Rack (2 points): holds a single spell.

Multiple-Spell Rack (5 points): holds up to 12 spells.

Rack and Use Multiple Spells (10 points): holds up to 12 spells, and can cast them independently.

Trump Images

Only artifacts can contain Trumps.

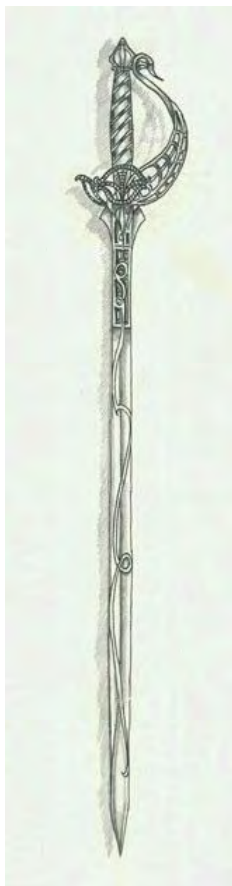
Trump Image (2 points): doubles as a Trump, having the same durability of Trump.

Trump Deck (5 points): up to 12 Trumps.

Powered by Trump (10 points): draws energy from Trump and has several images.

Transferral

The artifact or creature can transfer its abilities to the user. Traits that are transferable must be determined at creation.



Qualities and Skills (2 points): Qualities are transferred as is; skill as bonuses.

Attributes (5 points): transferred as bonuses.

Powers (10 points): transferred as is.

Once everything has been chosen, add the various costs and divide this total by five to arrive at the base cost.

The final cost of an artifact or creature is the base cost modified by the quantity (minimum 1 point). Rounding should follow normal rules (e.g., 5.4 and below is 5, 5.5 and above is 6).

Quantity	Mod	Description
Unique	1/2	Only one exists. If it is destroyed or killed, the character must find another in Shadow and pay the cost.
Named & Numbered	x1	Up to 12 exist. Some may be kept in reserve. For example, a set of 12 daggers, but the character only uses four at a time.
Horde	x2	Up to 50 on short notice, but can replenish by going to a specific location in a specific Shadow.
Shadow-Wide	x3	Easily accessible high numbers. Exists across one specific Shadow.
Cross-Shadow	x4	Found in all Shadows that have a particular environment. For example, a dagger you can buy in any knife shop of any world that has a knife shop on it. Depending on the item and what you want, there can be up to Named and Numbered quantity.
Ubiquitous	x5	Found across Shadow. The only exceptions are Amber and the Courts. Anywhere else, one can be found within a few minutes. As with Cross-Shadow, it has to look normal and should appear to be really commonplace.

More Expensive Artifacts

As showcased with the Sorceress Dagger below, powerful items may end up being rather cheap, pointwise. That is why GM oversight is required.

If GMs want to prevent problems without having to bring down the hammer very time a player comes up with an artifact concept, just shift the modifier column up one step.

This way, Unique items have a x1 modifier and Named & Numbered, x2, all the way to a x6 for Ubiquitous. Using this rule, the Pattern-engraved swords and the Sorceress Dagger cost 4 and 12 points, respectively.

SAMPLE ARTIFACTS

Here are three sample artifacts: the canonical Pattern-engraved swords and the Jewel of Judgment, and the original Sorceress Dagger. Point-breakdown is only given for the swords and the Sorceress Dagger.

The Jewel of Judgment and similarly powerful artifacts are not meant to be created by PCs; at least, not initially. These items can only be built by such master artificers as Dworkin.

Pattern-engraved Swords

These swords have a section of the Pattern engraved on their blades. The two most famous examples are Corwin and Brand's swords, Grayswandir and Werewindle, forged on the first rock that leads to Tir-Na Nog'th. They give +1 to Melee and cause triple slash damage against Chaos denizens.

Additional effects include mediating contact between the wielder and Tir-Na Nog'th ghosts, when the blade is laid crosswise between them or touches the intangible beings. Corwin's blade is also able to wound the apparitions. It is unclear if these properties are the result of its crafting or due to the Pattern-engraving.

Qualities: Natural Weapon (Large), Pattern-engraving, materiality [6 points]

Skills: +1 Combat [1 point]

Powers: Transferal (+1 Combat) [2 points]

Cost: 2 points (Named & Numbered; Corwin and Brand each paid 1 point)

Sorceress Dagger

Despite the name, the Sorceress Dagger is actually an ancient, sentient gauntlet laced with powerful enchantments. It was found in Shadow, but legend tells it was forget in the Pit of Hell, next to the Abyss. Others say it was crafted under the light of the Pattern.

The Sorceress Dagger enhances its wielder's strength and fighting ability (+3 to both) and protects them from harm (halves all damage). It can create a blade that can cut the hardest materials, and emit a shaft of light and fire that pierces and burns its target.



The Sorceress Dagger has its own agenda, which may conflict with the wielder's. In this case, the artifact will try to force them to do its bidding by an Opposed WILL doubled roll. If the wielder wins, they resist; failing means doing as the Sorceress Dagger wants.

Consistently denying the will of the Sorceress Dagger will make it deny the wielder the use of its powers. In this case, in order to employ them, the character needs to succeed an Opposed WILL doubled roll.

Attributes: +2 STR, INT 3, PER 3, WIL 4 [12 points]

Qualities: Natural Armor 10, Natural Weapon (Large, Retractable, Armor-Piercing 2), Reduced Damage (Everything) 2, Supernatural Attack (Major, Ranged) [37 points]

Skills: +3 Combat, Brains 3 [6 points]

Powers: Transferral (+3 STR, +3 Combat, Reduce Damage 2) [7 points]

Cost: 6 points (Unique)

Jewel of Judgment

The symbol of Amberite royalty is a large blood-red gem (a [40- or 50-carat ruby](#)) mounted on a simple setting and a heavy chain. It contains a three-dimensional version of the Pattern and a multitude of powers, as well as some pretty serious drawbacks. Powers and perils are listed below.

Pattern creation: the most potent ability of the Jewel is inscribing a new Pattern. For a quick-and-dirty system, use the *Walking the Pattern* rules ([p.xx](#)), but there is an extra -2 for all rolls. After creating each section, the character *must* spend a DP or a point of CON *permanently* (the Grand Arch requires three

points). Sacrificing CON will knock off 4 LP/point as well.

Bonus: for all of the following powers, the wielder adds 10 to their rolls.

Weather control: one of the most used abilities is weather manipulation. Treat the character as having four levels of the Control Weather power (GA44).

Paralysis: 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. Roll an opposed WILL doubled check. If the wielder wins, the targets cannot move. Paralysis lasts while the user concentrates plus extra-success turns after that.

User protection: wielders can count on the protection of the Jewel of Judgment. It will save them from death by teleporting them to a safe place (even across Shadow), but the aggression must originate from close quarters – ranged attacks do not trigger this effect. The Jewel is fast, but not much, so surprise attacks or really fast opponents can get past it. The Jewel has a “rolled” initiative of 15.

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

Attunement: to use the Jewel, characters must attune themselves to it by walking the Pattern and, at the end, projecting their consciousness into the three-dimensional Pattern within the Jewel. This functions like walking the Pattern, but uses INT or PER instead, whichever is lower. After finishing the Jewel's Pattern, the character spends a DP and the attunement is complete.

Life drain: each hour of constant use (wearing or carrying the jewel around is considered use) drains the Amberite of one DP. The user does not notice this draining. When all DP are gone, the Jewel starts siphoning off LP at a rate of 10/hour. At this point, the user becomes aware of an alteration in his time sense – the rest of the world seems slower (they gain Fast Reaction Time or double its bonus, if they already have it) – and that the Jewel is pulsing in synch with their heart. Upon reaching zero LP, the wielder falls unconscious and, if still in possession of the Jewel of Judgment, dies within the next hour. Removing the Jewel stops the draining, letting the user recover normally.



Strength boost: it is possible to summon strength from the artifact. This doesn't stop the loss of LP, but gives the wielder more time. The first summoning will put the character at full LP. Further uses will be less efficient: the second time, the Jewel raises the character to 75% LP; the third, half the total; the fourth, 25% LP; and the fifth and final time, 10%. Always round up (for Ambrose, it would be 104, 78, 52, 26 and 11).

Strength drain: when helping someone attune, the wielder can drain LP from them. Each extra success in an opposed WILL doubled roll transfers 10 LP.

sample CREATURES

Here are four sample creatures: the canonical hellhound and Morgenstern, and the original stryx and Juranti. Point-breakdown is only given for the hellhound and the stryx.

Hellhounds

Julian's hellhounds fall under Horde, because they are only found in the Forest of Arden. Hellhounds are powerful canine creatures capable of pursuing a car and biting through metal.

Attributes: we start with wolf stats (GA196), but raise STR by two, and CON and PER by one [21 points].

Qualities: Acute Senses (Smell), Increased Speed 4, Natural Armor 5, Natural Weapon (Medium, Armor Piercing 2), Supernatural Senses (Enhanced Smell) [18 points].

Drawbacks: Animal Intelligence [-10 points]

Skills: Combat 4, Brains 2 [6 points].

Base Cost: 7 points (37 divided by 5)

Final Cost: 14 points (Horde)

STR 6 DEX 4 CON 4 INT 1 (animal) PER 5 WIL 3

Muscle 18 Combat 14 Brains 11

Life Points 60 Speed 32 (64 mph)

Special Abilities: Acute/Enhanced Sense (Smell), Armor Value 5

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Bite	14	22	slash, AP2
Dodge	14	—	Defense action
Scent	19	—	Notice, track (use PER)

Morgenstern

STR 8 DEX 4 CON 8 INT 1 (animal) PER 4 WIL 4

Muscle 22 Combat 13 Brains 12

Life Points 94 Speed 36 (72 mph)

Special Abilities: Increased Life Points 2, Increased Speed 3

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Trample	13	35	bash
Dodge	13	—	Defense action

Cost: 4 points (Unique)



Stryx

These are raven-like birds that can fly through Shadow, functioning as scouts, spies or messengers. Stryx murders can attack as a swarm (AB141).

Attributes: stryx have bird-appropriate physical Attributes, are smarter than higher apes and extremely perceptive [22 points].

Qualities: Flight 2, Photographic Memory, Telepathy (Only with the character) [9 points]

Drawbacks: Animal Intelligence [-10 points].

Skills: Combat 1, Brains 3 [4 points]

Powers: Shadow Seek [10 points]

Base Cost: 7 points (35 divided by 5)

Final Cost: 14 points (Horde)

STR 1 DEX 4 CON 1 INT 4 (animal) PER 6 WIL 2

Muscle 8 Combat 11 Brains 10

Life Points: 18 Speed 5/15 flying (10/45 mph)

Special Abilities: Flight, Photographic Memory, Shadow Seek

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Peck	11	3	slash
Dodge	11	—	Defense action
Notice	15	—	Notice, track

Juranti

The product of a multigeneration, gene-enhancing, mind-shaping breeding and indoctrination program, Juranti are fanatic, peak-human warrior-devotees of the character, whom they consider a god.

STR 6 DEX 6 CON 6 INT 3 PER 3 WIL 5

Muscle 18 Combat 18 Brains 15

Life Points 73 Speed 12 (24 mph)

Special Abilities: Fast Reaction Time, Hard to Kill 5, Iron Mind, Nerves of Steel, Situational Awareness, Mental Problems (Zealot) -3

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	18	29	slash
Shield	20	—	Defense action

Cost: 12 points (Named & Numbered)

TRUMPS

Trump creation is covered by the Trump Artistry Power (p.11). Do not use this system for them. If using the alternative method for artifact creation described below – for comparison only –, a Trump card is Power Level 5; and a full deck is Power Level 6.

Acquiring decks

If the characters are Royals, they probably should each have a Trump deck for free. It includes cards for Oberon; his children; Amber; Amberite PCs in the campaign, if they are known; and whomever else the GM deems fit.

After the game starts, the only way to acquire a deck is by stealing, receiving one as a gift, or by creating your own.

If the GM wants to charge for a Trump deck at character creation, two or three Quality points should be enough – Trumps are powerful, but they are relatively easy for characters to get. Trump Artists should still get a deck for free as part of their Power Quality.

ARTIFACT OPTION

An alternative and simpler way to handle artifacts is with the Enchanting/Superscience rules (MB90).

Using the Power Level descriptions (MB93), assign one to the desired item and have the player pay two Quality points per level, as if they were buying the Enchanted or Superscience Item Quality (MB29).

If using this option, the Power Level of the sample artifacts is:

Pattern-engraving: +1 Power Level

Pattern-engraved swords: Power Level 2

Sorceress Dagger: Power Level 5

Jewel of Judgment: Power Level 7

As stated before, Power Level 7 artifacts, like the Jewel of Judgment, should not be something in reach of the characters.

Finally, this option doesn't give a lot of flexibility in terms of Power Level. If a Pattern-engraved sword is Power Level 2 and the Jewel of Judgment is 7, this means you have to fit everything else in only four levels.



Appendix

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

AMBER CONVERSION

The *Amber Diceless Role-Playing* (AD) remains the most comprehensive gaming supplement dealing with Zelazny's work. It contains stats for all the major Amberites, including versions of different power levels – perfect for conversion to other systems, despite the diceless nature.

It has been said that RPG conversions are more art than science. This is true and should be taken into consideration here. If even between systems that use dice, conversions can be difficult, imagine with one that has a fundamentally different mechanical approach.

Having said that, I think this will at least get you halfway there for your games.

Attributes

AD uses four ranks to measure Attributes: Human, Chaos, Amber and Ranked. In Unisystem terms, these tiers can be represented by the following levels:

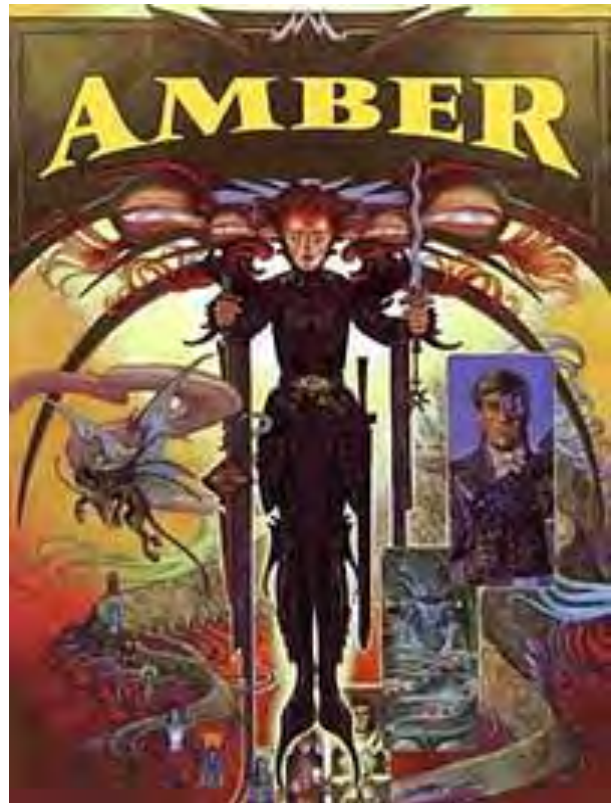
AD	Unisystem
Human	up to 5
Chaos	6
Amber	7
Ranked	7 + 1/15 full points

This doesn't mean all beings from Chaos will have 6 in their Attributes, just that this is the equivalent of Chaos rank. The Ranked range of +1/15 full points may vary depending on which write-up you are using. For consistency, you should always convert from the same set of similar write-ups (e.g., all the 250/300-point ones).

There are four Attributes in AD and six in Unisystem. Some map perfectly, others not so much. To calculate the Unisystem level of the AD Rank, use the formulas below. Treat Amber rank as zero, Chaos as -10, and Human as -30.

AD	Unisystem
Strength	Strength
(Strength + Warfare)/4	Dexterity
Endurance	Constitution
(Psyche + Warfare)/4	Intelligence
(Psyche + Warfare)/3	Perception
Psyche	Willpower

The Attributes chosen for each formula contain elements of their desired counterparts, but these are just ballparks. You will need to fine-tune the results based on your interpretation of the character.



Qualities and Drawbacks

There is no equivalent to Qualities and Drawbacks in AD. However, the book includes a "The Potential of" section for each of the four Attributes that gives guidelines on what is possible to accomplish. These serve as good indicators for Qualities.

The other source for possible Qualities and, especially, Drawbacks is, of course, the fiction. If you are reading this, chances are you have read the novels at least once and know the characters well enough to translate them to Unisystem.

Below are suggestions of Qualities and Drawbacks for AD Attributes.

Psyche: Acute Senses, Iron Will, Nerves of Steel, Psychic Visions

Strength: Natural Toughness

Endurance: Hard to Kill, Resistance

Warfare: Fast Reaction Time, Situational Awareness

Qualities such as artifacts, creatures and personal Shadows can be ported over with a little work to match the rules presented here.

Skills

Here again there is no direct counterpart, except for Warfare. Skills in AD are subsumed in the Attributes. The same "The Potential of" section gives some pointers, and the novels can help as well.

Start by giving the characters level 5 in all skills they are supposed to have. Don't refrain from excluding a skill. For example, the Corwin write-up in the next chapter doesn't include either Craft or Occultism.

Then, adjust skill level up or down according to how much the character is shown using a particular ability. Corwin can drive and sail, but there isn't any remark on him being great at it, so we bump Piloting down to 4. Corwin is good at lying and convincing people to do as he says, so we raise Influence to 6.

Specialization can be used as an additional conversion-customization tool. There is no indication Corwin is particularly skilled at handling animals, but riding is a big thing in Amber. We give him Beasts 3 and add the Riding specialty (he has level 5 when using mounts). He is an accomplished artist, so Arts 5, and is especially talented at songwriting, so he gets that specialization.

Powers

This is a straightforward conversion. Just add to the Unisystem sheet the Powers listed in the AD write-up and use the system above to determine a skill level for Pattern or Occultism. Bear in mind that this document does not include rules for the Advanced versions of the Powers. Either you wait for *Unisystem Amber 2: Sign of the Unisystem* or make your own.

Converting Corwin

Let's take these notes for a spin converting Corwin. We will use the Champion of Amber version (AD167). His Attributes are all Ranked: Psyche (21), Strength (16), Endurance (81) and Warfare (85).

This translates to STR 8, DEX 8, CON 12, INT 8, PER 9 and WILL 8. A respectable set of Attributes, no doubt. It could be used as is, especially compared to the Mad Visionary of Amber Brand (AD160): STR 7, DEX 7, CON 7, INT 9, PER 10, WILL 16.

However, it seems a little off to me, so here's how I would probably tweak it. Corwin lifts and carries half of a one-ton car, so let's bump up his STR to 9. I don't see Corwin as particularly agile, so DEX 8 seems exaggerated, but he probably has great reflexes, let's drop it to 7, which is still Amber level. CON seems ok.

Corwin is a master strategist and a great artist, but INT 8 is way high. I'd put him at 6, peak human (or Chaos), but maybe I'm being too conservative – 7 it is. Does Corwin have PER 9? I don't think so. I'll go Amber again. WILL is good. The new set is STR 9, DEX 7, CON 12, INT 7, PER 7 and WILL 8.

Qualities and Drawbacks should include Age 8 (he's 800 years old); Fast Reaction Time; Hard to Kill 5; Nerves of Steel; varying Adversaries, depending on when your campaign is set; Covetous (Ambitious); maybe Emotional Problems (Fear of Commitment); Bad Luck; Mental Problems (Obsession and/or



Paranoia); Obligation (Amber); Physical Disability (Blind) for a time; Recurring Nightmares, possibly; and almost always Secret.

Corwin's skills should include combat abilities, Art, Knowledge with an Amber specialty, Medicine, and Shadow and Pattern, obviously, plus a few others.

The final write-up is in the next chapter.

COST BREAKDOWN

This is an alternative way to charge for Powers. It allows characters to start with some abilities, if they don't have enough points to buy the whole package. This option can also be employed to mediate how the PCs acquire advanced versions of the Powers during the game.

Each Power has a basic technique that must be bought first. The others can be acquired in any order, except for indented ones – these depend on the ability above and can only be acquired after them.

Pattern Imprint

The basic Pattern technique is Moving through Shadow.

Moving through Shadow (5 points)

Tracking and sensing movement (2 points)

Blocking the Way (3 points)

Shadowfinding (5 points)

Shifting Shadow (5 points)

Pattern Defense (5 points)

Logrus Mastery

The basic Logrus technique is Logrus Sight.

Logrus Sight (5 points)

Tendrils of the Logrus (5 points)

Shadow Travel (5 points)

Logrus Defense (5 points)

Trump Artistry

The basic Trump Artistry technique is Trump Sketches.

Trump sketches (5 points)

Create Trump (5 points)

Sensing Trump (3 points)

Trump Defense (5 points)

Shapeshifting

The basic Shapeshifting technique is Natural Forms.

Natural Forms (5 points)

Familiar Forms (5 points)

Shapeshift Wounds (2 points)

Partial Shifts (2 points)

Automatic Shapeshifting (1 point)

Sorcery

The basic Sorcery technique is Basic Spell Components. Spell Rack is the ability to hang one spell on the character's mind, while Lynchpin Flexibility is being able to prepare spells with undefined lynchpins.

Basic Spell Components (5 points)

Spell Rack (2 points)

Lynchpin Flexibility (3 points)

FACTIONS

Sometimes, you may need to know if certain actions taken by a group were successful, or to quantify how much they know, or have a better idea of how powerful their forces are. In Unisystem Amber, these NPC (or PC) organizations are called Factions and their capabilities are defined using the Clout rules from *Angel* (160).

A Faction is any group that has common goals and resources. Amber can be a Faction, as can the whole of the Courts of Chaos, but individual houses or coalitions of them can as well. Factions can include Shadow-based organizations, like an order of wizards or a corporation. PCs can have their own Faction.

Clout

Once a Faction has been defined – who they are and what they want –, its ability to operate needs to be quantified. This is done through the four Clouts: Lore, Might, Power and Shadow. Each of these covers a broad sphere of influence, but not all Factions will have all Clouts.

Each Clout has five levels that describe how accomplished the Faction is in that area. The level descriptions are not limiting, being more an indicator

of the amount of resources. For example, a Faction with level 1 Lore has appropriate information-gathering apparatus for its home Shadow, but that does not mean it cannot try to spy on another reality, just that it will be more difficult for them.

Unisystem Amber Clout can be used in the same way as *Angel's*. Since most Factions are controlled by NPCs, GMs will probably use Getting Things Done more. That is also how to solve direct conflict between Factions. Determine the INT of each Faction and roll an opposed INT + Clout. The winner's extra successes indicate how well their Faction accomplished its victory

If GMs allow, different Clouts can be used to support the same objective. For example, a Faction wants an asset from a nation deep in Shadow, but does not have the Shadow Clout or has failed the roll. It decides to steal the asset, a Might roll. However, it also employs its intelligence services to collect data and improve its chances. Successes from the Lore Clout roll will count as bonus for the Might check. GMs may consider, though, that casing the asset location is included in the Might roll.

Clout Spheres

Here are the four areas of influence a Faction can have.

Lore

This represents the ability to know what is happening around you, to gather information and acquire intelligence.



Level 1: Home. The group's information network covers its home Shadow.

Level 2: Regional. The group's information network extends to Shadows in the same region (e.g., the Golden Circle).

Level 3: Extensive. The group's information network has access to other regions of Shadow.

Level 4: Far-reaching. The group's information network reaches far across Shadow.

Level 5: Ubiquitous. The group can easily learn what is happening anywhere in Shadow.

Might

This represents military power. It can be standing armed forces and/or the ability to gather assets from Shadow. Despite the first three level mentioning land troops, the units can be sea- or air-based.

Level 1: Personal guard. The group has a small military unit for personal protection. External missions involve a single operative or, at most, a small squad.

Level 2: Garrison. The group has a small military force for defending its holdings. External missions involve up to a mid-level military unit.

Level 3: Army. The group has a standing army large enough to protect its holdings and conduct operations abroad.

Level 4: Armed Forces. The group has an army, navy and/or air force that operate in coordination.

Level 5: War machine. The group has vast military forces that can easily be replenished from one of more Shadows.

Power

Access to major and minor Powers. 'Members' mean individuals who belong to the leadership/inner circle/upper tier of the Faction.

Level 1: Minor individual. The group has a single wielder of a minor Power.

Level 2: Major individual. The group has a single wielder of a major Power and/or assorted users of minor ones.

Level 3: Major collective. The group has up to a handful of major Power wielders and/or advanced users of minor ones.

Level 4: Major total. All members of the group wield a major Power and many may also wield minor ones, including advanced versions.

Level 5: Advanced collective. One or more members of the group wield advanced versions of major Powers.

Shadow

This represents the ability to exert social and economic pressure across Shadow. It can result from territorial control, political influence, trade relations; etc.

Level 1: Reflections. The group's influence is limited to reflections of its home Shadow.

Level 2: Similar. The group can exert pressure in Shadows similar to its own (e.g., Medieval Japan Shadows).

Level 3: Thematic. The group's reach extends to



Shadows that have the same "theme" (e.g., Nipponic Shadows, from *Sengoku* to *Ghost in the Shell*).

Level 4: Demiverse. The group's influence is broad enough to cover half of creation (e.g., Chaos-side Shadows).

Level 5: Omniverse. The group can reach anywhere in Shadow.

Sample Factions

Here are two Factions from my campaign, which is set in the far future of the setting, after Amber and the Courts have succeeded in mutual annihilation.

Adding the Clout levels, which can vary from zero to 20, gives an approximate idea of the overall power level of a Faction, so the total is listed as well.

Antagorean Empire

After conquering his own Shadow, Emperor Antagoras has set his sight on other worlds. Thanks to his shadowwalking son, he has already expanded his empire into a reflection, the first of many, he desires.

Clout: Lore 1, Might 3, Power 2 (6)

Note: the Antagorean Empire is present in one reflection, but that is not enough to justify Lore 2 or Shadow 1. Their influence in their new province can be folded into their Might Clout.

House Mormoi

One of the eight surviving Houses of Chaos, the Mormoi are Wardens of the Black Road. Invested in the recreation of the Courts, they use their resources to return Shadows to Chaos, i.e., destroy them.

Clout: Lore 3, Might 2, Power 3, Shadow 3 (11)

Note: House Mormoi is actually Power 2, but has access to powerful weapons of Shadow destruction that bump their Clout up.

LINEAGE TABLES

These tables randomly determine a character's parentage and first appeared in *Patternbound*. Here, I have changed them to use only D10s, but tried to maintain the original probabilities, where possible.

Parent Generation

These tables let you find out the generation of your character's Amberite parent. The first one is for games set around the time of the novels. The other is for campaigns several decades, maybe centuries, later.

D10	Generation	D10	Generation
1-4	Oberon	1	Oberon
5-8	Second generation	2-3	Second generation
9-10	Third generation	4-6	Third generation
		7-8	Fourth generation
		9	Fifth generation
		10	Later generations

Legal Status

Is your character born out of wedlock?

D10	Legal status
1-3	Bastard
4-6	Bastard, recognized
7-10	Legitimate

Other Parent

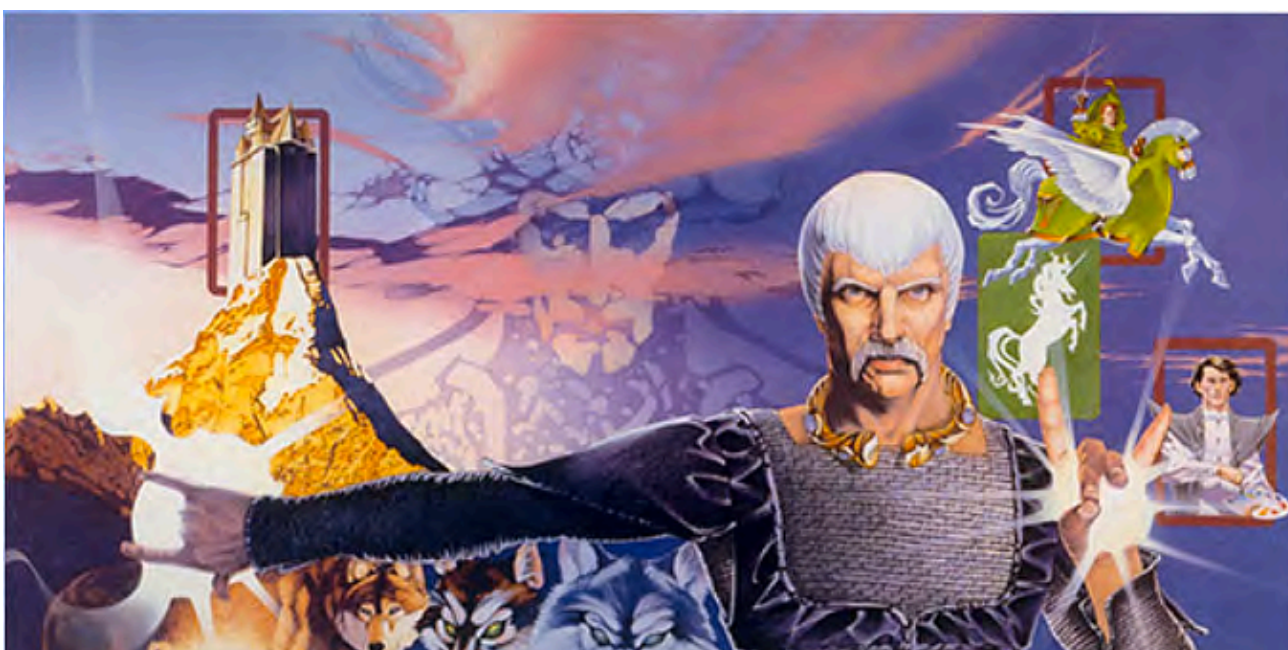
Who was your character's non-Amberite parent? Again, the odds have been adjusted, but if you want equal chances, just roll a d6.

D8	Other parent
1-3	Amber noble
4	Amber commoner
5-7	Golden Circle noble
8	Golden Circle commoner
9	Shadow dweller
10	Chaosian

Second Generation Parent

Here you can find which of Oberon's legitimate children sired your character. This table uses two D10s to preserve the probabilities of the original one, which used a D20.

D10 #1	D10 #2	Parent
1	1-5	Benedict
	6-10	Corwin
2		Bleys
3		Brand
4		Caine
5		Eric
6	1-5	Deirdre
	6-10	Fiona
7	1-5	Flora
	6-10	Llewella
8		Gerard
9		Julian
10		Random



CORWIN AND FAMILY

This is Corwin at the end of *The Courts of Chaos*. As homage to *Amber Diceless Role-Playing*, I give two Attribute sets for Corwin: the one resulting from a straight conversion and the fine-tuned one.

STR 8/9 **INT** 8/7
DEX 8/7 **PER** 9/7
CON 12 **WIL** 8

Life Points: 135/139 **Drama Points:** 10
Speed: 20/19

Qualities: Age 8, Artifact (Grayswandir), Attractiveness 2, Blood of Amber, Contacts (Bill Roth 2, Merlin 4, Random 5), Fast Reaction Time, Hard to Kill 5, Jewel of Judgment Attunement, Nerves of Steel, Pattern Imprint

Drawbacks: Adversary (Dara) -3, Covetous (Ambition) -2, Luck -1, Mental Problems (Paranoia) -2, Obligation (Amber) -2

Skills: Art (Songwriting) 7, Athletics 5, Beasts (Riding) 5, Brawling 8, Crime 5, Influence 6, Knowledge (Amber) 7, Melee 8, Medicine 4, Notice 5, Outdoor 4, Pattern 5, Piloting 4, Science 3, Shadow 5, Shooting 7, Technology 3, Warfare 8

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	16/15	32/36	slash
Dodge	13/12	—	Defense action
Shadowwalk	13	—	Pattern

Points: Attributes 71/56 + Qualities 75 + Drawbacks 10 + Skill 120 (32 from Age 8)



THE ROYALS

These are simplified quick sheets for the rest of the family. They are based on straight conversions using the system in the *Appendix (p.XX)*. I included specific maneuvers that are independent of the Combat and Brains scores (e.g., Benedict's Warfare skill).

Benedict, Ideal Warrior (AD150)

STR 9 **DEX** 9 **CON** 10 **INT** 9 **PER** 10 **WILL** 8
Muscle 24 **Combat** 28 **Brains** 23
Life Points 116 **Speed** 19

Special Abilities: Luck -5, Pattern Imprint, Power Words

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	28	44	slash
Dodge	28	—	Defense action
Warfare	28	—	INT

Bleys, The Corwin version (AD156)

STR 8 **DEX** 8 **CON** 8 **INT** 8 **PER** 9 **WILL** 8
Muscle 22 **Combat** 22 **Brains** 22
Life Points 104 **Speed** 16

Special Abilities: Pattern Imprint (Advanced), Sorcery, Trump Artistry, Power Words

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	22	38	slash
Dodge	22	—	Defense action

Brand, Mad Visionary of Amber (AD160)

STR 7 **DEX** 7 **CON** 7 **INT** 9 **PER** 10 **WILL** 16
Muscle 20 **Combat** 18 **Brains** 27
Life Points 96 **Speed** 14

Special Abilities: Artifact (Werewindle), Luck -5, Pattern Imprint (Exalted), Sorcery, Trump Artistry (Advanced)

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	18	33	slash
Dodge	18	—	Defense action
Power	32	—	WILL, Pattern, Sorcery

Caine, Protector of Amber (AD164)

STR 7 **DEX** 7 **CON** 8 **INT** 8 **PER** 8 **WILL** 9
Muscle 20 **Combat** 18 **Brains** 19
Life Points 100 **Speed** 15

Special Abilities: Pattern Imprint, Power Words, Trump Artistry (Advanced)

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	18	33	slash
Dodge	18	—	Defense action

Deirdre, Corwin's Paragon (AD172)

STR 9 **DEX** 9 **CON** 8 **INT** 8 **PER** 9 **WILL** 8
Muscle 24 **Combat** 24 **Brains** 20
Life Points 108 **Speed** 17

Special Abilities: Pattern Imprint, Power Words

Maneuvers

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Battle axe	24	43	slash
Dodge	24	—	Defense action

Eric, Rightful King of Amber (AD176)

STR 8 DEX 8 CON 8 INT 8 PER 9 WILL 9

Muscle 22 Combat 22 Brains 22

Life Points 104 Speed 16

Special Abilities: Jewel of Judgment Attunement, Pattern Imprint (Advanced), Power Words**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	22	38	slash
Dodge	18	—	Defense action

Fiona, Sorceress of Amber (AD180)

STR 7 DEX 7 CON 7 INT 9 PER 9 WILL 15

Muscle 20 Combat 18 Brains 28

Life Points 96 Speed 14

Special Abilities: Pattern Imprint (Advanced), Power Words, Sorcery, Trump Artistry**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	18	33	slash
Dodge	18	—	Defense action
Power	32	—	WILL, Pattern, Sorcery

Flora, Faithful Servant of the Crown (AD184)

STR 8 DEX 7 CON 8 INT 7 PER 8 WILL 8

Muscle 22 Combat 19 Brains 20

Life Points 104 Speed 15

Special Abilities: Attractiveness 3, Pattern Imprint, Power Words**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	19	37	slash
Dodge	18	—	Defense action
Influence	23	—	Attractiveness

Gérard, Strongman of Amber (AD188)

STR 15 DEX 9 CON 9 INT 7 PER 7 WILL 7

Muscle 36 Combat 20 Brains 18

Life Points 126 Speed 18

Special Abilities: Natural Toughness, Pattern Imprint**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	20	65	slash
Dodge	20	—	Defense action
Grappling	22	—	
Wrestling Hold	34	—	

Julian, The Corwin Version (AD192)

STR 9 DEX 8 CON 8 INT 7 PER 8 WILL 7

Muscle 24 Combat 22 Brains 20

Life Points 108 Speed 16

Special Abilities: Creatures (Hellhounds, Morgenstern), Pattern Imprint, Power Words**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	22	42	slash
Dodge	22	—	Defense action

Llewella, Reluctant Princess (AD196)

STR 9 DEX 8 CON 8 INT 8 PER 8 WILL 10

Muscle 24 Combat 19 Brains 22

Life Points 108 Speed 16

Special Abilities: Pattern Imprint, Power Words**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	19	41	slash
Dodge	19	—	Defense action

Random, Corwin's Friendly Younger Brother (AD199)

STR 8 DEX 8 CON 8 INT 8 PER 8 WILL 8

Muscle 22 Combat 21 Brains 22

Life Points 104 Speed 16

Special Abilities: Jewel of Judgment Attunement, Pattern Imprint, Power Words**Maneuvers**

Name	Score	Damage	Notes
Sword	21	38	slash
Dodge	21	—	Defense action

