# Mythic Mastery Mythic Curses



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### Introduction

Curses—powerful magic of malicious intent that have a lasting and lingering effect on their victim—are a major part of the fantasy genre. From the curses of folklore and fairytales, typically inflicted by witches and wise men to punish those who wronged them, to the legendary curses of ancient pharaohs and kings that punish trespassers, graverobbers, and archaeologists alike, curses serve not only as powerful magical deterrents against all kinds of mischief, but also have the potential to be great encounters and exciting story elements in your game. In some cases, curses can act as a sort of antagonist in and of themselves, albeit a disembodied one.

Why, then, don't curses see more use at the game table? The short answer is because mechanically, curses in *Pathfinder*, and the 3.5 OGL that it's based on, simply aren't that interesting. Few curses can claim to have the same level of complexity as the average disease or poison—other afflictions in the game that are not particularly known for being terribly fun and engaging at the table.

This book attempts to make use of the mythic rules, presented in *Mythic Adventures*, to truly bring to life the potential that curses have to be an active and engaging element in the game. Our approach treats mythic curses almost as though they were intelligent entities, granting them uses of mythic power each day, and allowing them to use this mythic power to hinder their victims in a variety of ways. Further, mythic curses capitalize on an aspect of curses not explored by the curses in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, which is the curse's role as a punishment, rather than a weapon, and the way that curses shape—and are shaped by—the behavior of their victims.

This book introduces rules for mythic curses, as well as five sample mythic curses, inspired by some of the most iconic curses in the history of the *Dungeons and Dragons* game, as well as from other sources. Also included are six sample moral axioms, which are the sources from which mythic curses derive their power.

### **Mythic Curses**

Mythic curses are powerful, magical afflictions which act in some ways more as intelligent characters than as simple afflictions. Each magical curse has an effect that functions more or less like a standard curse, but they each also gain a number of uses of mythic power each day, which they can expend to inflict a variety of different negative effects on their victim, as described in the individual curse's description. It is up to the GM to "roleplay" the mythic curse, and determine when and how the curse expends its daily uses of mythic power.

### Mythic Rank

Each mythic curse has a mythic rank, which affects how powerful the curse is, how difficult it is to resist and remove, and how many daily uses of mythic power the curse gains. Each day, a mythic curse gains enough uses of mythic power to bring its current number of uses of mythic power to be equal to its mythic rank + 1. Depending on the mythic curse's moral axioms, and the actions of the creature affected by the curse, the curse may gain more additional uses of mythic power, or may lose some of its daily uses of mythic power. See Moral Axioms and Mythic Power, below, for more information.

The saving throw DC to resist a mythic curse also depends on its mythic rank. By default, a mythic curse's saving throw DC is equal to 20 + the mythic curse's mythic tier.

While there are some exceptions, in general, a mythic curse gains a number of mythic powers equal to its mythic rank +1. These mythic powers allow the mythic curse to expend daily uses of mythic power in order to affect the cursed creature.

### **Carrying Over Mythic Power**

Typically, a mythic curse expends all uses of mythic power that it gains each day, but sometimes, due to various circumstances, a mythic curse may not expend all of its uses of mythic power in a given day. If this occurs, then the next day, when it regains uses of mythic power, it only gains enough to return it to its normal daily amount (typically its mythic rank +1). If the mythic curse begins a day with more uses of mythic power than that amount (typically due to gaining additional uses of mythic power from its moral axioms), it does not gain or lose any uses of mythic power as a result of it being a new day.

Certain mythic curses function differently, and are able to amass more uses of mythic power over the course of several days. In such cases, the description of the individual mythic curse explains how this functions.

### **Moral Axioms**

A moral axiom represents a particular set of behaviors that a mythic curse either rewards or punishes, and serves as a source of power for a mythic curse, as well as a potential way for a creature to free himself from the curse. Whenever a character is affected by a mythic curse, the mythic curse's source can choose a number of moral axioms to apply to the curse, up to a maximum amount equal to the curse's mythic tier. While the mythic curse's source can choose to apply fewer moral axioms than the maximum amount, he or she must choose at least one moral axiom to associate with the mythic curse.

Each moral axiom specifies a number of general and/or specific behaviors that cause the mythic curse to gain additional daily uses of mythic power, if the cursed character engages in them, as well as a number of general and/or specific behaviors that cause the mythic curse to lose daily uses of mythic power if the cursed creature engages in them. In this way, moral axioms can also serve as a means of lifting a mythic curse (see Lifting Mythic Curses).

The cursed character does not automatically know what moral axiom(s) the curse possesses, though the curse's source will often provide at least some clues on this topic. The cursed character does automatically know whenever the curse gains or loses a daily use of mythic power as a result of his actions, and may be able to determine the curse's moral axiom(s) in this fashion. While the character is not aware of abstract concepts like "daily uses of mythic power," this knowledge represents a certainty that the power of the curse is growing or weakening.

### Moral Axioms and Mythic Power

Whenever a character affected by a mythic curse performs an action that is in alignment with one of the mythic curse's moral axioms, the mythic curse loses one of its daily uses of mythic power. If the curse doesn't have any remaining uses of mythic power, then it gains one fewer daily use of mythic power than it normally would at the beginning of the next day. The character can reduce the number of uses of mythic power that the curse will gain on the following day to o in this fashion, but gains no benefit from any further actions in alignment with the curse's moral axiom for that day.

On the other hand, whenever a character affected by a mythic curse performs an action that is in opposition with one of the mythic curse's moral axioms, the mythic curse gains an additional daily use of mythic power.

### Lifting Mythic Curses

Once a character is affected by a mythic curse, there are a few ways that it can be removed. The following section presents rules for lifting mythic curses in a variety of ways.

### Spellcasting

The most straightforward way to remove a mythic curse is with magic. The type of magic that is required to remove a mythic curse depends on the mythic curse's mythic rank, as outlined below:

**Minor (MR 1 – MR 3):** Minor mythic curses can be removed with a *remove curse* spell, or more powerful magic. The DC for a caster level check to remove a minor mythic curse with *remove curse*, or similar spells, is equal to 15 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank.

**Medium (M4 – MR 7):** Medium mythic curses can be removed with a *break enchantment* spell, or more powerful magic. The DC for a caster level check to remove a medium mythic curse with *break enchantment*, or similar spells, is equal to 20 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank. Alternatively, a mythic character that casts *remove curse* can expend a daily use of mythic power while doing so in order to allow the spell to affect a medium mythic curse. The caster must still succeed on a caster level check in order to remove the mythic curse, and the DC remains the same (20 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank).

**Major (MR 8** – **MR 10):** Major mythic curses can be removed with a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle* spell. Even with such powerful magic, the caster must succeed on a caster level check (DC 20 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank) in



order to successfully lift the curse in this way. Alternatively, a mythic character that casts *break enchantment* can expend three daily uses of mythic power while doing so in order to allow the spell to affect a major mythic curse. The caster must still succeed on a caster level check in order to remove the mythic curse, and the DC remains the same (20 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank).

### Loss of Mythic Power

A character can also lift a mythic curse by performing a large number of actions that are in alignment with the curse's moral axiom, effectively "starving" the mythic curse of daily uses of mythic power. In order to accomplish this, the cursed character must prevent the mythic curse from regaining any daily uses of mythic power for a number of consecutive days equal to the curse's mythic tier (for example, in order to lift a mythic curse with mythic rank 2 in this way, the character would need to perform three actions that were in alignment with the curse's moral axiom each day for two consecutive days, without performing any actions that were opposed to the curse's moral axiom).

### **Unique Removal Methods**

In addition to the methods outlined above, each mythic curse's description includes information on a specific activity that the victim can undertake in order to lift the curse, which is unique to that particular mythic curse. Unless the curse's description indicates to the contrary, a character can identify this method of removing the curse with a Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 15 + twice the mythic curse's mythic rank).

### New Mythic Curses

The following section presents rules for five new mythic curses. They are presented in alphabetical order.

### CURSE OF AGING MR 2

Type curse; Save Will DC 22 negates, no save to avoid effects

This curse slowly drains away the youth and vitality of the victim, causing the target's very life to pass by in a matter of a few short weeks.

While affected by a curse of aging, a character's age increases by 1 year for each day that passes. If this aging causes the character to advance to the next age category, he suffers penalties to his physical ability scores as normal for his new age category, but does not gain the normal bonuses to his mental ability scores. The effects of aging in this way are permanent, and cannot be removed by any means while the curse is still in effect. Once the curse is lifted, this aging can be reversed with a *limited wish*, or more powerful magic, as well as by other spells and effects that can counter magical aging.

Mythic Powers: At any time, the curse of aging can expend a daily use of mythic power in order to perform one of the following:

- Cause the cursed creature to immediately age 3 years. This aging functions identically to the automatic aging that occurs as part of the curse's normal effect.
- Cause the cursed creature to temporarily age more • dramatically for a very short period of time. The cursed creature immediately suffers penalties to his physical ability scores as though he were one age category older than he actually is. This effect lasts for 1d4 rounds. The curse must use this ability at the beginning of the cursed creature's turn.
- Cause the cursed creature to suffer a potentially fatal heart attack. This ability requires five uses of mythic power to use, and can only be used if the cursed creature is venerable. The cursed creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 22) or suffer 5d10 points of damage. Even if the cursed creature succeeds, he suffers 3d6 points of damage, and is fatigued for 10 minutes.

Lifting the Curse: In addition to the normal means of removing a mythic curse, you can remove a curse of aging by performing a special cleansing ritual. The ritual takes an hour to perform, and requires a spring of pure mountain water, and must be performed on the night of a new moon.

#### CURSE OF BABBLE

MR<sub>2</sub>

Type curse; Save Will DC 22 negates, no save to avoid effects

This curse strips the target of his ability to speak, effectively cutting him off from the world around him.

While affected by a curse of babble, a character is unable to speak or write coherently, although he can still read and understand spoken words normally. Creatures with telepathy are similarly unable to coherently communicate via telepathy. Unless the curse of babble uses its mythic powers (see below), this has no impact on the cursed creature's ability to cast spells.

Mythic Powers: At any time, the curse of babble can expend a daily use of mythic power in order to perform one of the following:

- Force the cursed creature to succeed on a • concentration check (DC 15 + twice the spell's level) or fail to cast the spell that he is currently casting. Only spells with verbal components can be affected in this way. If the cursed creature fails his concentration check, the spell is lost. The curse must use this ability as the spell is cast, before any attack rolls or saving throws are made.
- Cause the cursed creature to spontaneously say a single short phrase or sentence (up to 25 words). The cursed creature is able to speak these words (and cannot refrain from doing so), even though he cannot otherwise speak normally. In general, the curse of babble typically uses this ability to force the cursed creature to insult or provoke a powerful creature, or to reveal some hidden secret that the cursed creature does not want to reveal.
- Cause the cursed creature to constantly speak gibberish and nonsense very loudly for 10 minutes. This imposes a -15 penalty on Stealth checks, and may have other negative effects (such as attracting unwanted attention from passersby).

Lifting the Curse: In addition to the normal means of removing a mythic curse, you can remove a curse of babble by convincing another creature to speak your name three times within the course of one hour. If you do so, the curse transfers to the creature that spoke your name (this creature is entitled to a saving throw to resist the curse, but suffers a -6 penalty on this saving throw).

#### CURSE OF GENDER REVERSAL MR<sub>1</sub>

Type curse; Save Will DC 21 negates, no save to avoid effects

This curse transforms the target into the opposite gender, which frequently leads to confusing and awkward situations.

While affected by a curse of gender reversal, a character's gender is reversed: male characters become female, and female characters become male. Characters that are normally genderless (such as many constructs) are immune to this curse.

Mythic Powers: At any time, the curse of gender reversal can expend a daily use of mythic power in order to perform one of the following:

- Affect any creature within 100 feet of the cursed creature with an unnatural lust for the cursed creature, causing the target to rush to the cursed creature and passionately kiss or caress that subject, taking no other actions, as the effect for the spell unnatural lust. The target may make a Will save (DC equal to the curse of gender reversal's DC) in order to resist this effect, and gains a +4 bonus if it would not normally have lustful feelings towards creatures of the cursed creature's current gender. The kissing and caressing activity is very disruptive for the cursed creature: treat the target's attempts to kiss and caress as an attempt to grapple and pin (but not damage) the cursed creature. Unlike unnatural lust, this effect lasts for more than one round. The target may make a new saving throw each round, with a cumulative +1 bonus for each previous saving throw. Once the target succeeds on the saving throw, the effect ends.
- Impose a -2 penalty to AC, attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 round, as the cursed creature is distracted by its unfamiliar body. The curse must use this ability at the beginning of the cursed creature's turn.

Lifting the Curse: A curse of gender reversal is more annoying than actually debilitating, and is one of the easiest curses to remove. In addition to the normal means of removing a mythic curse, you can remove a curse of gender reversal by refraining from willingly engaging in romantic or sexual activity for a full week.

### CURSE OF ILL FORTUNE

### MR 2

Type curse; Save Will DC 22 negates, no save to avoid effects

This curse plagues the victim with misfortune, making it difficult for him to succeed in a variety of ways.

While affected by a curse of ill fortune, a character treats a result of "2" on a d2o as an automatic failure, as though it were a "1," instead. Additionally, he does not treat a result of "20" on a d2o as though it were an automatic success (although it may still be a success if the result is high enough, after adding modifiers; a "20" on an attack roll is still a critical threat, assuming that the result is a successful hit).

Mythic Powers: At any time, the curse of ill fortune can expend a daily use of mythic power in order to perform one of the following:

- Force the cursed creature to reroll a single attack roll, ability check, skill check, or saving throw, or allow a creature that is attacking the cursed creature to reroll its attack roll. The curse can use this ability after learning whether or not the attack roll, ability check, skill check, or saving throw is a success or failure, but the cursed creature uses the new result, even if it is better than the original.
- Impose a -4 penalty to one of the following for 1d4 rounds: the cursed creature's attack and damage rolls, the cursed creature's AC and saving throws,

or the cursed creature's skill and ability checks. The curse can only use this ability at the beginning of the cursed creature's turn.

• If the cursed creature would roll a d% for any reason (such as because he was using a *rod of wonder*), the curse can force him to roll three times and take the worst result. The curse must use this ability before the d% roll is made.

Lifting the Curse: In addition to the normal means of removing a mythic curse, you can remove a curse of ill fortune by convincing the person that issued the curse to lift it. Doing so requires that you change the curse issuer's attitude toward you to at least friendly (it can generally be assumed that they have an initial attitude of hostile, since they cursed you). Once this is done, convincing them to lift the curse is treated as using the Diplomacy skill to make a request, and the DC is increased by +15, as though requesting aid that could result in punishment. In some cases, the curse issuer may require that you perform a specific task before she will lift the curse, regardless of the result of the Diplomacy check. Once the curse issuer is satisfied, she can lift the curse as a full-round action.

### CURSE OF PETRIFICATION

### MR<sub>4</sub>

Type curse; Save Will DC 24 negates, no save to avoid effects

This curse stiffens the target's body, and slowly transforms him into stone.

While affected by a curse of petrification, a character suffers a -2 penalty to his Dexterity score. Additionally, unlike most mythic curses, a curse of petrification continues to gain uses of mythic power each day, even if it already has 5 or more uses of mythic power.

**Mythic Powers:** At any time, the curse of petrification can expend a daily use of mythic power in order to perform one of the following:

- Completely transform one of the cursed creature's legs into stone. A creature who has one of his legs turned to stone in this way has his movement speed reduced to 5 feet, and applies only half his Dexterity modifier (rounded down) to his AC. Finally, such a creature suffers a -10 penalty on all Acrobatics, Climb, and Swim checks. A creature who has all of his legs turned to stone in this way is unable to move, although he is not considered helpless, and can still take actions that do not require the use of his legs. Creatures that have had all of their legs turned to stone in this way are denied their Dexterity bonus to AC. This ability costs 10 uses of mythic power to use.
- Completely transform one of the cursed creature's arms into stone. A creature who has one of his arms turned to stone in this way loses the use of that arm. The arm can no longer be used to hold or wield items, nor can it be used to manipulate objects, or to make unarmed strike attacks or natural attacks. The arm also does not count as being a "free hand" for the purposes of using the somatic components of spells,

and other activities that require a free hand. This ability costs 10 uses of mythic power to use.

• Completely transform the cursed creature's head and torso into stone. The cursed creature gains the petrified condition. A creature that is petrified in this way can only be cured of the petrified condition by a *wish* or *miracle* spell, or by a *stone to flesh* spell cast by a mythic character. In the case of a *stone to flesh* spell cast by a mythic character, the caster must expend two uses of mythic power, and must succeed on a caster level check (DC 24) in order to succeed. In either case, the petrified condition is cured, but the cursed character's limbs remain transformed, and the curse remains in place. This ability costs 10 uses of mythic power to use, and can only be used if all of the cursed character's arms and legs have already been transformed into stone.

**Lifting the Curse:** In addition to the normal means of removing a mythic curse, you can remove a curse of petrification by bathing in the blood of a mythic basilisk or mythic gorgon.

### Moral Axioms

The following section provides a few example moral axioms, to be used in conjunction with the mythic curses in this product, and to serve as a template for GMs to use in creating their own moral axioms for use at their table.

**Control Your Fear:** The cursed creature must gain control over his fears, and show bravery and courage in the face of adversity. Whenever the cursed creature succeeds on a saving throw to resist a fear effect, engages in combat with a creature whose CR is at least 3 higher than his level, or otherwise acts with particular bravery, the curse loses one daily use of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature fails a saving throw to resist a fear effect, uses the withdraw action in combat, or otherwise acts with particular cowardice, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power.

**Control Your Temper:** The cursed creature must gain control over his temper, and not rely on aggression and combat to solve all of his problems. Whenever the cursed creature attempts to resolve a hostile situation through diplomacy, stealth, or any other means that does not involve combat, as well as any time that the cursed creature forgives a slight against him instead of lashing out or plotting revenge against the one that wronged him, the curse loses one daily use of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature initiates a combat that could reasonably have been avoided, or holds a grudge over a particularly minor issue, or otherwise loses his temper, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power.

**Don't be a Miser:** The cursed creature must show generosity with his wealth, and must avoid hoarding his wealth or focusing overly much on accumulating worldly goods. Whenever the cursed creature willingly gives away goods or coins worth at least 1% of his total wealth, or chooses to pursue an activity with no chance of monetary return instead of pursuing an activity that could, or otherwise places monetary wealth second to something else, the curse loses one daily uses of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature denies a reasonable request for a loan or other monetary support, or places material wealth at a higher importance than other things, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power.

Don't be Controlled by Alcohol: The cursed creature must avoid becoming drunk, or otherwise allowing himself to be inhibited or controlled by drugs or other potentially mind-altering substances. Whenever the cursed creature refrains from using such substances when they are offered, or stops himself from consuming enough of the substance to have any effect on his mental state, the curse loses one daily use of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature deliberately consumes enough of a mind-altering substance to affect his mental state, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power.

**Protect the Weak:** The cursed creature must demonstrate a concern for those weaker than himself, and a willingness to potentially endanger himself in order to protect them. For the purposes of this moral axiom, any creature whose CR is at least 2 lower than the cursed creature's level is treated as being "weaker" than he is. Whenever the cursed creature endangers himself in order to protect a creature that is weaker than him, the curse loses one daily use of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature ignores a creature weaker than himself that is in danger, or otherwise deliberately refuses to safeguard such a creature, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power. Finally, if the cursed creature ever deliberately attacks or otherwise intentionally endangers a creature that is weaker than he is, the curse gains two daily uses of mythic power.

**Respect for the Elderly:** The cursed creature must demonstrate respect for, and kindness to, those older than himself. For the purposes of this moral axiom, any creature that is at least one age category older than the curse creature is treated as an "elder." Whenever the cursed creature defers to an elder, accepts the wisdom of an elder, or shows kindness to an elder, the curse loses one daily use of mythic power. On the other hand, whenever the cursed creature mocks an elder's frailty, ignores the wisdom of an elder, or generally disrespects an elder, the curse gains one daily use of mythic power. Finally, if the cursed creature ever deliberately attacks or otherwise intentionally endangers an elder, the curse gains two daily uses of mythic power.





### Sidebar: Using Mythic Curses in Your Game

Incorporating mythic curses into your game may be incredibly simple, or somewhat difficult, depending on your style of GMing. There are no spells that allow characters to impose mythic curses on each other, and mythic curses (much like the curses in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*) don't have a CR. Ultimately, like most of the curses in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*) don't have a CR. Ultimately, like most of the curses in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, it is up to the GM to determine when a mythic curse is appropriate, and when it is not, and there are no specific rules governing which NPCs can inflict a mythic curse, or ward a building such that a mythic curse is laid upon those who dare enter it, just like there are no specific rules explaining why a particular villain is able to muster so many henchmen without the Leadership feat, for example.

That said, it is possible that, after seeing mythic curses in action, and being wielded by your NPCs, that your players may express a desire to be able to use mythic curses themselves. While curses are generally more effective tools for antagonists than for protagonists like player characters, you can still indulge your players in this fashion, if you are so inclined. We recommend making use of the following optional mythic feat in such a situation:

### Mythic Curse [Mythic]

You are able to inflict a powerful mythic curse upon your enemies.

**Prerequisites:** Able to cast *bestow curse*.

**Benefit:** Choose a mythic curse whose mythic rank is equal to or less than your mythic tier. Up to three times per week, as a full-round action, you can inflict the chosen mythic curse upon a single creature within 60 feet of you that you can see. You can maintain a total number of mythic curses in this way equal to your mythic rank at any given time. In order to inflict a mythic curse on another individual after that, you must end one of your existing mythic curses. Doing so requires a 10 minutes of meditation.

**Special:** You may select this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you select this feat, choose an additional mythic curse whose mythic rank is equal to or less than your mythic tier. Whenever you use this feat, you can choose which mythic curse to use from among all of the ones that you have selected. You can still only use this ability three times per week, but you gain one additional weekly use each time you take the feat after the first. You can still only maintain a total number of mythic curses at any given time equal to your mythic tier.



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## Abandon All Hope

In folklore and fantasy media, curses are powerful supernatural forces that are not to be trifled with, which can take on lives of their own, and respond to the actions of the poor wretches unfortunate enough to have been accursed. These curses are mysterious and terrifying, punishing transgressors for their misdeeds and reacting to the events that happen to their victims, sometimes even becoming adversaries in and of themselves. In *Pathfinder* and the 3.5 OGL however, curses are just a minor nuisance that is quickly resolved with remove curse or break enchantment.

This book presents a new type of curse. the mythic curse, which uses the mythic rules presented in Mythic Adventures as a starting point to create dynamic curses, which respond (positively or negatively) to the actions of their victims, and which generally require a whole lot more than a simple spell to get rid of. In addition to rules and guidelines for creating and using your own mythic curses, the book includes 5 sample mythic curses, such as the curse of aging, the curse of babble, and much more, all of which are sure to have a memorable impact on your game.

The Mythic Mastery series of products builds and expands on the rules for mythic characters introduced in Mythic Adventures. Each Mythic Mastery provides new content and rules for mythic games, with a focus on a single theme or area of play. While some of the content provided in Mythic Mastery products requires the use of mythic characters and a mythic adventure, others, such as those focused on exploring mythic monsters, can be used in games of every sort.

