

Connecting JackPoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login

> Enter Passcode

... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>

"Circles of power sometimes resemble squiggly lines."

JackPoint Stats

9 users currently active
in the network

Latest News

Just because you traded in your
Americar two years ago, it doesn't
mean everyone else did. - FastJack

Personal Alerts

- * You have 7 new [private messages](#).
- * You have 72 new responses to your [JackPoint posts](#).
- * Drone KE 459-LSEA-194 is requesting additional license information.

First Degree

Three members are online and in
your area.

Your Current Rep Score: 653
(69% positive)

Current Time: 28 May 2074,
1026 hours

PREFERENCES

FEEDS

TASKS

LINKS

HISTORY

Welcome back to JackPoint, omae; your
last connection was severed: 2 days, 1
hour ago.

Today's Heads Up

Here's a brief who's who of
Awakened groups that might be
of use to, drek. -FastJack

Incoming

- * Just because it's old, doesn't mean
Grandma won't run you over with it.
[Tag: [Used Car Lot](#)]
- * The wars of yesterday leave us the museum pieces of today. [Tag: [Eurowar Antiques](#)]
- * When are rocks not just rocks? [Tag: [Paragon](#)]
- * There are dangerous places in the world, and sometimes you have to go there. [Tag: [Hazard Pay](#)]

Top News Items

- * Knight Errant is investigating the recent loss of material from Metroplex Guard Armoury Delta 27. The Governor's office has not responded to allegations the weapons might have been sold to violent pro-human groups. [Link](#)
- * The body FBI Supervisory Social Agent Jennifer Kowalski was located this morning at a facility in Renton marked as extrajurisdictional. Federal authorities are still trying to gain access to the Renraku property so they can cut the swinging body down from the flagpole. [Link](#)
- * Havana, Cuba—Several explosions have been reported in the city at law enforcement facilities. Reporters are still attempting to locate a spokesperson for a formal statement. [Link](#)

CHAT

MESSAGES

FILES

POSTS

NEXUS

SEARCH

Active

ComStar
Firewall

Active

Jack-in-the-Box
Antivirus

Active

SpamWitch
Filter

On/Receiving

Commcode

Excellent

Signal

Active

Hidden
Mode

Local
Map

MAGICAL SOCIETIES

Invited Guests: Smiling Jack

Posts/Files tagged with "Magical Societies"

Assemblies of Power
The Brotherhood of Darkness
Cracking the Bones

[More]

CONTINUE

ADVANCED
SEARCH

SAVE



Two Latin phrases circled through Alistair's head, time and time again, repeating, drowning the hiss of sleeting rain with the noise in his own head. He looked for a path that might allow him to keep somewhat dry, but it was hard; the fog rolling off the bay mixed with the spray of water bouncing off the tarmac near the docks, filling the air with a constant mist of water that glowed in the sulphur-yellow lights

As he entered an old wooden warehouse and passed into the dimness, he allowed his spells to fade into the manosphere. Freed from this minor distraction, he took a deep breath and inhaled cinnamon mixed with burnt brakes. The warehouse was very quiet, which meant he had arrived unnecessarily early. In the darkness, he slowly picked his way past piles of spice in rough plastic sacks until he was past all the stock. Walking briskly, he crossed the empty space in a few seconds, stopping next to a wall. He turned, raised the cowl of his robe, and waited for the other judges to arrive.

The next to arrive was Derek, fat and ancient. His robe looked like it was draped over a floating beach ball. Alastair dropped reality from his sight and focused on the astral, allowing him to view a spirit using magic to fly the obese bastard in.

Typical. Never does anything himself that he can get someone else to do. The old judge drifted gently to the floor, not even looking at Alastair as he faced the empty space. Under his cowl, Alastair felt his face flush at the insult.

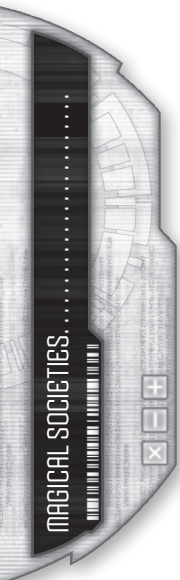
The final judge arrived on foot. Zak eschewed the robes and many of the traditions of the group; he was a young human of indeterminate ethnicity, stripped to the waist with only a sash to show that he might have skill in the art. With him some employees dragged a struggling bound, hooded figure. Alastair and Derek watched silently as a chair was found, and the figure tied to it. The employees then left the way they had arrived. When their footsteps had disappeared, Zak chanted a quick phrase, and in the blink of an eye he was clothed in the order's robes, complete with deep cowl. He stepped forward and slapped a patch on the exposed neck of the prisoner, putting drugs in his system to keep him quiet. He then pulled the hood off, revealing a young ork wearing gang colors and a glazed expression.

Alastair was getting worried about Zak's anti-metahuman views. His Humanis membership could be a conflict of interest with some of the other members of the group. In this case it didn't matter who the victim was, though, because he'd probably survive. Zak took his place on the other side of Derek and waited. A few minutes later Alastair felt the touch of a spell intruding on his soul; with a moment's hesitation he allowed it past his defences and heard Derek's voice as it must have been decades ago.

"She is outside the building. The rest of the crew she runs with are nearby in case of trouble. I have sent a watcher to direct her in."

If there was any trouble, it was doubtful that anyone would be able to save her. Alastair was always reluctant to recruit shadowrunners—they had a tendency to bring trouble with them, and a habit of thinking about themselves first and the group second. Still, they were often able to get things that were impossible to





find otherwise, and occasionally they had the most astonishing insights. Knowledge that might have otherwise been lost, if not for groups such as his.

As she made her way toward them, Alistair cast a spell to prevent electronic transmissions from inside the warehouse. He could sense Derek invoking another spell of some sort, probably something to slow down her backup. She reached the edge of the empty space, and Zak spoke softly, his voice almost swallowed by the darkness.

"Are you ready?"

The attractive young elfen woman nodded and stepped into the space. She took a deep breath and looked into the darkness. Alastair created a soft blue radiance above them, lighting the area while blurring details. Her eyes looked as black as her hair in the half-light.

"I have come seeking knowledge." Her voice was clear and strong. "And I wish to share the knowledge that I have."

"Do you swear to keep our secrets, to entrust yours to us, and to harbor a brother or sister in time of need?" Derek croaked out the old phrase; he must have forgotten the new one, or he was deliberately winding Alastair up.

"I so swear."

Digging into his memory for the last few words, Alastair spoke.

"Do you understand that the quest for knowledge is the highest ideal, and do you promise to pursue this in the face of danger?"

"I do."

"Then show us something new."

The candidate turned and faced the ork victim, who was still too drugged out to be able to make much sense of the situation. The demonstration was a forerunner, like most shadowrunners, the candidate had developed her new spell and flashed it around several times. He himself had watched from the astral realm while she had been practicing last night, and it was certain that the others had seen it before as well.

Stepping back with one leg, she moved into a more secure posture. Taking a second to concentrate, she chanted quickly in Sperethial. Alastair watched as the mana concentrated around her and took form. There were no hints that anything strange was happening until an opaque cloud formed above her head. Before it had completely formed, it was already moving in a long stream toward the hapless ganger, impacting with a splash. The victim's head and torso were completely covered for the split second the spell took to run its course. As the magically conjured water and sand dispersed back into the manasphere, the ork's chair was slammed into the floorboards. Bruises were already beginning to form over his face, and the attack had shredded the ganger's shirt and jacket, scouring his skin until it was bleeding. He was not seriously hurt and would be left here to wake up on his own.

"It's a water elemental strike with a sand effect. Nothing new. Reject." Zak's terse mental contact came across Derek's telepathic link. It wasn't a surprise that the metahuman-hater was rejecting the elf.

"Nice technique, good focus, and it's not exactly the same as the spell we have in the library. Approve." Again, not a surprise that the fat old bastard approves of the attractive young elfen woman.

Alastair thought about whether approving her membership would be better for him or not. On the one hand, it would irritate Zak, who was influential with the younger up-and-comers, and ultimately those were the people who would be driving the organization. On the other hand, having an attractive, young elf around would distract Derek from playing politics.

"The old spell hasn't been used in years, it will be good to have someone to circulate it in the organization. Approve." Besides, maybe he could get Derek to instruct her in some of the older spells. That would keep the lecherous old fool busy.

The candidate had turned to face the three adjudicators and was waiting in silence for their judgment. Although she was keeping her emotions under control, it was obvious that she was proud of the spell.

Derek stepped forward. "Welcome to the Gate of Ishtar."



ASSEMBLIES OF POWER

Posted by: Smiling Jack

It is good to be with many of you again. I was active on Shadowland long before the last Crash, and I have been busy enough since that time that I have not had an opportunity to follow the discussion to JackPoint. I remember some of you from the old days, and it is good to make your acquaintance again.

- I like how the guy assumes he would have been invited to JackPoint if only he wasn't so busy.
- Slamm-O!

I am a sociologist and a magician, in that order. I used to be a shadowrunner, back when everyone who wanted decent access to the Matrix needed a wire in their head. It has been a long time since I've needed to pick up a gun and shoot anyone in the face.

I ran across FastJack while I was checking out some rumors of a new type of magical group, one that mixed magicians and technomancers. He asked me to upload a guide to modern magical societies, initiatory groups, and other social clubs to give a feel for what is out there.

First, a bit about me. My old handle was Whizzer; if you go through what's left of the archives, you might be able find some of my old posts, but bear in mind it was a long time ago.

I'll be covering a bit about what magical societies are, the benefits of joining, and the best way to find and join a group that suits you so that everyone has the basics. Then I'll go into some detail about groups that are currently active in North America and further afield, what their goals are, and any dirt that I've managed to dig up.

Many of these groups are secret, and even the ones that aren't don't broadcast their innermost rituals and goals to the world. Most of my information comes from carefully watching suspected members of groups, talking to defectors and deserters, listening to rumors, and looking at police and government records. The statements I make in this document are ones I have judged to be based on reliable evidence, supplemented by logical inference. Like anything you read on the Matrix, treat the information as useful, but if you are going on a run against one of these societies, do your own legwork as well. More to the point, although these groups don't change as fast as hacker groups or gangs, they do change, and it only takes one powerful person to have an accident for the direction of a group to shift.

The information is also valuable because magical societies are good sources of work and great places to off load fenced magical materials; they have their own agendas as well, so it's important to know whose toes you might be treading on.

FastJack didn't give me full access here, so if you have any questions, let him know. He'll pass them on.

MAGIC SOCIETIES: AN OVERVIEW

There are many misconceptions about magic groups and societies, made by many different, otherwise well-informed people. To clear a few things up, let's first review the type of groups you might find.

A *magical initiation group* is a small collection of people, who find that initiating with like-minded people helps make the process easier. The group is tied together by a shared mystic bond, as well as by the social agreements that hold the group together.

A *magical society* is an overarching method of organizing the magical initiation groups to which its members belong. A magical society will usually have other goals as well, based on the combined beliefs of its members.

So a member of the Bear Society is a member of a group of Bear Shamans that stretches across the UCAS and Native American Nations, and each member of the Bear Society is welcome at the other lodges, but each member of the society is also a member of a much smaller local chapter of the society—normally one with no more than a dozen members—that serves as his magical initiation group.

Small magical societies may only have enough members to form one initiation group, while larger ones may have hundreds of groups and thousands of members scattered across the globe.

It might help to think of the structure of the Freemasons, Rotary, or the local church. In each of these cases members belong to the local lodge, group or parish, but they all agree with the overall goals of the society of which they are a part, and in most cases are welcome to visit other parts of the same organization.

Magic groups who are not dedicated to secrecy also have the opportunity to connect with other magical societies. Differences in philosophy or methods can make it impossible for two groups to merge, but that does not necessarily stop the groups from occasionally helping each other out. In most cases links between very different magical groups occur on an individual level, where a member of one society wants a particular item or service that is not available within their own group. A member might buy reagents, ask for a place to stay, or create a ward or sustaining focus for a member of a different society in exchange for a favor or payment. Contacting another magical society is also a good way to arrange a meeting with someone who might otherwise be out of reach. If they are a member of another group or have a friend who is.

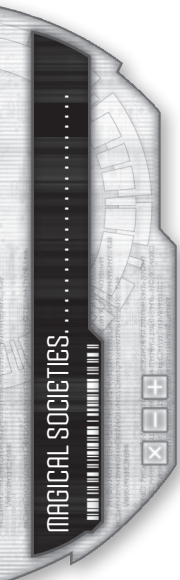
Membership in Magical Societies

Shadowrunners are usually interested in magical societies that fly below the radar and don't ask too many questions about members, but those aren't the only societies around. Magic has been around for forty years and there are many more public magical societies.

Any major corporation which has an interest in magic has an internal magical society that they control. All of the AAA megacorps have at least one magical society as a part of their employee framework, and most have more than one, each focusing on different corporate goals. Inside a large corporation, membership of the corporate society means the wage-mages have an internal network of other people who understand their work and can be called on for magical purposes, pending managerial approval. It also means that news about the latest magical developments, spells, initiation techniques, physical adept developments, and reagents filter through these corporate groups.

For mages of all sorts who are not in a megacorp, the benefits to joining a magical society are similar but less formal. Since mages are rare, a chance to relax around people who understand what a mage or adept deals with in their daily life is gratifying.





Why Would a Society Accept Shadowrunners?

Shadowrunners who are mages or adepts do not often talk about specific runs, but sometimes they can't resist sharing news. For magical shadowrunners who are a part of an otherwise non-magical team, relaxed chatter or jokes about mundane runners are an effective way of unwinding.

Magical societies, or rather the authorities in the societies, are aware of the material benefit that shadowrunners can bring to an organization. Shadowrunners are paid to penetrate tight security, and these situations often have Awakened animals as a part of the security response. Although shadowrunners naturally want to be paid for these reagents, the price they ask is not normally as high as talismongers charge, and sometimes runners encounter creatures that never reach most of the world's markets. The benefit of having access to the goods runners obtain has to be weighed against the risk that those reagents will be tracked down, but often that is a risk worth taking.

Shadowrunners also tend to have a large web of (usually criminal) contacts, particularly runners who have been in the shadows for a few years. This can be an effective way for magicians who are generally honest to gain access to shady underworld activities. This help is not necessarily violent; access to high society, digging up blackmail material, or creating an anonymous account or a fake ID are all activities for which a member of a magical society can use a shadowrunner's assistance. In most cases the shadowrunner will simply pass on a commcode, but sometimes the runner will agree to act as a proxy for the non-criminal.

Some magical societies are open to whoever comes along. Shadowrunners are people too, and for some societies, what a member does to earn their living is unimportant. Other societies may never do enough vetting to discover that a member is a shadowrunner.

There are many societies that simply won't accept criminal members. For those societies, the risks of being associated with a shadowrunner are too great to allow them to become members. If a shadowrunner is hard to find but is a known member of a particular society, there is a risk that a member of the society will be captured and questioned in order to track them down. Even worse is the possibility that a meeting of the magical society will be infiltrated in order to ambush the runner. Some societies will not accept the possibility of being caught in the crossfire between a violent criminal group and the magical society. Other societies would rather openly let in shadowrunners (and keep an eye on them) rather than have those same shadowrunners attempt to join under a false identity, where the same risks apply but the society doesn't know it is at risk.

Magic groups vary from obvious and public to the secret and underground, which means that contacting a magical group is the first hurdle a potential member must overcome.

FINDING A GROUP

Prospective members can hear about a group from their friends, who may be members, or who know members. Public groups often have a Matrix presence with an email address or a phone number. Secret groups are, of course, much more difficult to find. A magician may go for years without knowing that his best friend is a member of a secret magical society.

The fastest way to join one of these groups is to have the society notice the prospect in some way, usually by excelling in an

area in which the group has interest. At that point, the members of the society consider whether or not the prospect matches the group's goals and dynamics. If the individual is deemed to be a good fit, they may approach the prospect with an offer. There is, of course, a bit of a catch-22 to this whole situation. To join a society, you have to do something that will get you noticed, which raises your public profile. The higher your public profile is, though, the less likely it is that some of the more secretive groups will reach out to you.

- The trick, then, is to make sure your special magic is seen by people who are influential but not likely to speak injudiciously. Smacking down another runner team is one way to do this.
- Lyrann

Groups may desire to be secretive, but it is very difficult to be completely invisible. Even the most secret group has dealings with those outside the group, and where there are interactions, there are leaks. That means that a slower but more reliable technique is to chase rumors. Some societies will plant false rumors or information trails, and for a few societies sifting through the information to find a point of contact is the first test for potential members.

Anyone might hear a rumor of a magical group: apothecaries, local police, other magicians, taxi drivers, or plumbers are all potential sources of information. You have to know what to ask when talking to these groups. You can't just ask if they've noticed any magical societies in the course of their rounds. Get them talking about the weird things they've seen on their jobs, the kind of things that just don't make sense. Some of these will be caused by random lunatics, but if you ask enough people, you might find information that points you in the right direction.

- For example, finding a plumber who has dealt with a sewer alligator doesn't necessarily mean anything. Finding that the sewer alligator showed up at a place that is frequently patrolled by Awakened cops and has been visited by knee breakers working for a local apothecary may be enough to at least make you alert about that spot.
- Elijah

JOINING A GROUP

Group membership is not to be taken lightly. Most societies require some sort of formal initiation into the group, and many require proof that the prospect is going to be a worthwhile addition to the society. Demonstrating your mastery of a difficult spell or developing new spell formulae are common steps societies ask prospective members to take. Recovering exotic reagents is another task they might give to a prospective member.

- If you have any choice in the matter, go after a plant, not an animal. Some plant-based reagents are plenty powerful, and not as hard to deal with as something large and toothy.
- Jimmy No
- Unless you're, say, trying to sneak out a Brazilian kiwi from under a Amazonian spider-beast using the plant as part of its nest.
- Marcos



When joining an initiatory group within a society, it is particularly important that the members be willing and able to work with each other. So when meeting the members of a society, you need to be congenial—or at least fake it for a while.

GETTING IN DEEP

When a runner decides to join a magical society, they generally see the mystic bond and the access to components as the entire reason for their involvement with the Society. In truth, though, once a member has been an active part of a society for some time, they often find themselves asked to shoulder extra tasks for the society's benefit. At this point the member has to decide whether they are happy serving the society as a part of the lower ranks of the membership, or if they want to move up the hierarchy.

A member can volunteer for extra duties and responsibilities, and by carrying out these duties well they can gain internal recognition and respect. To get on the leadership path within an organization, members must show themselves to be dedicated to the group, which requires spending extra time and effort helping the society achieve its goals.

In some societies, such as the Illuminates of the New Dawn and the Gate of Ishtar, members progress by degree until they are laden with titles; in other societies, such as the Lodge of the Painted Horse or the Magical Investors Group, there are no ceremonies or recognitions. New members receive nothing other than the respect of the society's elders and a reputation for getting things done. In every society, the criteria for advancement combine traditional methods, popularity, and approval from those already in positions of authority. Naturally, societies mix these things in different ways. The Brotherhood of Darkness, for example, advances members to senior positions mainly through popularity with the other members, but finding artifacts can also allow a member to advance despite being unpopular. One thing is common between all of these groups: Gaining the very highest ranks of each society requires popularity, approval from above, and traditional advancement. This is often where otherwise idealistic, rapidly rising members often become bogged down in competitions for approval.

Progressing up the ranks can seem thankless at times, but it does have advantages. As a member advances, their opinion becomes more respected and sought after by other members of the society. Members of the society are willing to go the extra mile for a member as they progress up the ranks, and at the highest levels of the society, the member becomes an important guiding force in the society's direction. Leaders of secret societies generally start to use the society to achieve their own goals directly, and leaders of public societies can use their position to lobby politicians or other major figures.

Becoming a leader is harder for the larger societies, where there are more members competing for the leadership positions. The benefit is leaders of larger societies have much more influence outside that society. Groups such as the Ordo Maximus have an entrenched leadership that it is hard to break into; in other groups, a rising star might quickly leap to the highest levels.

THE PLACE OF MAGICAL SOCIETIES IN THE SIXTH WORLD

Magical societies are not the big boys in the Sixth World. The largest society, the Illuminates of the New Dawn, would be roughly comparable to a A-level corporation in influence and resources. Members in societies also have additional loyalties that may influence or supersede the bond to their society. This means that societies have considerable soft influence on members, in that they have the ability to get their message across, but little hard influence. No society has foot soldiers or militia (although they may hire security), and law enforcement corps generally have no problem raiding lodges if they suspect criminal activity is occurring in the organization. Members do not make up a solid bloc; each of them has a life outside the society, and if forced to choose between the group and their lifestyle, most would let their membership in the society lapse.

These facts mean that a society will only retain its membership if it benefits those members. The benefits a society brings come in two main categories: the benefits of socializing with like-minded individuals and economies of scale.

There is a significant benefit in socializing with members who have the same outlook. It becomes easier learning spells and rituals from members who have the same perspective regarding life. It is difficult surviving the sprawl as a back-to-nature shaman, but if you meet regularly with like-minded people every couple of weeks, day-to-day life becomes easier to bear.

WORKING WITH MAGICAL SOCIETIES

You don't have to be a magician to work with a magical society. Magical societies deal with the mundane world all the time, and non-magicians can gain some benefits from connections with the right group, including a steady source of jobs.

Magical groups are focused on their goals, possess pooled resources to use as they see fit, and often hold specializations in one particular area. This means that occasionally a society will need outside help to achieve its goals. When the goals are illegal, immoral, secret, or too expensive, groups seek out independent contractors to get the job done.

One of the keys to working with a magical society is knowing how to offer what they don't have. This is easiest, of course, for people without magic talents. The societies have magic talent; if they're looking for outside help, it's likely to be the shooting or brawling abilities they don't possess. So find a fixer who knows magic, let them know that you understand how magic works and generally don't hate mages on sight, and you could end up on their list of people to call when a society needs help.

- Given the exotic reagent work that often pops up, being comfortable with travel and having the ability to get questionable materials across international borders helps, too.
- 2XL

If you've got some magic talent, then you need to know which societies do what—what their strengths are, what skills they lack, and the role you might be able to play in enhancing what they can do. This download should help you gain useful information in that regard.

