

test requires another ritual taking a number of hours equal to the current Force of the spirit, requiring the same materials as before (at 500¥ per point of the spirit's Force). At the end of the ritual, the magician makes another Opposed Test, just as when binding a new spirit. Unlike Binding, every net hit adds to the services owed. The first hit is not required to form the initial bond since the spirit is already bound. The Drain Resistance Test is the same as with a standard binding, except that the spirit does not become uncontrolled if the magician is rendered unconscious or dying from Drain.

## WATCHER SPIRITS

A watcher is a simple type of servant spirit. Some experts consider watchers to be a tangible expression of the magician's own consciousness, molded from the fabric of astral space, while others consider them the bottomfeeders of the spirit world. Watchers exist solely on the astral plane. They can never leave the astral plane, either to materialize in the physical world or to ascend to a metaplane. They may, however, manifest in the physical world (see *Manifesting*, p. 184). The Force of watcher spirits is always 1. A watcher's attribute ratings are equal to its Force (though watchers do not get Edge).

Watchers are single-minded and clever about carrying out their assigned tasks, but everything else tends to go over their little astral heads. Their intelligence can be compared to that of a well-trained, loyal dog. They also take their commands quite literally (never tell a watcher to search every corner of that building ...). Watchers rarely manage to overcome unforeseen difficulties. For example, if a watcher sent somewhere finds its path blocked by an astral barrier, it will most likely simply remain there until its time runs out and it dissolves.

Watchers attributes and powers are detailed on p. 295.

## Summoning Watchers

Any magician with Summoning skill can summon watchers; the summoning ritual requires no special equipment and can be performed at any time. To summon a watcher, the magician makes a Summoning + Magic Success Test. Each hit gives the watcher one hour of life span. The summoner must then resist Drain equal to the number of hours; watcher Drain is always Stun damage. The summoner may also choose to limit the watcher's life span to decrease Drain. At the end of its life span, the watcher dissolves back into the formless energies of astral space.

A character can maintain a number of watchers at once equal to her Charisma. Watchers do not count against the number of spirits a magician may have on hand (bound or unbound) at one time. Characters can dissolve watchers they have conjured at will, even before its time expires, whether or not the spirit is present.

Watchers can be banished; each net hit scored on the Banishing Test diminishes their life span by 1 hour. They can also be engaged in astral combat. They cannot inflict Physical damage and so cannot affect astral forms affected only by Physical damage, such as barriers and foci.

Watchers maintain the same mental link with their summoner as regular spirits do (see p. 177).

## Watcher Tasks

Watchers will obey the commands of their summoner to the best of their limited abilities for as long as they last. Watchers do not need to remain in the summoner's vicinity, but they may get lost if sent on a remote mission. Watchers are commonly used for the following tasks:

- **Tracking:** Watchers excel at astral tracking, thanks in part to their one power: Search (see p. 290).
- **Astral Alarm:** Watchers can be instructed to watch or patrol an area of astral space, and to alert a specified person if they spot an intruder.
- **Attack Dog:** Though largely ineffective in astral combat, watchers can be used to harry or distract opponents.
- **Courier:** A watcher can be sent to a specific place or person known to its summoner to manifest and deliver a spoken message. It can also display simple pictures, up to the complexity of a two-dimensional, non-moving photograph, shown to it by its summoner. If required, the spirit will get a reply and return to its master with it.
- **Irritant:** A watcher can be ordered to find a person and follow him or her around, loudly repeating some offensive slogan or insult or even carrying on an argument. For this job, the watcher manifests visibly and audibly on the physical plane. Alternatively, the watcher can go to a specific place and hang around, sounding off on its assigned theme. "Hey, there! Welcome to Hannibal's Grill. I hear the ratburgers are really tasty today. Hiya, welcome to Hannibal's Grill. Got your DocWagon card paid up?" And so on.
- **Shadow:** Watchers can be instructed to follow or even eavesdrop on someone astral or physical and then report back to its summoner. If the target passes through an astral mana barrier or projects onto a metaplane, the watcher will lose track of him.

## THE ASTRAL WORLD

While the physical realm is the world characters know and walk in every day, another realm exists alongside it, invisible and unnoticed by most of the people on the planet. That place is called the astral plane, a sort of photo-negative of the physical world where only living things—things infused with mana—are real.

The astral plane is the home of spirits and magic. It is suffused with mana, the essence of magic, which flows from the metaplanes into our physical world and through it to the astral, where it pools and infuses the astral plane with its presence.

The astral plane is fueled by the life force that exists in and on our planet, and the general aura of that force illuminates the astral world at all times with an ambient glow. Things that exist only on the physical plane can be seen and heard from the astral, albeit with blurred features and indistinct sound—emotional content registers far more strongly than exact details.

## AURAS AND ASTRAL FORMS

Living things that are not active on the astral plane still cast a reflection of themselves there, called an aura. Any non-living objects appear as a faded semblance of their physical