

Fall of the Dark Lens

Player Guide

A FATE 2.0 adventure in Aurelion



INFERNAL LANDS

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AQUATIC LANDS

INFUSE

Introduction

Welcome to this player guide for the adventure “Fall of the Dark Lens”. This document will provide you with all the necessary information you would need to create a character and play along in the world of Aurelion using the FATE 2.0 system. If you are using a different system you can ignore the sections labelled with an (F). To keep these pages from dragging on too much it will only include as much info as needed to be able to make an immersive and well-informed character. Practically any character should be able to be integrated into Aurelion and the tools provided to the player and the GM will allow for great freedom when creating a character. Other information on the world of Aurelion is available and could make the experience even more interesting and immersive. If you would like to read up more on the lore of this world it can be found in the Aurelion Compendium, which can be found on www.roywilmer.com under the world-building section of Work.

Participation in this adventure does require a basic understanding of the FATE 2.0 system and the character creation process within, as well as its general gameplay loop. If you are not familiar with it you can ask your GM to give a rundown or go to this URL: <https://www.faterpg.com/dl/FATE2fe.pdf> to download a pdf of the ruleset. A basic Aspect and Skill list will be provided in this document, but make sure to discuss any possible additions with your GM as customising the experience can lead to great results.

The idea of the “Fall of the Dark Lens” is to be a relatively short adventure in which your party of adventures has been called to investigate rumours of suspicious activity in the city of Lunalae, a trade hub and city on one of the many provinces of the Earthen Lands. The party will need both wits and combat prowess to uncover the truth behind these rumours and will pass judgement on the characters around that truth.

Places

This section of the guide will focus on the places that the party will visit and/or have good knowledge about. Other places in Aurelion may be mentioned by the GM and explained about if needed, but these are the ones critically important to the adventure.

Aurelion

The continent of Aurelion is one of plenty. The land provides a lot of materials and fertile soil for the population to thrive. The magical Solar Lens provides light from the top of the massive Luxibris tower in the centre of the continent and grants protection from the horrors that lurk in the dark. This does not mean it is in any way a utopia. Each kingdom only has a certain set of resources and is reliant on the others for the rest. While all-out war is uncommon because of this fact, tensions are quite high as the very different cultures and the exploitative nature of many of the nobles leads to a lot of friction.

The land itself is also not the friendliest. Natural disasters are not uncommon in Aurelion. Every 2-3 centuries an event known as a Scourge Incursion occurs. Its beginning is marked by the Endless Sea going from its normal dark blue to an inky black. When the Solar Lens turns an eerie red the Incursion begins in earnest. Creatures of all shapes and sizes, collectively known as Dreadbeasts rise out of the Black Sea with seemingly only one goal: to kill as many living creatures as they can.



The Earthen Lands

The Earthen lands, receiving a mild light from the Solar Lens has very fertile soil, and its livestock is prized for the quality of their produce. The official capital of the Earthen Lands is Ophelia, but most of the governing happens in the lands' many separate provinces, together known as the Earthen Coalition.

The green hills and plains of the land are subdivided into small feudal provinces that are each controlled by a noble family. These lands are tended to by peasants and, in return for a share of their produce, the peasants are granted protection by their respective noble rulers.

The lives of the people in the Earthen Coalition are usually rather simple. Those born into a peasant family will likely grow up to tend the farm of their parents and provide for the next generation.

Those of noble birth have a little more on their plate. They will occasionally have to quell some bandit activity or, through diplomacy or violence, resolve a dispute with some of the neighbouring nobles. Lastly, they will convene in Ophelia every five years (or when called upon) to visit the Coalition Senate.

The Earthen Coalition does not have a single unified army. Rather, all the different provinces have their own militias consisting of minor nobles, mercenaries and some eager peasants. Should a threat arrive that threatens the entirety of the Earthen Coalition, then the provinces tend to come together to form a larger army to fend it off, though strife from within has historically weakened their overall military might.

The great forests of the Earthen lands are not subject to the rule of the Coalition. They are a haven for outcasts of all kinds, though a semblance of hierarchy does exist within some of the groups living there. There are two major influences upon the forests. The first is the Peasantry, a faction of militant peasants that are unsatisfied with the rule of the nobles, who use the forests as training grounds and as sites for the creation of their loyal companions, the Dreadhounds. The second are the Spirits of the Forest, a fanatical group of Tainted (explained below) that are hostile to most humans. Those that respect the forest and its inhabitants are likely to be left alone. However, any who harbour malicious intent against the forests or otherwise disrespect the rulers of the forest will meet a rapid and painful end.

Religion in the Earthen lands is as unified as its provinces, that is to say not very. Most provinces will follow the Twin Gods as mandated by their nobles, though there are others that will not enforce any particular belief and yet others that enforce not believing. The Coalition formally bans Scourge worship and other destructive cults, but apart from putting up the occasional bounty will not enforce this very strictly. This has led to the Earthen lands having to deal with a rather large amount of Scourgebound incursions.

Lunalae

Capital of the Dukedom of the Black Lens, Lunalae is a bustling city of trade. Its located quite centrally in the Earthen coalition, this makes it so that almost all goods coming through the Coalition make their way through the city's markets.

This central location also makes it a hotspot for Scourgebound factions looking to spread their influence. Recently rumours of their taint have once again spread and adventurers from all over Aurelion have been visiting to verify the truth of them.



Great Square

Lunalae's great square is known for the large markets that are held there daily. The guard barracks and their training grounds are located here as well, close to the gate. The square is a great place to gather information on almost anything as people from all walks of life gather to browse the wide selection of goods that is on offer.

Commercial District

Many of the traded goods that come through Lunalae can be processed there as well. The Commercial district contains workshops of all kinds along with housing for the people that work there.

Guild Quarter

This is where the guilds of Lunalae are located. This is where the Coalition Embassy is located, which handles all the coalition wide bounties and assignments for passing workers. It will also contain any delegations from the many organised factions of Aurelion.

Residential District

This is the district containing all the housing for the common folk that work the fields, ply a trade outside of the commercial district or are passing through the city.

Noble Quarter

The district of the rich. Those with money and a need for privacy set up here. It would be a very good place to hide something that no one is supposed to know about, leading to the black market thriving from within the houses. Though this is public knowledge it is mostly overlooked because of the significant political and martial power those living here wield.

Grand Cathedral

The main religious structure of the city and the seat of the Duke of the Black Lens, Sephira Lunalae. Those following the Faith of the Twin Gods will visit the church in veneration of their deities, but even those less religiously inclined will visit the Cathedral should they wish to visit the Duke.

Races

Lore

Human

The vast majority of Aurelion is inhabited by humans and very few areas still go without their touch. The humans of the different lands will have vastly different cultures and proficiencies, but they all share a hardiness and adaptability that has allowed them to thrive after being released from the dominion of the ancient Scourgebeasts.

The average lifespan of a human comes out at around 100 years. Though this can be much shorter, due to unkind circumstances, or much longer if one is magically inclined.

Being the dominant species on Aurelion means that any human can travel anywhere and easily find accommodation and other basic necessities. Though the occasional faction or people can be hostile to their fellow humans, this is the exception rather than the rule and most people will be hospitable to others, within reason.

Most humans are followers of the Faith of the Twin Gods. Their exact teachings and how strictly they are followed is very different based on what exact part of Aurelion one finds themselves in. Though a general hospitality for other followers can be found across the lands, as can a hatred for most things Scourge.

The general populace will therefore have an open distaste for the Tainted and members of said species unlucky enough to be unable to hide their nature will be shunned and mistreated for their association with the Scourge.

Tainted

Abominations, Beastfolk, Unshorn. The Tainted go by many names, most of which meant to harm. The name encompasses a great number of species of humanoids that walk the lands of Aurelion, with their common link being that all descend from the mingling of Scourgebeast and human. This link to the Scourge makes them the target of the vitriol of many human communities, though most will begrudgingly tolerate their existence as the Tainted will often have traits that make them very useful in specific cases.

Though most Tainted are born within their own communities it is possible for human families to have a Tainted child or for a human born child to develop Tainted traits if they come into contact with Scourge-related items at a very young age.

Though they have a relatively small population when compared to humans they are not entirely uncommon and most normal citizens will have interacted with them at some point in their life. It is estimated that for every 10-20 children that are born one of the Tainted will be among them.

Their rarity and special traits makes it so that they are in high demand from those that want to use them. Most of the Tainted will live the life of a mercenary or other hired muscle, their unique traits allowing them to be especially good at a specific job. Those that do not possess physical prowess may find other professions where their "condition" does not halt them.

Those unlucky enough to be born within the reach of nobility are usually sold into slavery. This practice has only been formerly outlawed in the Kingdom of Fire, and even there the occasional Tainted slave can be found working in the mines.

The traits that set the Tainted apart from normal humans can be stronger or weaker, depending on the circumstance of their birth. Though the variety of traits is vast they are usually subdivided into two main categories.

Utilitarian: Useful traits that make a job or other task easier are categorised as Utilitarian. Examples are superhuman strength or to be better in tune with certain magics. These traits are usually not outwardly visible and are unlikely to negatively affect the Tainted socially.

Aesthetic: Though not always purely visual in nature, for example a tail could be used functionally but would be seen as an aesthetic trait, these traits are very much outwardly visible and will likely affect the Tainted socially.

Though these labels mean little to the Tainted themselves, those interested in them usually use these terms to narrow down what kind of Tainted they are specifically talking about. This of course being of particular interest to those in the business of “handling” Tainted.

Such individuals also use a few terms to denote the balance between Utilitarian and Aesthetic traits.

The Afflicted: This title refers to the Tainted that have mostly utilitarian traits. The Afflicted are also the most common Tainted to live in human settlements as they can relatively easily hide their true nature.

The Blighted: These Tainted have mostly aesthetic traits and very few utilitarian ones. This often leads to them being quite weak and/or small. Though less often sighted living among human communities it does happen, as their often non-threatening appearance makes the general populace less weary of them as a group.

The Cursed: This group is the rarest to encounter for humans and as such their true numbers are unknown. The Cursed are those with an abundance of both Aesthetic and utilitarian traits, making them more beast than man. Due to their bestial form they can only very rarely integrate into human society and are only seen as novelties on the markets. Most of the Cursed live in secluded regions or otherwise away from humans.

Gameplay

The “two” races of Aurelion play quite differently from each other and the gameplay ramifications should also be taken into account when deciding what race to use.

Human

To start with the simpler one, playing as a human character will not really positively or negatively affect your experience. Being the race that dominates Aurelion, most NPCs the player will interact with will be human. This means that the player will not find much unnecessary flak thrown their way because of their race. Playing as a human is the recommended way to play, especially for beginning players, as it allows you to focus on your character interactions and growth rather than also having to deal with the difficulties of automatically being an outcast

Tainted

Playing as one of the Tainted makes the play experience somewhat more difficult because of the same reasons being human is easier. The player character will either have to hide their identity, in most cases, or deal with a great amount of prejudice and disdain from the majority of NPCs in the adventure. This difficulty is somewhat offset by the player being able to choose one “free” rank of an Intrinsic Aspect (just the aspect, no extra skill points are assigned). This can be quite useful in certain situations, though the negative impact is often underestimated. Playing as a Tainted is recommended for intermediate to experienced players that would like an extra layer of social interaction during their playtime.

(F) Character Creation

This section contains all the FATE 2.0 related information on creating an original character that fits within the Aurelion world.

Sample Aspect List

This list has examples of aspects that could be chosen during character creation or advancement. Things like connections to named NPCs won't be listed here. Players are encouraged to come up with their own aspects if they are not included in the list, in discussion with the GM.

Intrinsics

Aspects describing basic personal characteristics.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
STRONG	Physically strong
WEAK	Physically weak
INTELLIGENT	Book smart, quick-witted and/or clever
DIMWIT	Unintelligent, mentally slow
HARDY	Physically resilient, able to withstand punishment
FRAIL	Easily hurt, weak to pain, poison and disease
GULLIBLE	Easily fooled, too trusting
SCEPTICAL	Not easily convinced, distrustful and/or paranoid
STRONG-WILLED	Has strong convictions, not easily deterred
WEAK-MINDED	Easily scared, low self-esteem
FAITHFUL	Trustworthy, "leave no man behind" attitude
TREACHEROUS	Not to be trusted, self-preservative

Background

Aspects related to general things people can devote themselves to that could define a person's abilities.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
SPELLCASTER	Those that study magic and have the ability to cast it through a magical contract. Usually somewhat weak physically, they make up for that with intellect and strategy
SOLDIER	Someone formally trained in the use of a weapon or style in service of a lord or country. More disciplined than the average mercenary, though often less creative in their approach to difficult situations.
MERCENARY	Someone selling their services to the highest bidder. Likely to be somewhat "morally lenient" and less committed to their cause. Can have a very diverse skillset and generally have a more open mind-set.
THIEF	Someone proficient in larceny. Likely to have complete disregard for the established order, though their skillset can make them invaluable.
WANDERER	Someone who has spent a large amount of time travelling. Likely to be of hardy constitution, though less socially acclimated.
MERCHANT	Someone who buys and sells goods to make a living. Likely to have some measure of martial prowess and is well versed in the social arts.
VETERAN	Person that has spent a large amount of time in a martial profession. Likely to be scarred by some of the events witnessed, but also very experienced in combat.

Location

Aspects relating to the characters location or social status that shape a person and their values.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
INFERNAL CITIZEN	Commoner instilled with the importance of trust, paying debts and connection to your fellow man. Usually some level of religious in the Faith of the Twin Gods. Used to the tough living of the Infernal Lands. Likely to be or have been a miner.
INFERNAL SOLDIER	Commoner that has chosen to follow a military career. Well trained in the martial arts to protect the King and his people from human and non-human threats. Loyal to their king and has a deep respect for the chain of command, though their training for unconventional combat situations allows them to think more creatively in combat.
INFERNAL CLERGYMAN	The Clergy of the Infernal Kingdom serve the Twin Gods with their worship and will travel around Aurelion to spread their word and to end the heresy of the Scourge in its extreme forms. They are well versed in both literature and combat and can hold their own against many of the threats of Aurelion.
AQUATIC CITIZEN	Commoner of the Aiyana Empire. Likely to be a fisherman or otherwise occupied with the waters. Their unyielding loyalty lies with the Empire and their Empress who is seen as more of a mother than a ruler, due to her care for all her subjects.
AQUATIC SCHOLAR	Commoner of the Aiyana empire that has dedicated their life to some sort of study or scholarly task. Intelligent and well-versed in technical conversation, a scholar is curious and clever. They tend to be rather creative in their thinking though their physical prowess tends to be somewhat limited.
AQUATIC MAGE	Citizen of the Aiyana Empire that has dedicated themselves to the study of magic. The separation between a mage and a healer lies in that the mage is also open to learning destructive magics. Mages will tend to have some measure of scholarly knowledge and they will be well-trained in group combat. Aquatic mages are not too well-versed in melee combat but tend to have quite stellar stamina.
INFUSED SAVAGE	A person that has spent most of their life living in the hazardous wasteland of the Infused lands. They are extraordinarily tough people, both physically and mentally, being able to survive in extreme conditions, though the land has affected them in other ways as well. They tend to be very paranoid and slow to trust those outside of their inner circle. Though referred to as Savages that does not necessarily mean that they are entirely uncultured.
INFUSED SCHOLAR	A citizen of the Infused lands that was born in or has travelled there to gain knowledge. They will either be seeking to join the Madmen of Corta or at least learn from them. These scholars will have access to the specialised equipment needed to survive and do research in the Infused Lands.

**AERIAL
MERCENARY**

A person that has made their services available for hire within the Aerial Lands. An aerial Mercenary is skilled in many things both diplomatic and violent in nature, though their biggest strength lies in their adaptability. Being able to work in any circumstance is the most important skill in this line of work.

**EARTHEN
CITIZEN**

Citizen of the Earthen lands that serves no particular noble house. These people move between the different territories of the Earthen Coalition to trade or otherwise provide services to the local lords and farmers. Their wide network of contacts gives them some power and their knowledge is often just as valuable as the goods and services they peddle.

**EARTHEN
NOBLE**

A person born into one of the many noble families of the Earthen Coalition. Trained in combat and politics, these nobles can handle themselves in almost any conflict. Will have access to knowledge and equipment not available to the commoners. Likely to be somewhat egotistical.

**EARTHEN
SERVANT**

A person specifically serving under one of the houses of the Coalition. Most of the people considered servants are farmers. This life leads them to have a strong constitution. Some servants may have received military training from the nobles. They will be quite capable with the blade and their skill with improvised weaponry should also not be underestimated.

Faction

Descriptors of current or previous allegiances to the different factions of Aurelion. This would grant or deny a person certain privileges and connections among the different peoples of Aurelion. More information on the factions themselves can be found in the Compendium.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
LOST LEGION	Group of knights for hire based in the Infernal Lands. Those that join were often those exiled or otherwise devoid of purpose. Their use of Scourge weaponry is frowned upon though, begrudgingly, accepted. They will have a strong constitution and will possess good marital skills. If one has been a member for a while they will have been granted an Enchanted Item (see "Using Enchanted items on pg. 22").
MADMEN OF CORTA	Scholarly elite of Corta. They seek knowledge above all else and have very few qualms about the way in which it is obtained. Often especially well-versed in alchemy.
PEASANTRY	A group of disenfranchised Earthen citizens that took up arms against the threats that their lords wouldn't take action against. Possess unique Scourge infected companions to aid them in and outside of battle (see: "Example Extras" on pg. 16). More accepted among the Tainted than other human groups.
CHOREO ARCANA	A subsection of Aquatic spellcaster that use dance, or entertainment, as their 'sacrifice' for their magic. Their magic is often slower though quite versatile. Their training has granted them stellar stamina, though their skill in melee combat is often weak.
AURAL SYNDICATE	Mafia-like organisation controlling the majority of city fortresses in the Aerial lands. The privileges assigned to each member heavily depends on rank. (see the Aruelion Compendium for more information)
RIDERS	Large machine-worshipping cult, based in the harsh lands between the Aerial cities. Will have access to heavily fortified and heavily armed vehicles. Their wild demeanour leads to regular conflict with the other denizens of Aurelion. A member of the Riders is very unlikely to be outside of the Aerial Lands, as they would be near their god.
HUNTERS OF THE SKY	Group of technologically advanced mercenaries based in the skies of the Aerial lands. Possessing sought-after technology because of their non-magical means of flight, the hunters are very careful about who they allow into their circle. Hunters are powerful in combat due to their advanced weaponry and mechanical enhancements, though they tend to be overly reliant on them and are at a major disadvantage without them.

Hidden

These aspects are important to a person but will only be known to the GM and that specific player. Through invocation this aspect can eventually be discovered by others and lead to conflict. Any of the above-mentioned aspects could also be hidden for dramatic effect. Though having more than one hidden aspect is strongly discouraged.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
SCOURGEBOUND (FACTION)	Those that have aligned themselves with the Scourge are likely to be shunned if not outright hunted down by the rest of the population. Members of a Scourgebound faction are given a particular boon and one tenant relating to that faction, they can be practically anything, but make sure to discuss them with your GM. The tenant that the faction dictates must be followed at all times and will likely inconvenience a member of the faction. However, their boon will help them greatly. Though using their boon too much may draw unwanted attention to them.
SECRET IDENTITY	Due to whatever reason a person may want to hide who they are. This identity stands at the core of a character and will have an effect on almost all actions they take. This hidden identity will likely manifest in some way during the adventure and will lead to confrontation down the line.
HIDDEN GOAL	This aspect should be taken if the character has some sort of goal that they do not wish to share with the party members when they set out on their adventure.

Sample Skill List

CATEGORY	SKILL
ACEDMIC	Area Knowledge (Aerial Lands) Area Knowledge (Earthen Lands) Area Knowledge (Infernal Lands) Area Knowledge (Aquatic Lands) Area Knowledge (Infused Lands)
ATHLETIC	Athletics Endurance
COMBAT	Custom Weapon Skill Infernal Combat (Lances, Large weapons, Heavy bows) Aquatic Combat (Small weapons, Acrobatics) Infused Combat (Daggers, Thrown weapons) Aerial Combat (Vehicular, Ranged, Tech weapons) Earthen Combat (Improvised weapons, Unarmed, Guerrilla tactics)
CRIMINAL	Larceny Stealth
PERCEPTION	Awareness Observation Mental Fortitude
MAGICAL	[Requires 'Spellcaster' or 'Choreo Arcana' aspect and skill rank 3 'Magic Contract' extra] Spellcaster (Scourgebound) Spellcaster (True magic)
PROFESSIONAL	Craft Craft (Technology) Alchemy (Potions) Healing (Magical) [Requires skill rank 1 'Magic Contract' extra] Healing (Alchemical) Riding (Mechanical) Riding (Non-Mechanical)
SOCIAL	Bluff Contacting Persuasion Intimidate Lie Seduce
SURVIVAL	Herbalism Hunting Camping Tracking
ARTISTIC	Dance Play Instrument Singing Art

Sample Extras

A list of example extras that could be taken by players in exchange for skill ranks. Some will be required for specific aspects/skills

NAME	DESCRIPTION
MAGIC CONTRACT	A contract made with a True Mage so that the holder of this contract can channel the arcane knowledge of the mage to manifest magic through some sort of compensation. Each rank of this extra will further define the terms of the contract leading to more powerful magic. See "True Magic" and "Scourgebound Magic" on pg. 19-21 for information on creating this extra.
(MECHANICAL) VEHICLE	A vehicle either mechanical or biological in nature that is intrinsically important to the character. These are usually named. Investing more ranks into this extra allows for the vehicle to gain more abilities and become more powerful/useful.
NAMED WEAPON	A weapon that is unique and inseparable from the character. Investing ranks in a named weapon allows for the player to gain unique advantages when wielding it.
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT	A non-weapon piece of equipment that the character owns and has special meaning to them. Investing in special equipment allows the player to gain unique advantages or overcome weaknesses not otherwise avoidable.
INTRINSIC ABILITY	If your character has an ability that is intrinsic due to their race or other circumstance you may be asked by the GM to spend a skill point on it if it is too strong to be used freely. Further investment would mean that the player can use the ability more often.
DREADHOUND	Exclusive to members of the Peasantry. The Dreadhound is a wolf-sized companion that has been intentionally infected with the Scourge to increase their longevity. Though the transformation has left them physically weaker than their non-infected counterparts they are practically immortal and will follow any order given by their master without hesitation.

(F) Magic and Insanity

Though combat usually follows the standard structure of FATE 2.0 combat there are some tweaks that should be made to the system so that it is compatible with the intended magic and insanity systems within Aurelion. These changes can be discarded or altered should the GM have their own rules surrounding such things, but they are provided here for easier reference should your character be a spellcaster or otherwise involved with Insanity.

Insanity

Mechanically magic works differently from the usual check/challenge in that the MoS of the caster is decided immediately based on the power of the spell, instead of through a roll. This means that a static check or challenge can be succeeded immediately if the power, and therefore cost, of the spell is high enough. Dynamic checks/challenges, mostly combat, practically turn into static checks or challenges for the opponent (The opponent may try to dodge a fireball with an Athletics check or resist mind control with a Mental Fortitude check, the difficulty of this check is usually set at half of the damage the spell would inflict, rounded up).

Magic and magical enhancement in Aurelion are based on the spellcaster or item being imbued with arcane knowledge. The source of this knowledge can, in almost all cases, be traced back to They Beyond, unknowable godly beings that reside outside of the reach of the Solar Lens. Using this knowledge, a person can do things that would normally defy reason, however the nature of this knowledge makes it so that delving too deep into it is bound to drive a person insane eventually.

In game this is represented by an Insanity score. Using a magical ability strains the users mind and will increase their Insanity based on what they did. The level of Insanity should be tracked by both the GM and the player as it will have an impact on the story. A player will start a character at an Insanity level of 0. Based on what relevant actions they take this can increase and start affecting the character. The severity of an insanity increase will be different for each action taken and is pre-defined or up to the discretion of the GM.

Depending on the situation a GM may decide to have you roll for an increase in insanity or a fixed amount will be chosen by them. It is advised to use the Magic Contract extra or a part of an enchanted item's description to define what severity of spell constitutes one die in an insanity roll. If using fudge dice the usual method for calculating Insanity increases would mean a plus (+) is no increase, rolling a blank would mean adding a single point of Insanity and rolling a minus (-) would increase the score by two (With regular D6: a 5-6 equals a plus (+), a 3-4 equals a blank, and a 1-2 equals a minus). A more taxing action would make it so you would have to roll more dice.

Example: The player casts a fireball at a bandit. They wish to immediately knock out the bandit. The GM states that this would need 6 insanity dice to be rolled. The player agrees and the fireball is cast. Now the player rolls for insanity and gets +5 to their insanity score. The bandit (or GM) now has to succeed a Athletics check at +3 (Great) to dodge the attack. The roll ends up at +1. With an MoF of 2 the GM decides that the bandit is taken out immediately and that nearby entities take slight damage due to the explosion.

Non-magical characters can also be driven insane by witnessing particularly horrible scenes. If such a moment occurs all players involved must succeed a static sanity check or have their sanity score increased by their MoF. The base sanity test should be a Mental Fortitude check at difficulty 0 (Average). A particularly high MoS could infer bonuses to later sanity checks.

The insanity score is decreased every time aspects regain their uses in an adventure. Rolling two dice where a minus (-) leaves the score unchanged, a blank decreases the score by one and a plus (+) decreases the score by two. If the character has the Mental Fortitude skill it will decrease the insanity score by one additional point per rank.

Insanity Effects

The effects of Insanity increase in severity based on the score and are as follows (effects stack):

SCORE	EFFECTS
0-4:	The character is sane, for their standards, and is not adversely affected.
5-9:	The character becomes mildly paranoid and is quicker to anger/distrust. -1 to all social rolls
10-14:	The character starts to hallucinate and becomes prone to violence. -1 to all rolls (Insanity Challenge rolls excluded)
15-17:	The character starts to lose their grip on reality. Occasionally the GM can invoke a static test to test the character's sanity. Succeeding will reduce the character's insanity score by the MoS. Failing the test, the GM can force the character to take a single, usually violent, action. After completing the action, control of the character is then returned to the player.
18+	At the moment this score is reached the player loses control of their character until they complete the Sanity Challenge described below.

Insanity Challenge

When the Insanity score goes over 17 the character completely loses control over their actions and must fight to regain it. This fight takes the form of the Insanity challenge. During this challenge the player will not be able to control the actions of their character. After every roll the player makes for the challenge, the GM can force the character to do any one short action. When the challenge is completed the character's insanity score will be set to 15 and control of the character will return to the player. Every Insanity Challenge roll is a Mental Fortitude check at difficulty 0 (Average).

MOS	LADDER	NOTES
0	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Any Failing roll will be counted as a MoS 0 roll
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	After completion the character regains their senses. Set Insanity score to 15

True Magic

The safest and most common form of magic in Aurelion is True Magic. A spellcaster that uses True Magic does not access the arcane knowledge directly, but does this through the proxy of a True Mage. A True Mage is someone that has dedicated the majority of their life to studying a single aspect of nature and has ventured past the light of the Solar Lens to gain arcane knowledge directly. Such a journey requires extraordinary mental fortitude and as such True Mages are rare. However, almost anyone who receives training can use the knowledge these Mages possess through what is known as a Magic Contract.

This contract will allow the spellcaster to 'request' the knowledge required for their spell from the Mage, briefly glimpse said knowledge, and cast the spell. To do this the spellcaster needs two things: A conduit and a sacrifice. The conduit is an enchanted item that the spellcaster uses to channel the magic through, while the sacrifice is an item or collection of items that are consumed in the process of casting the spell. This item could be anything from coins to the heads of your enemies. Using this form of spellcasting minimises the risk to the caster's psyche and allows for much more frequent casting than other forms of magic at the cost of material goods. It should be noted that if the character does not possess enough of their sacrifice to cover the cost of the spell, then they can still cast it with Insanity rolls instead.

The Magic Contract is an extra that defines the character's relationship to the True Mage that provides them with their spells. The first rank will be dedicated to setting up the Conduit, the type of Sacrifices used, the aspect of the magic (fire, water, teleportation, etc.) and a basic rule for deciding the 'cost' of a spell. This is the only rank needed for Healing (Magical) for True Magic. Offensive magic requires at least three (mostly for balancing reasons). Every rank past the first one allows the player to define specific spells, so that they can be used more easily. Spells make it easier to use magic, but as long as you remain within the aspect of your contract you can cast many different spells when discussing with the GM. A spell not described in the contract is significantly more expensive to use than one that is.

Common Magic Aspects

Though you have complete freedom in deciding what aspect relates to your magic it might be useful to have some examples if you are looking for inspiration or a faster character creation process.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
FIRE	Harness the power of flame to burn all that would stand in your way.
WIND	Using air to attain flight or carry any burden.
EARTH	Distorting the solid earth to your whims as a weapon or defensive tool.
WATER	Controlling liquid to do your bidding for any purpose.
ELECTRIC	Use the power of lightning to overpower, stun or destroy.
LIFE	Understand the workings of life to mend wounds or end lives.
MIND	Tricking the mind into believing falsehoods can be more powerful than any blade.

Example True Magic Contract

SKILL RANKS	TERMS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conduit: Necklace inlayed with gems- Sacrifice: Copper Coins- Aspect: Wind- Cost: 10 Copper Coins = 1 die = 1 Clipped wound or equivalent
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Gust- Definition: Generate a gust of wind to displace another item or character.- Cost: 1 Copper Coin = Moving 10kg by 1 metre
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Air Blade- Definition: Generate powerful, razor thin pressure waves that can cut into materials- Cost: 10 Copper Coins = 1 Clipped wound or equivalent on non-character targets
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Choke- Definition: Remove the air from a characters lungs and stop them from breathing while the spell is active. Does not affect things that don't breathe.- Cost: 1 Copper Coins = 1 second of casting

Scourgebound Magic

Though its use is not entirely uncommon, you will rarely find anyone openly admitting using Scourgebound Magic, as its direct connection to They Beyond makes it quite the taboo. Scourgebound magic forgoes the proxy of the True Mage and has the spellcaster use the arcane knowledge directly. This often means that the spells are more powerful, but the effect on the spellcaster's psyche is much greater.

A Scourgebound spellcaster will also possess a Magic Contract though they will not be able to mitigate Insanity rolls by sacrificing items. This is counterbalanced by the fact that a Scourgebound mage will not have to stick to one specific aspect when creating their spells. However, A spellcaster cannot cast spells using an aspect that they are unfamiliar with. This means that to use an aspect it has to be listed in at least one of the spells in the Contract. It is advised to thoroughly talk through the magic that you want to use with your GM as this freedom can create difficulty for you and them. The general advice is to stick to using spells defined in a Magic Contract, though it is not a hard requirement. Do remember that more powerful spells infer greater Insanity rolls. When creating a Scourgebound spellcaster it is also recommended to put a few points into Mental Fortitude.

Example Scourgebound Magic Contract

SKILL RANKS	TERMS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conduit: Wooden Idol
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Fireball- Aspect: Fire- Definition: Create a fireball in front of the Conduit and propel it at a target location. Impacting any object causes a fiery explosion, dealing damage to all caught within.- Cost: 1 die = 1 metre diameter of AoE = 1 Clipped Wound
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Imbue Lightning- Aspect: Electric- Definition: Imbue a weapon with the power of electricity, shocking anyone hit by it. (+1 to combat rolls)- Cost: 1 die = 30 seconds of use time
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spell: Death Curse- Aspect: Life- Definition: Drain the life from an opponent, killing them instantaneously.- Cost: 10 dice = 1 opponent

Using Enchanted Items

Items can also be imbued with arcane knowledge and used by anyone to produce magical effects. The most common enchanted items are those made with Dreadsteel. A material used by the Scourge during their invasions of Aurelion. Enchanted items are usually created to alter the physical prowess. Weapons or items imbued with the ability to cast actual spells are exceedingly rare.

There are no skill or aspect requirements to using enchanted gear, though it may be useful to spend a skill rank on an extra if the item is of great importance to the character. To offset this jump in power it will be required to make an insanity roll whenever the item is used. Any strength enhancing item will cause a roll whenever strength is involved and an item that helps healing would do the same whenever the character is hurt.

For instance, if the character belongs to the Lost Legion faction the character could choose to have Dreadsteel imbedded into their body to increase their strength and regenerative ability. This means that they are physically more powerful and resilient than characters that have not undergone this procedure. However, every time that they have to rely on their strength, the influence of the Dreadsteel will weigh upon them. Even if they are doing something that a normal person could do the player will need to make an Insanity roll with a single die.

Overall, the use of enchanted items can greatly enhance the character, but the small increases in Insanity can start to rack up quickly if the item is too ubiquitously useful.