



SECRETS OF MAGIC

Revised for 2E Remaster

PATHFINDER

Acknowledgment:

Much of this guided is taken from the Pathfinder 2E Rulebook 'Secrets of Magic' and revised to be in line with ORC Remaster of the 2E rules. We own NOTHING in this Guide.




Why do we need a guide to Magic?

Pathfinder 2E is a hard magic system, with set rules and ways in which magic can be applied, even if these applications can be numerous. What this means is that there is functionally a limit to what magic can do, with powerful spells being rare and hard to find, and relegated to rituals requiring multiple people. As such magic is explained, studied, taught and practiced with a few hard rules and expectations in place. Some of you may have noticed that spells have very set limits to what it can do, and even though some spells interact with each other (amplifying or nullifying effects) these interactions are also limited to the rules of each spell.

The entire lore of Pathfinder is predicated on the essential existence of magic, magic in this world is considered a vital force, with essential aspects that make up the foundation and shape of the multiverse. As such magic can affect a great many things including the very rules of life and death. This may seem counter to having hard rules by having a great many spells that can alter even the balance of life and death, however this is not the case, as even though magic may manipulate and change even the foundations for the multiverse, it can only do so in ways that DO NOT violate the way in which magic operates and the essences that comprise all of magic.

Learning this magic system is therefore seen as VITAL for players to roleplay interacting with the universe, even if they don't cast magic. The rest of the guide is written in character, so feel free to use this PDF IC if you wish. (disregarding the first two pages)






The Structure Of Magic

Scholars of magic break down the magical forces at play and their effects using three categories. The power behind magic comes from the magical essences tied to fundamental components of reality: matter, spirit, mind, and life. Spellcasters practice one of four traditions of magic: arcane, divine, occult, or primal.

Each tradition's magic arises mainly from the confluence of two of the essences, which that tradition channels far more commonly than all others: arcane commands matter and mind, divine convokes the powers of spirit and life, occult aligns spirit and mind, and primal feeds upon matter and life.

Yet these borders are not as limited as they may appear, as each tradition's adherents have picked up other spells over time, or found ways to generate effects typically associated with one essence using clever applications of another.

Finally, the most narrow category are the schools of magic, and we mean literal schools. Most important to wizards—many of whom specialize in one school above others—the schools classify individual spells, items, and other magical techniques, of which there are many. The schools are the fingers that shape the magic, the traditions the arm that directs them, and the essences the beating heart that powers their movement. Schools are different all around Golarion, and have varied beliefs and teachings in accordance with culture and how they study magic. Schools like Magaambya teach that there is no one way to utilize a spell even within the rules of the spells creation. Harm spells can be used to heal the undead, being a boon to those with negative healing, for instance. Depending on your schooling, you may even have had a certain world view instilled within you. It would behoove the caster to then find which school they feel would help them best, of which there are many.



The Four Essences

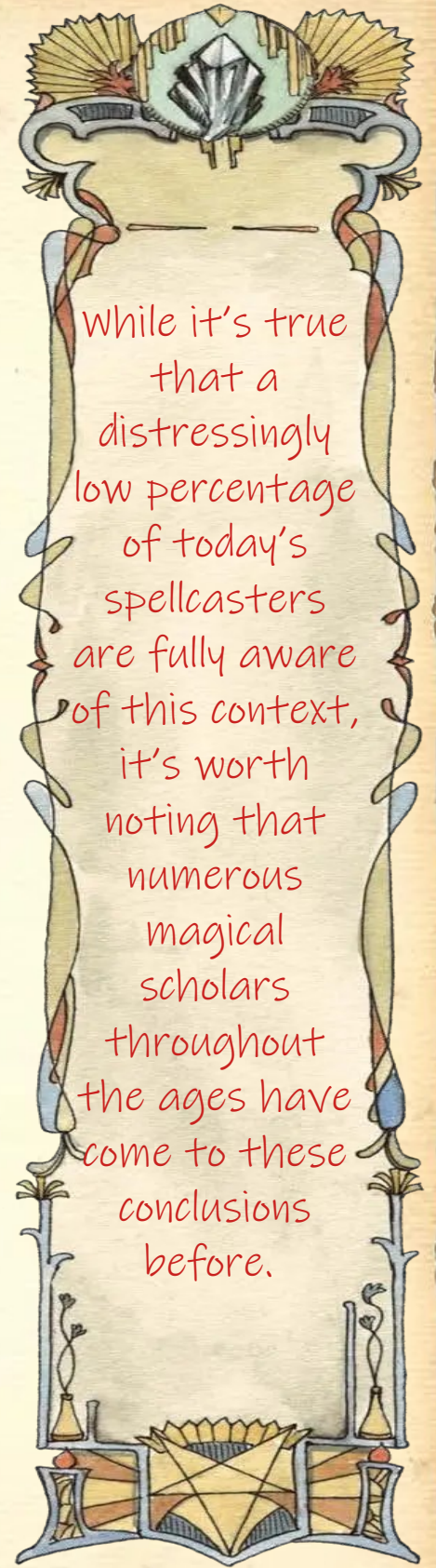
Introduction:

To understand the nature and structure of magic, we must first understand the essences that compose it instead of narrowly toiling in our chosen niche's, missing the broader picture of what can be done and knowledge that can be obtained.

Magic is composed of four distinct essences: Matter, Mind, Spirit, and Life. The four essences exist in two pairs; Matter and Spirit are the foundations that the multiverse itself are composed of, physically and metaphysically. Mind and Life are the magical energies that are infused within that foundation to give it structure and shape, they determine how a caster interacts with and understands the magic they use.



While it's true that a distressingly low percentage of today's spellcasters are fully aware of this context, it's worth noting that numerous magical scholars throughout the ages have come to these conclusions before.



Matter:

We will start with Matter, or material essence, the most concrete and easiest to understand (The latter statement is subjective and assumes a reader whose primary focus lies with arcane or primal magic.) of the four essences. While students of basic sciences will know that solid objects, liquids, and gasses are matter, the essence of matter reflects the energy of fundamental physical forces and reactions such as electricity or combustion.



Thus, Matter is not merely earth, water, and air, but fire too, as well as cold (the lack of heat) and chemicals like acid. Material essence is also the namesake of the plane we call home, the Material Plane, but ours isn't the only plane home to Matter. It's found everywhere, even in realms mainly built of spirit, and Matter in its purest form can be found on the six elemental planes. Spells based on Matter are physical energy attacks, such as fireballs and lightning bolts, but also spells of physical transmutation like enlarge and shrink, or physical creation like wall of stone. Thus, it covers a much

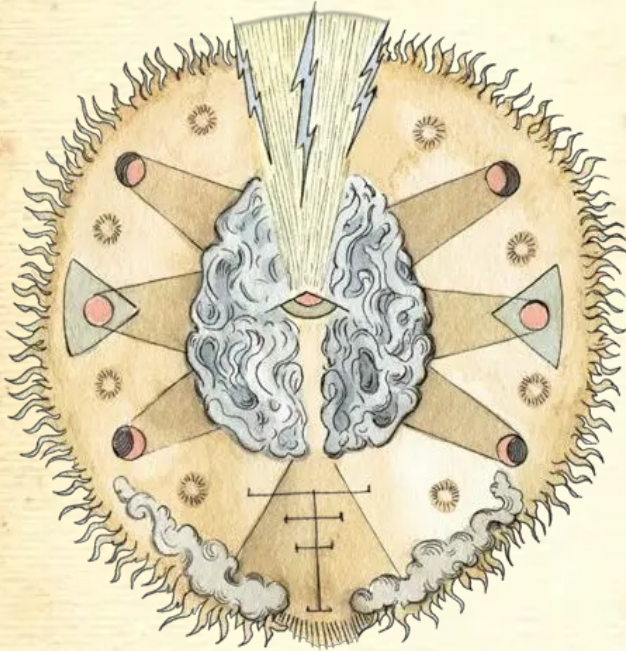
broader spectrum of spells than one might assume. The most important thing to remember about Matter is that it follows physical laws possible to deduce through a scientific process of observation and experimentation.

To arcane scholars, that might not seem special, but compared to the other essences, you can't take that fact as a given! Arcane magic is based upon the idea that we can understand Matter using logic and thought, the classic "Mind over Matter." Nonetheless, adherents of primal magic have proven that even Matter, the most quantifiable essence, has hidden secrets possible to unlock through faith and holistic understanding. The best research on this juxtaposition comes from the Magaambya, the magic school founded by Old-Mage Jatembe, whose students blend arcane and primal magic through the lens of material essence. You should seek out the recently recovered Usafi from Jatembe's Utunzaji Hekima to get the best context from his own words.

Before we move on, let's think about what it means for something to lack any connection to Matter. As mentioned, even most planes built mainly of Spirit also contain some amount of Matter. A being without Matter has no physical form and is thus incorporeal, composed of one or more of the other essences (for instance, a wraith is composed of Spirit and the destructive aspects of Life, while an animate dream is composed of Spirit and Mind). What implications does this have? For one, you might otherwise assume that a creature in a gaseous state or made of fire is incorporeal, whether from spells that cause those effects, or because it is naturally an elemental made of air or fire. However, these beings are corporeal, merely from different states of Matter, and those confronting a fire elemental will find magic designed to fight foes with no bodies isn't particularly helpful. Meanwhile, pure Matter, with no other essences, is just an object, like a chunk of rock, a flow of water, or a breeze of air.



Mind:



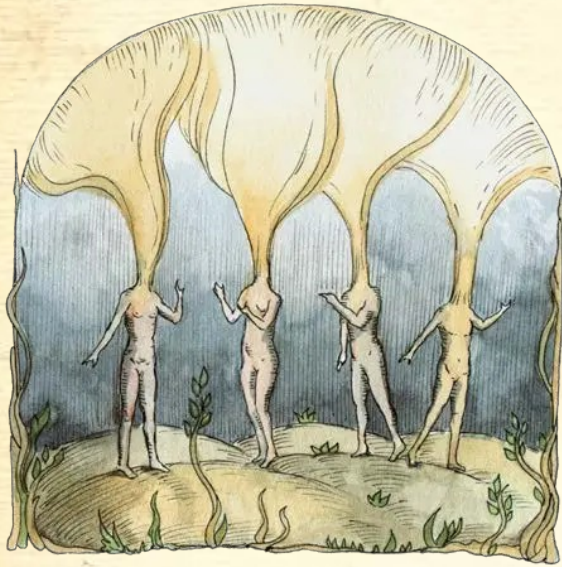
Let's move on to discuss Mind, or mental essence, also known as thought essence or even astral essence among esoteric circles. It's critical that you don't overgeneralize Mind to mean "Everything I experience in my consciousness as a thinking being." All three of the remaining essences (and even Matter, when considering the ability of physical chemicals to alter a mental state) have profound parts to play in your experience of consciousness. But Mind plays a very specific part. This is the energy of knowledge, facts, and your rational mind, including language processing, learning facts, and conscious decision-making. Mental magic is versatile and can be extremely powerful as it assists in gleaning information via divination, building illusions, and even enchanting minds. Not just spells like charm, hypercognition, or illusory image, but a variety of effects from subtle suggestion to obvious dominate. Mind is rarely involved with other schools of magic, but you'll see it pop up occasionally in mental effects like mind blank. The spell haste can either speed up one's body (mostly Matter) or speed up one's thoughts (mostly Mind), or both, and is thus available to spellcasters using either Matter or Mind. Mind is not simply cold and calculating logic. Intellectual creativity and dreams are built of Mind, along with Spirit. Emotions are among the most difficult parts of our experience to distribute among the essences, and are the subject of great debates as to exactly how they should be assigned.

Suffice to say, the best summary is that many of our emotions are complex enough that they are composed of more than one essence, and the most instinctual and subconscious emotions aren't associated with Mind. (That's not bad for someone so steeped in the study of the astral, but it might have been easier if you put Spirit before Mind, discussed the uplifting and transformative power of Spirit, and then paved the way to distinguish logic and the rational in Mind vs faith and the instinctive in Life. This is especially important as non-technical practitioners might expect faith to be associated with Spirit, not Life.)

But what does it mean to lack Mind? To put it simply, if perhaps circularly, it means having no mind, rendering a creature incapable of thought. While this might be more obvious for something like a stone, even living creatures, including most oozes, have no Mind, nor do rudimentary undead like zombies, as the magic creating them isn't sophisticated enough to steal or build a vessel for mental essence. Mental magic can't work on such a being, even though it might be capable of performing actions that seem like it has a mind. Generally, these occur either due to instincts built into the creature's being through life essence (including the perversion that fuels undead), or are pre-programmed by the being's creator. This often means a creature without Mind has no metaphysical alignment, though the instincts carried by life essence could instill one in them (as with mindless undead). A being composed purely of Mind is not alive, and has no body, instincts, or capacity for growth and change. It's like a bodiless yet intelligent construct, capable of reason, but not of instinct or growth.



Spirit:



Matter's metaphysical opposite, Spirit, or spiritual essence, is also known as soul essence or ethereal essence. For most of us on the Material Plane possessed of all four essences, our spiritual building blocks are intangible and invisible, passing through our physical bodies in a way we can feel more easily than see. That's not the case for celestials, fiends, monitors, and other creatures built primarily or wholly from Spirit. Many are fully tangible and manifest physical bodies from the

form of Spirit known as quintessence, which might seem counter-intuitive to my definition of Matter above. You might be most used to seeing the adjective quintessential, meaning a typical example, but quintessence means "fifth essence" or "fifth element." It refers to physically manifested Spirit used as building blocks of embodied creatures of Spirit, as well as the Outer Planes such as Heaven, Hell, and the like.

Why, when there are four essences, is it named this way? According to elemental scholars, in addition to the elements of air, earth, fire, and water, there is a fifth substance called aether, formed when elemental physicality mixes with the essence of the Ethereal Plane. This leads me to believe aether and quintessence are two words for the concept of Spirit made manifest. Since aether is the basis of force at a distance in effects like telekinesis, this also explains how spiritual magic such as spiritual weapon and spirit blast are associated with metaphysical force (as opposed to physical forces in bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing attacks). Spirit has another physical manifestation in ectoplasm, which occurs when Spirit pushes against the veil of the Material Plane. If quintessence, or aether, is Spirit made manifest like Matter, then ectoplasm is Matter stretched by Spirit, amorphous and only partially solid. So, if we're not a being of the Outer Sphere or the Ethereal Plane, what does Spirit do for us?

It is the building block of our immortal soul, which carries us to our afterlife along the River of Souls, meaning it's strongly connected to the metaphysical alignments of good and evil, law and chaos, much like the Outer Spheres themselves. It also carries pieces of those transcendent emotions that can elevate our souls to their highest (such as love) or drag them down to their lowest (such as love, again, but also hatred and despair).

Spirit reverberates through you like a breath, and inspires and elevates, so it unsurprisingly is associated with pure inspiration, like the muse that guides a bard or artist. Spirit is not just used for force effects like spiritual weapon or metaphysically aligned spells like divine decree, but also for divination connecting to the Outer Sphere or beyond, such as read omens, as well as necromancy manipulating spirits or souls, such as resurrection or bind soul. The uplifting and transcendent emotions lead the way to certain enchantment effects, like heroism. The most frustrating thing about Spirit is how misused the word is. The vernacular is popular, and most languages lack an analogous word meaning "Being composed only of Life," so beings composed of other essences are called 'spirits' an unfortunate percentage of the time. For example, consider the manifestations of Life that form leshys and guide druids. These are often referred to as "spirits of nature" while not being spirits in the true sense, or beings composed of Spirit, at all.

Many prefer to refer to them as vitae, though using the term vitae to refer to a category of vital-only beings is a bit of a neologism. What would a being without Spirit be like? Much as your physical body can change and grow as you age, work your muscles, or gain weight, Spirit allows you to grow metaphysically. That means a being without Spirit can think, reason, have instincts, and even have a metaphysical alignment, but it has no capacity to grow past those and become a fundamentally different person. This has led scholars to deep questions like, "If a being with no Spirit is created with a good alignment, meaning it had no choice but to be good and has no ability to change or choose, is it even actually good?" A being of pure Spirit would be a mindless quintessential or ethereal construct, neither alive nor dead, requiring programming from a creator to act. Think of a mindless inevitable aeon and you're close.

Life:



Last is Life not only because it is the hardest to write about as an arcane scholar, but also because by its nature it is impossible to teach it fully in a text like this. Nonetheless, we shall try. Life essence, or vital essence as it is often called to make it clear the essence has a destructive side, is the essence presiding over what we call positive energy, the cosmic energy of creation and life, and negative energy, that of destruction and death. It's tempting to misattribute metaphysical alignments from the Outer Sphere like "good" and "evil" to positive and negative energy, but that

would be an attempt to project morality onto amoral forces. Used for their intended purposes, both are part of the way the universe is supposed to work. Twisted against their intent, using positive energy to destroy or negative energy to create can lead to unspeakable evil.

Before we get sucked into a discussion on undead, let's finish defining vital essence. It's not so simple as "I'm alive. I have Life." Life is the counterpart to Mind because it represents the irrational, the instincts ingrained in you from birth as part of your very life force, your faith in the unknown. Here we return to emotions. Our most primal and subconscious emotions and urges are ruled by Life, and that is critical to understanding how we act in ways we might not have wanted to rationally, or in ways we can't explain

This can lead to sublime epiphanies and expressions of faith, but it has a dangerous side as well: In her provocative text on drug addiction, the world-famous Rahadoumi medic Kassi Aziril postulates that when the gods molded our vital essence to leave a hole to be filled by faith, they accidentally made us susceptible to filling that gap with drugs and other more dangerous addictions.

So, what would a creature be if it didn't have Life at all? It would be neither living, nor undead. Even beings of the afterlife built of spiritual quintessence have vital essence. It would be a construct, albeit an intelligent construct with a soul, able to reason and grow, but with no inherent instincts. What about a being of pure Life? Disembodied and acting on instinct? The vitae of nature called upon in commune with nature and that come to embody leshys are the perfect example. Powerful and wise beyond time, they don't have Mind or Spirit until embodied in a leshy, and thus don't remember or change in the way that we do.

The magic of Life is most obviously associated with necromancy, the study of life and death. It's true that positive and negative energy are strongly tied to Life magic, as are abjurations that protect against them such as death ward. But there's also an undercurrent associated with instinct and faith, more often found in enchantment, and sometimes even divination. For instance, effects like fear and sometimes charm, a prototypical spell of Mind, can be accessed via the instinctual connections within Life, speaking to base fears and drives, rather than intellectual ones. Let's address undead. If negative energy isn't evil, why are undead evil? The tragedy of undeath is that it perverts negative energy outside its natural role of destruction and forces it to create. The result is a being with a horrifying emptiness filled only by a connection to that subverted need to destroy, full of instincts and subconscious urges from the corrupted essence that inexorably twist it to evil. This is why ghouls must devour the living's flesh, vampires need fresh blood, and even incorporeal undead drain Life. Many become evil almost right away, but those with the willpower and virtue to stave it off are still doomed, with time, to change.



The Four Traditions

As with much of magical history, there has been extensive debate and literature done on how each of the pairs of essences combine and what categorizations they fit within. For centuries there have been theories, magical study, and many MANY experiments done, and throughout that entire time of intellectual rigor, four main categories emerged, every single time. These Categories, known now as “The Four Traditions” are the effort of centuries of work to examine magic and it’s particular essence makeup, and what it manipulates or governs. Though certain casters are limited to one tradition or another due to how their teachings have reared them to use such magic, sharing of such knowledge has never been at an all time high, and as such we are learning new spells and applications as we speak.

These traditions are well defined in what they can do and govern, and rarely if ever reach beyond their scope, though there may be some overlap.



Arcane:

Matter and Mind

Logical, formulaic, and consistent. Arcane represents a well studied and pragmatic approach and understanding to magic and it's structures. One practicing arcane magic tend to be able to consistently execute spells and rituals the exact same way, every time. Arcanists tend to view magic as an equation, a logic problem with specific answers and formulas, as such an arcanist tends to have more control over their magics in ways that allow them to tweak and manipulate their spells to their specific needs, even changing elemental properties of some spells. Arcanists may appear to be quite strict and inflexible with their manner of casting, and indeed that can be the case, however they understand the underpinnings of magic unlike any other caster, able to write out logical formulas of how they cast a spell in such a way that not only makes sense to them, but can be understood by many others as well. There is, after all, a reason most arcanists are wizards.



Divine:

Spirit and Life

Divine magics may seem to be wholly positive, and to many lay-people that may be the case, however to describe divine magic thus would be ignoring the other core aspect of the divine, destruction. For many the spirit aspect makes sense, the divine generally preside over matters of the soul, and so too do the chosen who cast such magic, whether for good or ill. Many such casters seeming to pass judgment as their deities command.

However, the much more complicated aspect of the divine is the command over life essence. This is perhaps where most people assume that this is wholly used for healing purposes, and you may be forgiven for assuming so as the many places of worship double as clinics and infirmary; however this is not fully the case. As with most things this is far, far more complex. Life is not just the essence of growth, birth, renewal and creation, but also of death, decay, sickness, and destruction. One must be careful, especially with the divine, not to ascribe motive or alignment with magic.

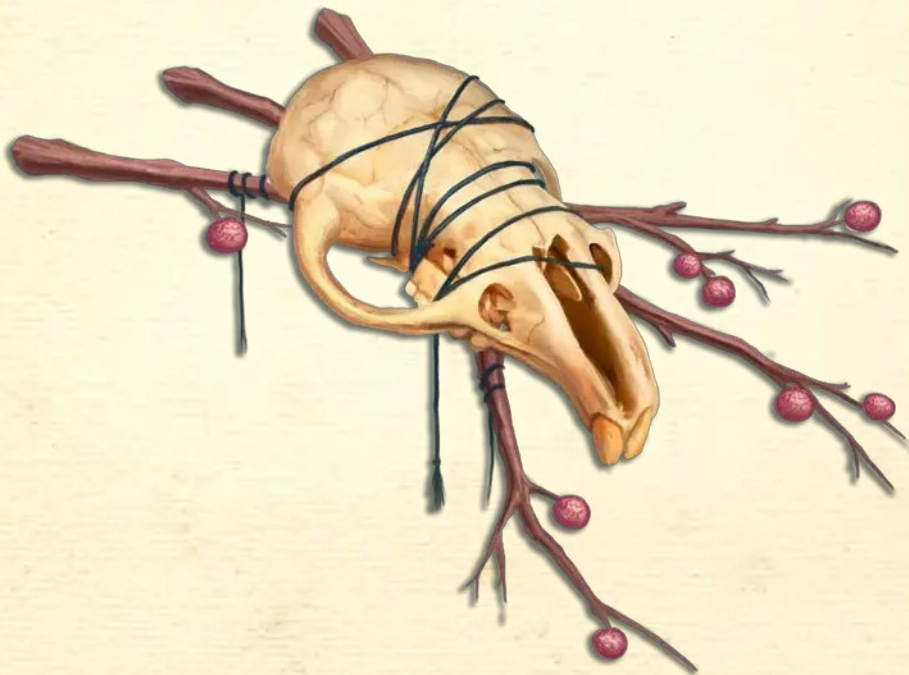
Magic is a tool, and any tool can be misused, even one generally used to for good. There have been many a witness to a justiciar healing a torture victim to prolong suffering, just as there have been others healed by what many would consider harmful spells. When it comes to the divine, it takes much patience and study to understand the complex interplay between spirit and life essence, and knowing the best time to apply both aspects of creation, this includes healing and harming the essence of ones soul. Command of the divine is thus incredibly complicated, and it is no surprise that Champions and Clerics are the common practitioners and wielders of such magic, for who is better trained to do so than the chosen of the gods?



Occult:

Spirit and Mind

The confluence of aether and knowledge. Experience and the soul. It is not a stretch to say that the occult is the tradition of the esoteric, forbidden, or lost knowledge. The manipulation of the beyond and even the strange outer realms, and its energies, and having the knowledge to do so mostly safely. The occult is most known by the ley people for blood magics, rituals that control the mind and bind the soul, and dark cults in hidden places. While this might be true in part, the study of the occult is hardly done only by those who do things in the dark of the world. One would not think a Bard as a occultist, however those well versed in the study know well the esoterica that the Bards wield, their ability to inspire and elevate their allies, and supernaturally bring their enemies low. Many practitioners strive to collect a lost and strange knowledge, called to categorize the strange, understand the inexplicable, and call upon the ephemeral at will. It is no wonder that such people, whose study is itself discomfoting to many, are seen at best as strange, and at worst a potential threat, and are thus subject to more scrutiny than most. However, these people see the world quite differently, able to see and understand a world very few will ever see, let alone experience, giving them a unique perspective. Occult Sorcerers and Bards make the bulk of these strange and wonderful people, dedicated in studying a world that for many remains unseen.



Primal

Matter and Life

Those who practice primal magics are often connected to the rhythm of the natural world. The cycle of life, death, and rebirth, the dynamic between predator and prey, the changing of the seasons, and the transformation of stone to sand, are all familiar and powerful natural forces that primal magic practitioners command and respect. When it comes to one of the most powerful and awesome magics, few can contend with the raw power of nature. These wielders of nature's fury and might understand the ebb and flow of natural energies throughout creation, and seek not only to understand, but work in harmony with them. It is a common misconception that primal magics are only that which we are accustomed, speaking with beasts and plants for example, and many such people have made the mistake of piquing the ire of a primal caster only to wind up at the very least with singed eyebrows, for many forget that nature is not just plants and animals, but also fearsome elemental might and the command of the very material the planes are made of. Indeed, those most common to this type of magic are Druids. Minders of the natural world and fierce protectors of her bounty, however one must not forget elementalists, and primal sorcerers also count among their number, the command of natural forces flowing through their blood. One may suggest that commanding such intrinsic forces could and can be quite dangerous, and indeed of a primal caster got the notion, one theoretically could call upon the elemental planes in ways that could severely alter the balance of the multiverse. However these very same casters are very conscious of the effect their command has on the planes, and as such many only truly unleash the full fury of nature out of desperation, rather than careless rage. It is no surprise then that Druids are the most iconic casters among this creed, balancing the forces of nature around their need to protect.

