

THE PATHS OF MAGIC

The mage turned to his companions, his eyes gleaming with excitement. "Behold!", he cried. "Finally, our efforts have paid off. Our journey is at an end. For, at great cost, I have discovered the long-lost secret of dragons. Now we have a weapon against our enemy!"

The intricate paths of magic weave their way through reality. To understand the nature of magic, one must understand the Threefold Components: *traditions*, *secrets*, and *spellpaths*.

Put simply, traditions enable you to discover secrets, and secrets form the ingredients of spellpaths. A *secret* is discovered; a *spellpath* is learned.

Secrets. *Secrets* are fundamental truths about the universe; whether they be words of power, or intricate formulae, a secret is a key which grants access to paths of magic. There is an infinite number of secrets, some rarer or more valuable than others. Secrets include – amongst many, many others - fire, ice, water, death, plants, animals, weather, blood, shadow, light, good, and evil. Secrets can be discovered through research, in ancient texts, or even intuitively known as a matter of race.

For example, the druid discovers the *secret of nature* early on in the tradition, allowing a druid to learn the *plant*, *water*, and *healing* spellpaths, amongst others. Clerics discover the *secret of good* or the *secret of evil* (depending on their chosen *Virtue*) Other times a race might automatically know a secret – the Sylvan Elves automatically know the *secret of plants*.

Spellpaths. Magic is organized into thematic paths of power called *spellpaths*. A spellpath contains a list of spells in ascending order of power, from minor cantrips castable by lowly farmhands to complex enchantments mastered only by the greatest of archmages. Before a magic-user can learn a spellpath, he must be in possession of one of its secrets. For example, a magic-user cannot learn the *Earth* spellpath without discovering either the *secret of nature* or the *secret of earth*. Similarly, before learning the *Necromancy* spellpath, a magic user must discover the *secret of evil* or the *secret of death*.

Traditions. Traditions are like 'careers' or 'disciplines' – they are types of magical study or practice, and offer unique abilities and provide certain *secrets*. Traditions include the mage, cleric, druid, firemage, necromancer, diabolist, and inquisitor.

The mage and the cleric are generalist entry-level spellcasting traditions. They learn five secrets in total (if they remain in the tradition until the end).

Mages may discover any five secrets other than the *secret of good* and the *secret of evil*.

Clerics discover the *secret of good* or the *secret of evil* plus any three other secrets related to the portfolio of their god.

The other spellcasting traditions are specializations. They require a magic-user to have achieved Grade III as a Mage or Cleric. These traditions learn three secrets in total, at Grades I, III, and V.

Firemages discover the *secret of fire*, and the *secrets of illusion* and *light*.

Necromancers discover the secrets of *undead*, *shadow*, and *death*.

Diabolists discover the *secrets of blood, shadow, and summoning*.

Druids discover three of the secrets of *nature, weather, plants, healing, and animals*.

Inquisitors discover the secrets of *divination, abjuration, and domination*.

A spellpath might be fire-themed, or focus on nature, animals, or birds. It can relate to an element such as water or air, an activity such as burglary or illusion, or any other theme. Most spellpaths are ancient paths of power discovered or developed by mages of old, and some are rare, unusual, or esoteric.

Some spellpaths are common and have utilitarian names – the *fire path* is known to many spellcasters. Others are more unusual and may have more descriptive or grandiose names – *Eleanour D'Gar's Rituals of Dark Summoning* is a dark, secretive path known to few. Some are based around a specific creator, or a school of magic. There is a rumor amongst many apprentices that there is one ancient spellpath centered around the color yellow! However, they are all spellpaths and follow the same basic patterns.

Spellpaths are dealt with in detail later in this rulebook. Below is a brief list of some example spellpaths and their associated secrets. There are many, many more spellpaths and secrets.

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| • Death [<i>evil, death</i>] | • Mending [<i>wood, metal</i>] |
| • Earth [<i>nature, earth</i>] | • Necromancy [<i>evil, death</i>] |
| • Ice [<i>nature, ice</i>] | • Protection [<i>abjuration, good</i>] |
| • Illusion [<i>illusion, air</i>] | • Plant [<i>nature, plants</i>] |
| • Fire [<i>nature, fire</i>] | • Shadow [<i>shadow</i>] |
| • Healing [<i>good, life, nature</i>] | • Sight [<i>divination</i>] |
| • Light [<i>good, light</i>] | • Water [<i>nature, water</i>] |

You can tell a lot about a spellcaster's magical capability simply by looking at their spellpath entry. An entry can be as simple as: *MAG 5 (3d6) fire, ice*. This tells you that the caster has a MAGIC attribute of 5 (giving him a dice pool of 3d6) and has access to the *fire* and *ice* spellpath. Not only that, the MAG score also tells you which spells in those spellpaths are available: a spellcaster automatically has all spells in a spellpath up to the value of their MAG attribute. So the example spellcaster has access to all spells in the *fire* and *ice* spellpath which cost 5MP or less to cast.

No creature or character can know more spellpath than the value of their LOG attribute.



An Orc necromancer masters the Path of Shadow.

DEATH SPELLPATH [*EVIL, DEATH*]

- 0 *Wilt* – you cause small plants within 5' to wilt and die.
- 1 *Deathtouch* – for one minute, your touch causes 1 die of damage.
- 2 *Toxify* – up to four pounds of food or drink within 30'; becomes toxic to eat, riddling it with parasites and diseases. The food effectively becomes offal.
- 3 *Blind & deaf* - a target you can touch becomes blinded or deafened (your choice) for 10 minutes.
- 4 *Touch of nausea* – you cause a target you can touch to become nauseated for one minute.
- 5 *Touch of affliction* - a victim you can touch takes 1 point of temporary attribute damage to the attribute score of your choice. The damage heals at the normal rate.
- 6 *Infection* – a target you can touch contracts the disease of your choice, and is afflicted immediately without any incubation period. The proceeds at the normal rate. You can only choose diseases that characters can recover from; those that have only magical cures (such as mummy rot) are not available.
- 7 *Greater deathtouch* - for one minute, your touch causes 7 dice of damage.
- 8 *Paralysis* – a target you can touch becomes paralyzed for 10 minutes.
- 9 *Curse* – a target within 30' takes 1 die of damage per round for one minute.
- 10 *Gaze of death* – you do 9 dice of damage to a single target within 30'.

EARTH SPELLPATH [*NATURE, EARTH*]

- 0 *Solidify* – you can solidify a 5-ft-square of mud or sand into stone, creating a firm surface for one minute.
- 1 *Anchor* – if on a stone surface, you are able to anchor yourself in place for one minute. Any attempt to move you or knock you down takes a -2 die penalty.
- 2 *Freezing blast* – you blast earth and stones at a single target within 5', doing 2 dice of impact damage.
- 3 *Soften stone* – you turn a 5' radius area of unworked stone into mud or sand for one minute. Medium or smaller creatures in the area are immobilized; escape requires a STR check.
- 4 *Stonewalk* – you are able to pass through stone as though it were not there. You can pass through 30' of stone, or for 1 minute, whichever comes first. If you are still within the stone when the spell ends, you die instantly.
- 5 *Vicious stalagmites* – hundreds of tiny, razor-sharp stalactites emerge from the ground, covering a 30' radius area around you for one minute. Anyone other than you entering or beginning their turn in the area takes 2 dice of damage. SPEED in the area is reduced by 2 points.
- 6 *Pebble blast* – sharp-edged stones whip forward towards three targets of your choice within 30', striking them for 4 dice of impact damage.

- 7 *Wall of stone* - you create a 70' long wall of stone with a width and height of about 10'.
- 8 *Shape stone* - you can reshape any stone into any other shape of similar volume. The change is permanent, and complex moving parts cannot be fashioned in this way. You can affect a 30' area within 100'.
- 9 *Skin of Stone* - you gain SOAK 15 for 10 minutes.
- 10 *Elemental* - you summon an elemental of stone (level 5) adjacent to you; it obeys you for 10 minutes before dissipating.
- 11 *Minor Earthquake* - tremors shake a 60' radius area centered on you, knocking down all creatures, and causing 1d6 damage to anyone in the area. Large objects and buildings are badly damaged if the caster successfully beats their break DC (see the *Environment* chapter). Anybody under a solid roof (tunnel, building, cave) is showered with debris for an additional 4 dice of damage.

ICE SPELLPATH [NATURE, ICE]

- 0 *Freeze* - you can freeze a small (cup-sized) amount of liquid.
- 1 *Cold weapon* - with a touch you cause a weapon to frost, making its damage type cold damage for 10 minutes.
- 2 *Freezing blast* - you blast icy air and ice at a single target within 5', doing 2 dice of cold damage.
- 3 *Resistance* - your affinity with ice is such that you gain SOAK 4 (cold) for 10 minutes.
- 4 *Chilling touch* - your icy touch causes 4 dice of cold damage; creatures up to medium become brittle for 1 minute, losing 2 SOAK, and tiny creatures become encased in ice for one minute.
- 5 *Ice sheet* - you render a 30' radius area within 100' *slippery* for one minute.
- 6 *Icicle blast* - icicles shoot forward towards three targets of your choice within 30', striking them for 4 dice of cold damage.
- 7 *Wall of ice* - you create a 70' long wall of ice with a width and height of about 10'. Contact with the wall causes 1 die of cold damage per round.
- 8 *Immunity* - you gain SOAK 14 (cold) for 10 minutes.
- 9 *Freeze* - you freeze (immobilize) a medium target within 30' for one minute, doing 1 dice of cold damage per round.
- 10 *Sleetstorm* - you create a 40' radius icy storm around you for 1 minute which blocks all sight and causes the ground to become *slippery*. Movement is reduced by 2. Creatures other than yourself beginning or starting their turns in the storm take 5 dice of cold damage.



The Secret of Blood is the key to a number of darker spellpaths.

ILLUSION SPELLPATH [*ILLUSION, AIR*]

- 0 *Minor illusion* - you create one minor effect. The effect is simple and imprecise, and only relates to one of sound, images, smell, or taste. Examples include a pattern of tiles on a wall, a growl or laughter (but nothing articulate), or the smell of rotting flesh, or baking bread.
- 1 *Chameleon cloak* - a creature you can touch is concealed by a fair illusion, granting a +2d6 bonus to attribute checks made to hide for one minute.
- 2 *Emperor's new clothes* - you alter your clothing for 10 minutes; the clothing choice is fairly simple, and can mimic a general style ("military", "farmer", etc.) but not a specific outfit or uniform.
- 3 *Illusory wall* - you create up to a 10' by 10' illusory wall within 30'. The wall lasts for one minute and blends in with a corridor, hallway, or other surrounding structure.
- 4 *Person mirage* - you can create the illusion of a full person within 30', complete with distinctive markings, unique pieces of clothing, and an expressive demeanor. The illusion emits no sound or other sensory cues, however.
- 5 *Invisibility* - you become entirely invisible for 10 minutes. Even when creatures know exactly where you are, you still gain the benefit of full cover. Invisibility grants you a +5 die bonus to checks made to hide (failing the check doesn't mean that you have been seen, just that you've made a noise or given away your location some other way).
- 6 *Illusory scene* - you can create a convincing illusory scene, which contains visual and audible elements (but not smell, taste, or touch), including convincing people or creatures, of up to 20' radius, and which lasts for 1 hour.
- 7 *Dragon's roar* - you can make any loud, complex sound appear to be emitting from up to 500' away and continue for a duration of 10 minutes. Sounds can be as loud as a dragon's roar or an entire parade cheering, and all of it can be as articulate as you want, complete with subtle sounds like kids in the crowd whining to their parents, or the dragon's roar echoing properly in an opera house.
- 8 *I'm on fire!* - you make a target feel like he's on fire or freezing cold. The sensation is incredibly intense and painful and causes non-lethal damage to the target. You can affect a single target within 40'. inflicting 1 die of non-lethal heat or cold damage per round for one minute.
- 9 *Illusory terrain* - you create a large (90' radius) area of fake terrain. This can be of any type - grass, swamp, lava, forest - and is enough to hide any buildings or other structures within the area.
- 10 *Nightmare incarnate* - this spell creates a horrifying illusory creature within 100' of up to Enormous size, which attacks your enemies. Use the actual stats of whatever creature you choose, but any creature struck by it might disbelieve the illusion. If they fail, they take non-permanent damage equal to the damage the creature would deal. If they disbelieve, they take no damage.

FIRE SPELLPATH [*NATURE, FIRE*]

- 0 *Spark* – you can create a small flame in your hand, enough to light tinder or to cause 1 die of heat damage to a target you touch.
- 1 *Affect flames* – you can make flames weave and move, enhancing or decreasing a fire the size of a campfire.
- 2 *Fire sheet* – you can blast fire from your fingertips, reaching about 5' in front of you, causing 2 dice of heat damage to a single target.
- 3 *Resistance* – your affinity with fire is such that you gain SOAK 4 (heat) for 10 minutes.
- 4 *Douse* – you are able to put out any fire of up to 30' radius within 30' instantly.
- 5 *Fireball* – a streak of fire shoots from your outstretched finger, and explodes in a 30' radius conflagration causing 2 dice of heat damage to anything in the area.
- 6 *Wall of fire* - You create a wall of fire of up to 30' length to a height of about 5'. Contact with the wall causes 3 dice of heat damage; squares adjacent to the wall are hot enough that creatures take 1 die of heat damage just be entering or starting a turn in one.
- 7 *Fireshield* – you become engulfed in flame for 10 minutes (which does not harm you), granting you a +4 DEFENSE bonus. Anyone who attacks you with a melee attack takes 3 dice of heat damage, while anyone entering or starting a turn in a square adjacent to you takes 1 die of heat damage.
- 8 *Immunity* - You gain SOAK 14 (heat) for 10 minutes.
- 9 *Pillar of flame* – you call down fires from the sky which engulfs anything within 5' of you, causing 9 dice of heat damage.
- 10 *Conflagration* - You cause a 40' radius area within 100', and any creatures or objects within it, to take 4 dice of immediate heat damage, or 1 die of heat damage per round for 1 minute.

HEALING SPELLPATH [*GOOD, LIFE, NATURE*]

- 0 *Aid* – you heal 1 die of HEALTH to a creature you can touch.
- 1 *Aid* – you heal 2 dice of HEALTH to a creature you can touch.
- 2 *Aid* – you heal 3 dice of HEALTH to a creature you can touch.
- 3 *Aid* – you remove one weak condition from a creature you can touch.
- 4 *Recover* – you remove one regular condition from a creature you can touch.
- 5 *Cure Disease* – you cure one creature you can touch of all diseases afflicting it.
- 6 *Negate Poison* – you negate all poisons with 30' for 1 minute.
- 7 *Aid* – you heal 7 dice of HEALTH to a creature you can touch.
- 8 *Recover* – you remove one acute condition from a creature you can touch.
- 9 *Revive* – you restore to life a creature that has died in the past day. The creature returns with 0 HEALTH, but stabilized.
- 10 *Aid* – you heal 10 dice of HEALTH to a creature you can touch.

- 11 *Mass Aid* – you heal 5 dice of damage to all targets of your choice within 50'.
- 12 *Regeneration* – one creature you can touch regenerates 1 die of damage per round for 10 minutes.

PLANT SPELLPATH [*NATURE, PLANTS*]

- 0 *Locate* – you determine the distance and direction of a specific plant type within 100'.
- 1 *Goodberry* – you pluck a berry which heals 1 die of HEALTH to anyone who eats it
- 2 *Plantspeak* – you talk to plants and determine the answer to a single yes-or-no question as long as it is about a topic witnessed by the plant.
- 3 *Thornwhip* – thorny tendrils whip a target adjacent to you for 3 dice of stabbing damage.
- 4 *Obstruction* – planets cause obstruction a 40 radius centered on you reducing ground speed by 2 for 1 minute.
- 5 *Entangle* – plants rise up and immobilize a medium creature within 30' for 1 minute.
- 6 *Clear the Way* – plants move aside from a 40' radius area within 100' to leave it unobstructed and clear.
- 7 *Animate Branch* – a tree within 100' slams any target within 10' of it each round for 1 minute. The attack does 4 dice of damage and includes a free *knockdown* combat trick against any medium or smaller targets.
- 8 *Mass Entangle* – plants rise up and entangle all creatures of your choice within 30' for one minutes.
- 9 *Skin of Thorns* – your skin turns into bark, covered with thorns, granting you SOAK 10 for 1 hour, although you become vulnerable (1d6) heat.
- 10 *Wall of Thorns* – a barrier of thorny plants rises up, up to 50' in length. Anyone who tries to push through takes 5 dice of damage. The wall persists for one minute.
- 11 *Tree Guardian* – a tree within 30' animates, becoming a treant (level 4) which protects you for 10 minutes.
- 12 *Plant Control* – plant creatures within 30' obey your commands for 10 minutes.

SHADOW SPELLPATH [*SHADOW*]

- 0 *Shadowcloak* – you become wreathed in flickering shadows for one minute, granting you a +2 DEFENSE bonus.
- 1 *Gloom* – darkness radiates in a 20' radius. Creatures with darkvision can see through this area normally; the darkness is the equivalent of a moonless night.
- 2 *Cloak of stealth* – you are hidden by shadows for 10 minutes, granting you a +3 die bonus to attribute checks made to hide.
- 3 *Darkness* - darkness radiates in a 60' radius for 10 minutes, so dark that nothing can see through it.
- 4 *Snuff out* – you extinguish any non-magical light source as bright as torches and

lanterns within 100' for 10 minutes. This does not affect a source's other properties (fire is still hot; it merely no longer gives off light).

- 5 *Invisibility* – you become entirely invisible for 10 minutes. Even when creatures know exactly where you are, you still gain the benefit of full cover. Invisibility grants you a +5 die bonus to checks made to hide (failing the check doesn't mean that you have been seen, just that you've made a noise or given away your location some other way).
- 6 *Shadow area* – you are able to hide an area of 10' radius for 10 minutes. This could be a small camp, room, a doorway or an adventuring party (as long as they remain in the same location). The area looks normal save for the elements you wish to hide, which are treated as though invisible. Approximately 10 medium-sized creatures can crowd in to 30' radius area.
- 7 *Shadow party* – you render your entire adventuring party invisible for 10 minutes. They can move, but they must remain within 30' of each other (no member can be further than 30' from any other) or the spell ends.
- 8 *Extinguish* – you extinguish any non-magical light source as bright as a bonfire within 100' for 10 minutes. This does not affect a source's other properties (fire is still hot; it merely no longer gives off light).
- 9 *Shadowstep* – you step into one shadow and emerge from another within 800'.
- 10 *Greater shadow area* – you are able to hide an area of 60' radius for 1 hour – enough to disguise a small building, a cave, or a large campsite. Approximately 40 medium-sized creature can crowd into a 60' radius area.

WATER SPELLPATH [NATURE, WATER]

- 0 *Create Water* – you create a gallon of clean drinking water.
- 1 *Wave* – a single crashing wave of water causes 1 die of impact damage to a target within 5', and puts out exposed flames in that square.
- 2 *Buoyancy* – you become able to float with ease for 10 minutes, even if heavily encumbered. As a side effect, you do not become wet; this can also be used to stay dry in heavy rain.
- 3 *Purify* – you purify all water within 30'.
- 4 *Water Breathing* – you can breathe, speak, and otherwise respire normally in any sort of non-toxic liquid for 10 minutes.
- 5 *Swim* – you gain a swim speed equal to your regular SPEED for 10 minutes, and also gain a +2 die bonus to any attribute checks made to swim.
- 6 *Mass Water Breathing* – you and any allies within 30' can breathe, speak, and otherwise respire normally in any sort of non-toxic liquid for 10 minutes.
- 7 *Waterwalk* – you are able to walk on water as though it were a solid surface for 10 minutes.
- 8 *Minor Tsunami* – crashing waves knock targets prone and cause 5d6 impact damage to all within a 30' cone.

- 9 *Raise/lower Water* – you can increase or decrease the depth of a body of water of up to 40' radius by as much as 20' for up to one hour.
- 10 *Elemental* – you summon an elemental of water (level 5) adjacent to you; it obeys you for 10 minutes before dissipating.
- 11 *Major Tsunami* - crashing waves knock targets prone and cause 4d6 impact damage to all within a 100' cone. Medium or smaller creatures are washed away to the far edge of the cone.

SPELLPATH THEMES

While a spellpath can have a theme, it doesn't have to. Or, rather, the theme doesn't have to be as obvious as “fire” or “water”. The focus or broadness of a spellpath does not affect its power – a broad path like “nature” is not more powerful than narrow one like “birds”. It's just a bit less themed. Therefore, whatever your theme, there's no danger in choosing themes that are too specific or too open – each spell is created individually at a power level appropriate to its level.



A Smallfolk craftsman has some knowledge of the Path of Mending.

These are useful, however, and should be encouraged. Other than elemental-type theme, however, there is a wide variety of possible choices. You might design a spellpath based on a tradition, or a specific creator, or a school of magic, or an eclectic but strict curriculum. Spellpaths can overlap – none claim exclusivity to any type of effect. You can

be as specific as “things with a K in their name” or as broad as you wish. The idea, however, is to make the paths useful to easily and thematically empower a magic-using NPC, monster, or player-character.

BUILDING SPELLPATHS

The spellpaths in this rulebook are just a starting set. Spellpaths can be designed using the *Elements of Magic* rules found later in this book. GMs are encouraged to design their own spellpaths, and players should feel free to design spellpaths subject to their GM's approval. Of course, a spellpath must be learned by spending XP, even if they player designs it herself.

Spellpaths can share spells – a spell can feature in multiple paths. Optionally, this can create a *junction* (see below).

Spellpaths should be created using the *EoM* rules, and shared so that others may use them. There are millions of spellpaths; some say an infinite number.

JUNCTIONS (OPTIONAL RULE)

As an optional rule, the GM may allow junctions to exist. A junction occurs when two or more spellpaths share the same spell. At a junction, a magic-user may continue along a different spellpath, almost as though switching rails at the junction, without spending XP to learn the “new” spellpath.

However, once she starts along the new spellpath from the point of the junction, she cannot change her mind.



A mage calls upon the Path of Protection to shield himself against an attacker.