

selves, gray and lifeless, while the auras of living things are vibrant and colorful.

Anything active on the astral plane has a tangible astral form—projecting magicians, spirits, dual-natured beings, and so on. Astral forms are more colorful and brighter than auras, as they are astrally “real.” The Earth has an astral form, and many regard this as proof that the planet is a living entity apart from the creatures that inhabit its surface.

ASTRAL PERCEPTION

Many Awakened characters can perceive the astral plane from the physical world. This ability is called *astral perception*. It is the primary sense used in the astral plane; it shows auras, allowing magicians to examine living creatures in the physical world as well as creatures who live on the astral plane. Astral Perception is available to characters who take the Magician quality during character generation (see p. 79), or to adepts and mystic adepts who buy the Astral Perception power (see p. 187). It takes a Simple Action to shift one’s perception from the astral to the physical, and another to shift it back again (it is not possible to see both at the same time, though almost everything in physical space is reflected on the astral, albeit without detail). A character using astral perception is considered dual natured, active on both the physical and astral planes simultaneously.

While astral perception allows an Awakened character to sense the astral plane, actually interpreting what is sensed takes practice. Interpreting auras to gain information about the person or thing to whom they belong is called *assensing*. A magician who wishes to learn more about an aura must make an Intuition + Assensing test, with the number of hits determining how much the magician learns, as outlined on the Assensing Table (p. 183). Without attempting to read an aura, a magician can still get an impression of what type of aura it is (spell, spirit, living creature, etc.).

Like physical perception, a character using astral perception should not need to make a test to see things that are immediately obvious (and since astral forms are bright and vibrant,

this means that most astral forms are easily noticed). An actual test should only be called for when an astral being is specifically trying to hide, or when a character is trying to astrally observe in detail; in both these situations, an Assensing Test is made.

By assensing something’s aura, a magician can gain information. The auras of living beings show their general health, emotions, and magical nature (if any). Enchanted objects show their magical nature. Non-magical and non-living objects have only gray, lackluster shadows rather than auras, but pick up impressions from being in contact with living auras. Assensing can read any impressions left behind on an object.

Spells cast upon an individual show up as a separate aura surrounding that person for the duration of the spell. Once a spell has been rendered permanent, the aura is no longer present. It is occasionally possible to see the traces that magic spells leave behind in a target’s aura; see *Astral Signatures* for more information.

Whenever you have to perform a physical, non-magical task (shooting a gun, driving a car, and so forth) while astrally perceiving, you suffer a –2 dice pool penalty. While astrally perceiving, a magician can cast mana spells at astral opponents. Other astral forms can engage an astrally perceiving magician in astral combat (p. 184) or cast mana spells at him as well.

Astral perception is a psychic sense that is not linked to the character’s physical sight. A blind magician can still magically perceive the astral plane and the creatures and auras within. Likewise, deaf magicians can “hear” in astral space.

ASTRAL SIGNATURES

Magical skills and abilities produce an *astral signature* on anything affected by them, which is detectable using assensing. An astral signature is the magical “fingerprint” of the Awakened creature who created it. A signature lasts for a number of hours equal to a magical effect’s Force after the effect ends. Foci and other magical items (like magical lodges) *always* contain the astral signature of their owner (or owners).

A character can attempt to read an astral signature with an Assensing Test. Three or more hits are required to detect the signature. If successful, the character detects the signature. Once seen, a signature can be recognized if the character

