

SORCERER

The dead are too much with us

Influences: Garth Nix (*Sabriel, Lirael, Abhorsen*), *The Sixth Sense*, *Kill the Dead*, *Sometimes They Come Back*, all as if directed by David Cronenberg.

Humanity in this game

Humanity = expiation through grief, “letting go,” and honoring memory over existence. Therefore losing Humanity is not about failure to care, but caring too much and refusing to accept loss.

If a sorcerer’s Humanity goes to 0, he or she is possessed by demons, converting them to Possessor types and utterly losing all identity to their drives.

The game does include an option for recovery, based on the “demon to human conversion” rules in *The Sorcerer’s Soul*, but it will require some action by other player-characters.



Making up your character

Is the topic disturbing? If so, then good. Make up a character which demonstrates to everyone else how and why this disturbs you. If it doesn’t, then re-arrange your mind so that it does.

- I don’t care how Goth you are. Dead people should be gone.
- Think about it carefully ... what could a dead being actually *want*?
- Sorcery isn’t technology. It literally means spitting in the universe’s eye.



Remember: a sorcerer has *mastered* the commanding and binding of demons. It’s up to you to say why and how your character has done this.

- Sorcerers are rare – you know maybe one other, if any.
- You learned how – who taught you?
- This is an appalling, *impossible* thing to do – why in the world are you doing it?

In all cases, think in terms of an awesome character for a movie, rather than a “justification” origin story for a superhero. You’re providing actual setting by answering these questions.

The Kicker

Something has just changed in your character’s life, so much that every choice, every decision, and every value has undergone a major review. This is the moment when it all gets interesting.

What just happened?



All sorcerer characters may perform all of the following rituals:

Contact	“Call” a demon from the River or its lair
Summon	Bring the demon into existence
Bind	Form a mutual relationship with a demon
Banish	Return a demon to the River or through a specific Gate
Contain	Restrict a demon’s movements
Punish	Cause a demon pain

SORCERY

Death is a river: when you conduct a sorcerous ritual, your real body freezes in place (literally) and you stand before the first of nine Gates, through which the river flows. All Lore and Rituals utilize the river and its qualities. There is only one river.

No one knows where the river actually goes. Sorcerers have no particular insight into the meaning of life or the ultimate fate of a living being.

Some implications: (1) separate acts of sorcery at the same time may encounter one another on the river, (2) any ritual may possibly run into something unwanted, and (3) traps may be laid for the unwary.

Rituals work *on any demon*. The typical ritual takes 1-3 hours. Each may be performed as a snap-shot, which drops the relevant score down to a value of 1, or as a 12-hour-plus full ceremony, which adds bonus dice.

Necromancy: the sorcery of murder

The Token

A Token is a physical object which houses the Humanity of a sacrificial victim. One makes an object into a Token through deliberate, ritualized murder. Its Power may be increased through repeating the act on more victims.

Using a Token

- Power over death: stave off or cancel damage, or deliver damage in the form of “raw death-essence”
- Enhanced sorcery: add bonus dice to a ritual, enhance a demon’s Power, get a free Boost, use the Token as the Hint ability
- Requirements: Repeat or symbolize the act of sacrifice, use or brandish an object involved in the sacrifice, or duplicate its conditions.



Necromancy typically carries significant potential for Humanity loss. In this game, especially, using a Token carries the risk of a Taint, just as described in the demon abilities, equal to the Power of the Token.

Oh – and let’s not forget – using *oneself* as a sacrificial victim is possible, too.

DEMONS

“Demons” are the dead who have not proceeded past the Ninth Gate, for whatever reason – and who have found a means (or are forced) to interact with the living world. They are no longer the living beings they were; do not think of them as people. Memory, to them, is nothing but obsession, and they know nothing of life or its priorities, not even as memory.

In this game, demons gain their abilities and Power scores through the Binding process. This idea has many implications both for the setting and for your options during play, so consider it carefully.



... a demon is the result of someone very tortured, very depressed, or very evil dying without resolution to the extreme issues in their lives. They are literally the living manifestations of the "emotions" of a deceased human or humans...the tortured poet, the starving artist, the scorned lover...perhaps twisted in some way since, now dead, the issue cannot be resolved. ...

The word means a spirit, an entity of semi-malignant nature. Perhaps not meaningfully malignant (no more than a chipmunk means to be cute), but they just are, they may not even actively work to cause pain, harm, suffering or etc. Those are just the effects they produce when they are around ... so make no mistake, they are corrupt beings. That's the word I'm looking for...corrupt.



- Jeffrey Kromer, Sorcerer cover artist



Demon Desires and Needs

Corruption is either the single Desire, or hybridized with another stated Desire. Needs always concern emotions in some way.

Demon Types

- Inconspicuous demons are shadows/ghosts, hallucinations and mental phenomena – classic stuff, but let's avoid the clanking chains
- Parasites include corpse animators and substitute body parts
- Passers are the risen dead, not zombies at all – very scary
- I'm open to suggestion about Possessors, because I want them to be genuinely scary and not merely repeating familiar motifs
- No Object demons; use necromantic Tokens instead



THE NINE GATES

At the entrance to the first Gate, there are no demons except for the newly-dead, the recently-Summoned, or those who've managed to force their way upstream on their own. Going through the first Gate is called "going into Death." You are sorcerers – you can go past the Gates, if you dare, and return, if you can. It's hard on your Humanity, though.

DEMONS AND THE GATES

- Beyond the First Gate: Power 1-2 and no particular abilities of note. They are shapeless and tattered.
- Beyond the Second Gate: Power 3-4 and have a distinctive shape and identity.
- Beyond the Third Gate: Power 4-6 and include smoke and/or flame as part of their bodies.
- Beyond the Fourth Gate: Power 6-8 and have some advanced form of travel.
- Beyond the Fifth Gate: Power 8-10 and are quite large.
- Beyond the Sixth Gate: Power 10-12 and have extra, non-humanoid parts.
- Beyond the Seventh Gate: Power 12-14 and can conduct Punish and Contain rituals.
- Beyond the Eighth Gate: Power 15+ and can practice sorcery (such demons are so rare and unique as to be legends).
- Nothing returns from beyond the Ninth Gate, demon, sorcerer, or otherwise.

To Summon someone recently killed, you can just go to the River. To Summon someone long dead, you must go beyond the Gates and search, not knowing how far you'll have to go. Or if you're seeking a demon with particular abilities, you can go to the appropriate region and get one, without reference to whoever they might have been in life.

THE NINE TONES

These can be expressed as visual symbols, specific harmonic sounds, key phrases, or any other medium of communication. Sorcery consists of using them properly, and referring to them during play in some descriptive fashion, perhaps in combination, is worth bonus dice.



- ***Ranna the Sleeper*** – makes demons drowsy or more "dead," useful for mild Punishing
- ***Mosrael the Waker*** – used for basic Summoning and Banishing
- ***Kibeth the Walker*** – used for holding demons in place (Contain), for animating dead things (i.e. simple Summoning), and if used on the River, then for Banishing or Summoning
- ***Dyrim the Speaker*** – used for commanding a demon to speak, or for Contacting
- ***Belgaer the Thinker*** – analysis using Lore.
- ***Sareneth the Binder*** – used for Binding or powerful Containing.
- ***Astareal the Sorrowful*** – used for powerful Banishing and Punishing

Hell is other people. – Jean-Paul Sartre, No Exit

Praying is too slow. – Steppenwolf, Snow

Life is what happens when you're making other plans. – John Lennon

... the living drive harder bargains than the dead. – Glendon Swarthout, The Shootist

