

EPIC HIGH FANTASY

Shardar



BLACK LANTERN REPORT



MAGE GUILDS & SCHOOLS

BLACK LANTERN REPORT: MAGE GUILDS & SCHOOLS

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PROLOGUE: BRENNA MCINTYRE

"My name is Thaddeus Taft; I'm an agent within the Black Lanterns and one of the three handlers who has been looking after our young mage student, Brenna McIntyre. Brenna came to us early in life. Her magical career came later as she's one of the graduates of our orphanage and schooling projects. After a few accidents where her power caused some... unanticipated effects to the surrounding countryside, we suggested a new avenue for her to follow. She joined us so young that our Brother Brenna very quickly realized the opportunity in front of the Lanterns to gain information on the Mage School of the Seven Stars -- we deemed it vital to learn as much as we could about the mysterious mages and their magical means as possible. She quickly made her way to the school and was accepted as a student.

One never knows when or how this information might prove useful.

Brenna is eager, quick to learn, and has managed to gain a solid reputation within the School in a relatively short time. She's the perfect agent as well, since in the beginning, she had several unfortunate accidents involving night terrors and unleashed magical energy in the academy dormitories. This allowed her to befriend key members of the Eldritch Academy, and to gain their confidence while learning to control her abilities.

Since Brenna is in a mage school, the normal lines of communication are not open to us. In order to avoid detection, Brenna's developed a reputation as a copious note taker and letter writer. Her reports always arrive as letters about her life to a close friend or relative, so to this end I've compiled all available reports into a single document to be left in the usual location -- allowing us to further illuminate the many secrets of the mages.

Brenna always disguises her reports as letters to her parents, so we make sure that her letters find their way home." **Brother ~ Thaddeus Taft ~ Blacksmith**

MAGE GUILDS & SCHOOLS

"I have few friends here, but the ones I do have are good ones. I remember when you suggested I enroll in the Guild of Seven Stars a few years ago; I was younger then, still not fully versed in the ways of magic while thinking I knew it all. My power had only just begun to show, and I was a danger to myself, and those around me. I am sorry dearest mother, for accidentally blowing most of the pig pen sky high.

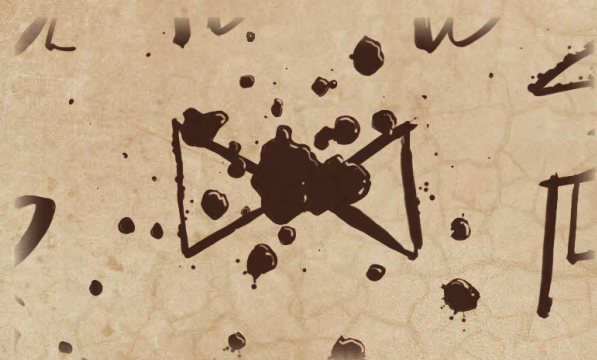
It might seem a laughing matter to those who look back on it in hindsight, but not to me, I still had second and third shockwaves from the magic coursing through my body. It hurt, and whilst I was furious at you for sending me away to one of the Mage Schools -- I can see the wisdom in your course of action now.

I have approached the third step of power, a new journey which will take my sorcery to new heights. I am controlling Essence and the forces that I can command with more accuracy now; there's not been a single incident where the Archmage Shyranna has had to scold me for detonating every window in the dormitory after a fit of night terrors. These incidents used to happen quite regularly.

Give my love to Uncle Jacob, I am sure he's eager to learn of my progress, and tell him that I'll try and keep up more frequent letters. We had to go into lock-down recently, one of the Aspirant Mages broke into the Sealed Library and managed to unleash a powerful summoned creature, it took the Archmage and her Senior Mages three whole days to put it back.

Thankfully it wasn't my fault!

I'll try and write some more soon, Your Loving Daughter, Brenna." ~ **Brenna McIntyre.**



A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

I sat in on the first lesson of that first day, and I remember some elderly mage and his penchant for long rambling speeches. It wasn't long before I found company with others - both mages and friends in the city. In addition there seems to be a bright light glowing in the Golden Lantern Inn. I turned some heads when I started learning more quickly than others yet I think that was due to the nightly meditations I'd learned as a child. It is more difficult to meditate now because all of us can feel the magic being learned and used on the school grounds. Who knew that it is almost like having a separate set of senses that are just for feeling when magic is performed and knowing what its composition is.

Senior Mage Denyn was his name. He had this thick accent which was hard to grasp at times, but thankfully Shanek wrote copious notes and I was lucky to have his help writing my own notes regarding the formation of the Eldritch Academies.

MAGIC, A NEED FOR CONTROL

I must admit that I did begin with a doodle of the old man talking, I couldn't help myself, but I don't think that's really important or appropriate. I was brash then but I'd hate him to think I was so rude to draw one of my caricatures. The basic point of that first lecture began with why we need learn to control our magic, whatever form it takes.

Magic, he stated, is one of the fundamental forces flowing through the world and those who can use it require control. He stated that we really need to be able to see the forces first to be able to control them, via our will, our thoughts, and the other ways we can display our magic. He went on to outline a few instances in which a lack of control had resulted in terrible events, and even went so far as to blame the Elders of the Elves for some long ago accident that caused untold damage. It seemed to have something to do with the Ascended.

I felt that the lecture was more a personal viewpoint, rather than any practical history. I must admit that I nearly dozed off a couple of times.

KAINE AND THE FIRST SORCERERS

I learned that the mages hold true to the idea that Kaine was the first sorcerer, a man who lived during or just after the Age of Darkness. He managed to discern that he'd a gift for manipulating Essence in ways that no druid, acolyte, nor necromancer could. He used this primal power to fight the Hordes of Darkness, and went off to find others to help him, those who shared his gift.

According to Denyn he was able to find several. A handful of humans and a fair number of fae were gifted with this power -- so they became the first sorcerers of Shaintar. They were weak though, their magic was crude, dangerous, and definitely uncontrolled. I learned that they were probably the first to use bursts of pure magic for attacking, and defensive fields of energy to prevent injury.

Kaine wasn't happy with the results, so he began to experiment, and Master Denyn says that Kaine was credited with the creation of -- in common parlance -- spells. With these spells he was able to create more sophisticated effects, gain more power, and eventually began to exert more control. Kaine's blueprint is what we mages now use in the learning of modern magic, experimentation, and in crafting new spells.

SORCERY AND THE THREE SCHOOLS

I didn't know this, but apparently it was Kaine, again, who studied magic to such an extent that he worked out there wasn't just Sorcery. Denyn rambled on about how Kaine was the first and only mage to truly understand this, and the father of the Sorcery art, the creator of the primary form of magic known as the School of Sorcery.

I had to interrupt, the old man glared at me, but I asked him what the other schools were.

He explained it as such:

"Any magic which is thus considered harmful, dangerous to life and limb, and can be used for sorcerous attacks -- along with magic which can be used for defense. This is considered to fall into the purview of the School of Sorcery, the kind of magic that you use young lady. Then there are spells which affect mind and body in some way, these are often known as Biomancy and fall under that School. Anything we cannot clarify, or we are so

unsure of which does not fall into the others we call Patternology. Though much magic, and many spells are often considered to be a combination of two, or three Schools. Or we did, because really, Sorcery changed so much now that the other Schools are a lost art."

So much of what they practiced has been lost according to the mage, only a small percentage remains to this day. Magic has totally changed, and modern Sorcery is nothing like it was.

Oh and he talked about Kaine's constant experimentation. I also learned that Kaine supposedly started the first crafted spell books: "The Lost Tomes of Kaine," which contained ancient spells and rituals -- many which might rival the spells of this age.

I find it hard to believe though, because as I studied I learned that people in Kaine's age were far more focused on surviving than writing things down. Not being killed or eaten is more important than recording things for posterity, scholarship, or research.

FORMALIZED TEACHING

Denyn went on to explain that although the mages look to Kaine as the root of Sorcery, and what it's become today, there's another mage they credit with the formation, and formalization of what we now come to call schools. He also notes that schools, are different to Schools, and guilds are a different thing altogether.

Brek, one of the other students, asked him at this point to clarify, and because it interested me, I jotted it down in my notes.

"Our School is one of the recognized paths of magic. These paths follow certain rules and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. The various common forms of magic are as such: Thaumaturgy (Acolyte), Necromancy (Necromancer), the Way (Adept), with specialized groups like Farspeakers, Warrior-Adepts of the Jade Flame, and the Order of the Azure Citadel, Alchemy (Alchemist), Channeling (Druids), with alternate forms like Shaman and Tempest/Storm, Sorcery (Sorcerer), Faith (Priest) and Arcmancy (Arcmancer). This ignores the power of item enchanting, which could be considered a magical art itself. Of course, these are a few of the paths of magic and the professions of the people who follow them. There's others which are a blend, such

as the Denier's of Death, and as no one knows what magic the Raven or Unicorn have and other forms have been lost in time. All mages learn somehow, whether through spells and books or creating potions or learning to control your surroundings with your mind.

This is a school is where you learn magical spells, control your gifts, and come into your power. There are a number of schools, but we feel that as ours has connection to the great Bran the Enlightened, it's the most important. Another term for these schools is Eldritch Academies, as that name encompasses a number of magical abilities..

A guild is a collected group of like-minded magical practitioners, formed for the purpose of protecting its members and crafting for others. An example of a mage guild could be a group of weather mages working together during the growing season and hiring out to help the crops get the right weather and encouraged to grow. Other guilds are formed for research to go beyond the mere capabilities of a school and into the unknown. Think of them like further education."

Centuries later, the old man continued after his discussion of the various magical abilities, the seeds of formal teaching began to emerge. He cites Bran the Enlightened, who lived centuries after Kaine, as the first mage who founded the first formalized school -- deep in the heart of what was to become known as the Freelands.

Master Denyn then goes on to explain that Bran was a devotee of a lost power. There were many scholars who decried Bran's work, claiming he was flirting with Necromancy, at best. The wily old mage called the accusations balderdash, falsehood, idiocy, and finally poppycock. There were some laughs in the lecture hall.

The old mage then went on to discuss Evander the Enchanter, Alain, and Oliana the Bright as masters of other arts. He also called Evander the: "Practical Man's Mage" though I'm not sure why, it must be in a later lesson.

Of course that was the sorcery of the past, modern sorcery is quite different. I'm told, Life is the magic of the Druids, Necromancy and Thaumaturgy are very bad -- which they're very quick to impress on the more unruly of the students here at the academy.

Something called Biomancy and Patternology are skills that have been lost to the ages or the magic has changed. I'd assume that these skills have been folded into the modern art.

I could fill my letters with such lectures, but I felt this was probably the most important one of them all to you. This is where I learned I didn't know anything. I'm off to study, Mother, I await your next letter soon.

LEARNING MAGIC

Dearest Uncle Jacob,

I'm writing to you because Mother said in her last letter to me that you've been really interested in the way schools teaches magic. I'm told that how I'm learning is typical of any of the magical schools found here in the Southern lands, and whilst some schools are devoted to teaching a particular aspect of the art, ours provides a balance between all the skills required to utilize magic for attack, defense, and to help others. I think you'll be really interested in the ideas behind how our teachers impart the correct methods for control, especially our elf lecturer.

Of course, the teachers are quick to point out that they've no idea how the Necromancers in Shaya'Nor learn their craft, which I've no desire to learn. There's not much known about the Acolytes of Kal-A-Nar Empire nor the Prelacy of Camon - though the latter seems to stem from a desire to remove magic from everywhere.

THE STEPS OF MAGICAL CONTROL

Uncle, I've become rather fond of our teacher in this regard, he's an elf and he's rather pretty. I do catch some of the other female students in the hall staring at him, but Quillion doesn't seem to notice. He's an Eldakar (one of several versions of this race) sorcerer and very much in tune with the natural energies that exist in our magical world. He taught one of the best lectures I've had on the subject of magical control, and he's such a confident speaker, I suppose he has hundreds, if not thousands, of years of experience which I don't understand because he seems so young.

He first talked about the importance of being able to perceive the magical world, to see the Aetheric energies and to recognize them. I was amazed to discover that color plays an important role in such things, and I was so energized by his lectures that I promise I never once doodled a silly old man next to a goat in the margin of my mystical workbook!

I was fascinated and learned so much. I learned that something called Patternology was once taught at something called the School of Enchantment on Sunrise Island. Now it's called the Dawn Academy and teaches Sorcery with a curriculum very similar to our own. There's a whole bunch of actions involved in learning to control yourself and affect your environment. As mother always says "It boils down to" three steps.



STEP ONE: PERCEIVING THE MAGICAL WORLD

When a person's power begins to manifest, the magic is usually accompanied by visual or other effects which may involve mystical runes glowing in the air, sudden winds, other illusions, and odd sounds or feelings. If they've the talent, they'll see the magic around them take on a colorful hue that's based on the casters' inner being. However, those who can see beyond will eventually pick out a whole spectrum of color that will help them to determine what kind of magic is being used.

Once a sorcerer can see/sense the aspect of the magic they can move onto reaching out with their ability and intent to begin taking hold of the power and using it.

STEP TWO: TAKE HOLD OF THE THREADS

Many sorcerers often call this Spell Weaving, because you're literally pulling threads of magical energy into a whole Tapestry to create the effect desired.

As it turns out, I was one of the better students at seeing magic according to Quillion. So Uncle, Marissa Cardyn was wrong, it's not only people who are born to the lines of famous sorcerers who can see magic the best. But I digress and it really isn't very nice of me to mention her in these letters, but I know you asked for my school life!

Marissa also needs a new hat; hers may have accidentally turned into ash from an accidental electrical discharge. I swear I didn't do it on purpose, but she got in the way when I was connecting an elemental thread to something and... Quillion wasn't happy, but he understood my mistake. I had to stay behind and help him clean up the hall.

Oh the hardship!

STEP THREE: EXERT CONTROL

Once you have the threads in place you really need to concentrate the most; it's something that Quillion has drummed into us time and time again. Eventually it will become second nature, but even then, there's room for error and if you're not concentrating one hundred percent -- well, Marissa would need more than a new hat. This is the most dangerous of the

three steps, and once you have control you can do what you want with the resultant magical energy -- Quillion demonstrated by erecting a magical barrier whilst some the students further along demonstrated by creating and throwing snowballs at him.

There you have it, Uncle. Three simple (ha ha) steps on how magic works. Sometimes I think I'll never have the hang of it, and then there're the days everything goes exactly right and I've no idea why. Love to Mother and Father.

OTHER LESSONS

Dear Father,

I wanted to tell you about some of the other lessons I've been learning about attack and defense. Our teacher is an accomplished sorceress from the Freelands. She's ever so nice, friendly, but I really don't think I ever want to be on the wrong end of her temper. Juliana Fero is her name, she's only slightly older than you, and apparently her lineage dates all the way back to the first known mages recorded, the ones I mentioned in my earlier letters -- like the people who helped found the Mage Schools with Bran the Enlightened.

She's good though, and has told us stories of her battles against the forces of Flame and Darkness. I think she'd make an excellent friend, and Father, you know how Mother is always telling me to try and make new friends. She's expressed an interest in meeting you both when the Academy holds an open day. I've told her about you and Uncle Jacob too.

I learned a new spell from her, one I was able to construct myself after watching her. I've decided to call it Brenna's Beguiling Bolt. Apparently, alliteration is important in Higher Magic. I'm not sure if she wasn't just pulling my leg, but I don't mind, she's fun to learn from and that's why I'm here.

Once again I was told I excelled at my training, and I was a model student. I hope you're proud of me. I hate to end this letter on a sour note though, it seems that Marissa (told you there was something wrong there) was caught with a book on Necromancy and now she's being expelled from the Academy. Her father's been informed and I don't think he's going to be happy she's besmirched her line. I don't want to be the student who takes pride in another's misery, but I think someone needs to watch her -- that's dangerous

magic and I don't really trust anyone who'd even look at a book on it, much less study it who's not from a certain Northern country.

If I hear any more interesting tidbits I'll be sure to write again. I'm learning loads but I miss you and everyone.

ELDRITCH ACADEMY LIFE

Dearest Mother,

I am sure you and father are really interested in the day to day life in the academy. You told me to write you about everything and I'll do my best. I can't let you know some of the things I do, because they fall under the shroud of secrecy that the mages claim protects those with no magic. I personally think they're right, after all, these ancient magic spells and rituals take a lot to control and could be devastating in the wrong hands.

I am told that the Eldritch Academies are less strict than the Citadels where the Adepts train and I can believe it. We're not forced into a strict regime to train the body and mind either, not like those who practice the Way. We're given time to pursue our fitness if we want, and are encouraged keep our minds and bodies working properly. Slovenly mages don't get very far, they lack the energy to control magic properly and to get out of bed in the morning -- or so I'm told.

Our day is structured around a dawn to dusk study and practical work format, and I'm listing the most important times based on the mage's method of keeping time. The school has developed cantrips for keeping track of time and other small chores that we're expected to learn.

EARLY 9:00

This hour is given to breaking fast, some light reading, and any rituals that require morning to complete. The school believes that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It lets us establish friendships and a congenial atmosphere with your fellow sorcerers, allowing a free form discussion of the subjects from the previous day. There's no segregation either, the head mages don't sit at their own tables, they're free to mix and mingle with the students and it's like that at the other mealtimes. I've heard of other mage academies where things are far more formal and strict.

EARLY 10:00 TO EARLY 12:00

The next two hours are broken up as follows: an early morning lecture, followed by a practical session where we can utilize the skills and spells we've learned from the previous hour's study. Some of the Mage School heads believe that we should make the theory part of these classes longer, claiming that an hour is too short a time to impart magical knowledge. I find myself in agreement with them, especially for the beginners, but the Archmage sees it as a way to train expediency. I'm not ranked in the school and have no standing, yet I feel that rushing something with such destructive potential as magic could get you killed. Of course, rushing is maybe a dramatic term, since an hour seems more than enough time for me to understand the basics I need to get me started.

EARLY 12:00 TILL LATE 1:00

Lunch follows the mid-morning class, and again, it's a great place to sit back and talk about the classwork in a relaxed environment. We spend a lot of time discussing the more overt uses of magic with fellow students most days, and I usually try to get some time to talk to Juliana Fero. The more I talk to her, the more I begin to understand her motivations and her power -- she's the sort of woman I hope to be one day.

LATE 1:00 TILL LATE 4:00

The first class after lunch focuses upon the history of magic, with the next two hours involve the practical study of magic split into two one hour sessions. The first hour is very structured and we use previously created spells with our magic, and the second hour is for the customization and creation of magic spells. This is my favorite part of the day. I love being able to bend the effects of magical energy and modify the way certain spells work. While I love the history of certain magic spells and the mages who created them, I am a woman who really desires to experiment with magical energies. In that way I take after grandmother, from what you've told me. I miss her dearly, almost as much as I miss you and Father!

I can come home to you both once I've completed my studies here and know that I'll not be a danger to my family and friends.

LATE 5:00 TILL LATE 6:00

They call this the reading hour, and it can be spent reading magic books, or books on theory as much as we want - as long as we go to the Academy Library. The Librarian, a mage called Shamara Kye is a very knowledgeable person. She graduated from this school and apparently she possesses an almost mystical knowledge of the structure of her library and can find any book in moments without the aid for indexes, or catalogs.

LATE 6:00 TILL LATE 7:00

These meals are more formal than the other meals through the day, but the instructors, academy heads, and higher ranking students still mingle. It's a nice atmosphere, perhaps like one might find at a really impressive restaurant in Galadrea, or one of the more formal noble functions that aunt Ryella often throws. I've got quite a few friends who I spend my time with here, and we usually have fun talking over our day. I've been discussing the state of events since the War of Flame for the most part over the last few days with a young sorceress from Camon, she fled the Prelacy there. I think her name is Eva. The Prelacy has some very strange ideas on magic and she has some problems calling forth her power because of some religious beliefs, I think. She doesn't talk about it much but I don't think she was accepted at all there and feared for her life before she came here.

LATE 7:00 TILL LATE 9:00

A final evening lecture takes place; sometimes on history, especially regarding Kaine and the first sorcerers. This lecture lasts for an hour, and often features a guest speaker from outside of the school; it's a chance for our Academy staff to mingle with other school lecturers and notable mages from elsewhere in the world. Then afterwards, we get more lessons on how to adequately defend ourselves against hostile magic.

I met two elven mages who came to speak to us, they are from Landra'Feya and they have such amazing stories about their people. They are called Dorelian and Krysellon, twins, brother and sister no less.

LATE 9:00 TILL LATE 10:00

Snacks are served and it's a simple time. You can choose to snack in your room, or spend time with a friend. It's probably the best time to go and catch up with everyone you missed during the day. We're also supposed to meditate during this time and add new spells to our own spell books and write in our journals.

LATE 10:00 TILL 13:00

Free time until 13:00 when you're expected to retire to bed, unless you're a senior member of the academy, then you can do what you want. During free time, we're allowed to visit each other's rooms and can use one of the teaching rooms to practice.

Then it's to bed, to rise again the following morning to repeat the schedule - such is the life of the hard-working, hard-studying sorcerer. I'm breathless as I write this, and hopefully now you both get an idea of my daily experiences now.

The weekends of course, are different. For a day and a half we get to do what we want before the whole academy week starts again. I study a lot, honestly! We've chores and other assignments to do for a half day at the end of the week.

I sometimes go for long walks. There are lovely gardens here and I can see the trees of the local forests outside of the walls of the school. There's magic in play that hide and protect the school from anyone who might attack or meddle in our affairs. I'd imagine that the Archmage and her staff have a lot of enemies who would like to see them out of the way.

I also find the last hour to be really useful to practice my control of the Mind's Eye spell, the sense of quietude that rolls over the school around Late 12:00 is rather peaceful.

I must run as it's time for class again. I can't wait to hear from you again.

POWER STRUCTURE

Father,

I am writing this letter to let you know who's in charge, so that if you ever need to contact someone at the top, or find out a particular classmate's rank (they're big on rank here) so you don't offend them, you can do it easily by looking at my list.

ARCHMAGE

Archmage Shyranna runs the school. She's really old, yet still beautiful and her long white hair is a testament to her former beauty. It's the kind of hair I want to grow when I'm older. She's powerful, and I've heard stories of her battles against childer, demons, and even a vampire - though I'm not sure how or why she would have gone up against someone from Shaya'Nor. She's reliable as well, and even though I've only spoken to her just the once, I'm pretty sure that she's one of the wisest people I've ever met. She seems rather fond of one of our Academy Heads too, though I'm happy it's not the elf, Quillion.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Cosmology) d12+2, Knowledge (Darkness Creatures) d6, Knowledge (Flame Creatures) d6, Knowledge (Legend Lore) d6, Knowledge (Magic) d12+2, Notice d10, Sorcery d12+2 (d10 Wild Die)

Cha: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 9 (3) **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Edges: Archmage, Attractive, Easy Magic (Armor, Deflection), Education, Essence Link, Exceptional Rapid Recharge, High Magic (Bolt, Dispel, Telekinesis, Teleport), Level Headed, Linguist, Mage, Magic Proficiency (+2 Bolt, Telekinesis), Master (Sorcery), Scholar: Knowledge (Cosmology, Magic), Sorcerer

Gear: Enchanted Everwood Staff (Str+d4+2, +2 Fighting, +3 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands; +15 Essence, Smite), Amulet of the Defensive Master (Improved Arcane Resistance, Mind's Eye, Quickness, Danger Sense), Robes of Protection (Armor 4)

Powers: Armor, Barrier, Blast, Bolt, Boost Trait, Cantrips, Conceal Arcana, Deflection, Disguise, Dispel, Entangle, Environmental Protection, Invisibility, Telekinesis, Teleport; Auberik's Instant Fortress

Essence: 50 (15)



THE THREE

Whilst the Academy leaders are come from the different teachers at the school, The Three are hand-picked advisors who've made their reputations outside the school, or devoted most of their life to study; they're given advisory positions of power. They're also the most likely to lead rituals alongside the Archmage. They don't teach classes and I think they are involved in the protection & defense of the school.

Donna Scotara is an impish woman; she's very strong when it comes to defensive magic against hostile spirits.

Lucas Germaine is a man who has very little in the way of humor; I think something terrible happened in his past. He's not very open, but he's really good at magic designed to discern the truth, and seeing things that are hidden.

Gyllian d'Itano is very fond of magic which is destructive, she loves storm based spells. One of her sisters is a Ship Mage or something, a Seacaster from Nazatair. I've been able to engage her now and then on the subject of destructive spells, and she's not a woman who likes collateral damage from dangerous magic like this. She's been a good person to talk to about control, and I've had a number conversations late into the night with her.

ACADEMY HEADS

The Academy Heads are the teachers and lecturers in sorcery at the school; they're the ones who I've mentioned previously in my other letters. There's a big list of them as you enter the school, so if you come and visit you'll be able to look up who's who, rather than me spend even more parchment trying to remember every single teacher that's stepped through the door to my classroom.

HEAD MAGE

I so want to reach this position in the school. The Head Mages are picked from the brightest and the best students. They're those who achieve exemplary grades in their various classes, and who demonstrate a great degree of control over their magical power. I'm pretty sure I'm getting better at the full control; I've got a bit of a way to go yet. They get to stand in for the guest lecturers if they can't make it and

do most of the demonstrations. They attend higher-level magic courses as well as learning the deeper mysteries of our art. You leave the life of a sorcerer behind at this point, they actually call you a Mage!

SENIOR SORCERER

This is me, and some of my friends. We're the responsible people at the school and some of us can even stand in for the lecturing staff, though we don't get to do demonstrations of magical power. We learn some of the higher mysteries, but mostly we're still learning theory and history at this point. We're also responsible for the younger and less trained mages and act as mentors to them.

JUNIOR SORCERER

This was me a while ago; it's the first step of the magical ladder. Learning all about the history of magic, how to apply the lessons of the past to controlling magical power now. There are a lot of new juniors this year, and some of them seem really promising.

ASPIRANT SORCERER

When you first enter the school, this is where you start. They test you constantly, ensuring you've got the skills to wield magic and not blow yourself (or anyone else) sky high. You get a lot of history, and a lot of personal one on one time with a trainer who helps you keep your energies in check, and also helps you see the magic better. I was told it was a good reason too for so much one on one time. If you can see it, you can't really wield the magic.

GUARDIAN MAGES

There's no sword wielding guards at our school, our guardians are members of the school who've achieved a high level of offensive and defensive training. Some are from outside the school, they don't talk much and they are quite surly. We're told they're here for our protection and not some kind of secret mage army. They stop any silly magical duels that might happen, because as you know, those are forbidden at most schools – save the Academy of Might.

THE LIBRARIAN

Shamara Kye, a really outgoing and nice person is in charge of our great library. Apparently this position is given to someone who shows a great deal of skill with magic designed to locate things. Also, someone who knows numbers, history, and a lot of other subjects that Shamara is versed in. I've heard rumors that the Librarian is also quite an adventurous sort, and ours had a very colorful youth. She's not said anything about that yet though.

GOALS OF THE ACADEMY

I know that Galina is really interested in what the Eldritch Academy's aims are when it comes to magic. I thought I'd list some of their goals here, these are written from the rather long and really stuffy speech that everyone gets when they join the school. It should have probably been at the start of this letter, but I forgot till now.

- Educate students in magical history, to explain the old theories of mystical power use, and illuminate the differences between magic then, and magic now.
- Impart the correct skills, respect, and understanding of magical power use while preventing magical accidents.
- Educate mages on the proper way to comport themselves in society; one never knows where they might end up.
- Prepare the mage for eventual confrontation against the powers of Darkness and Flame.
- Provide a basic knowledge of eldritch creatures, how to recognize dangerous magical beings, and how to fight them.
- Educate the higher students in the deeper mysteries of the art.
- Hone promising young mages to serve as advisors, court sorcerers, and powerful figures of influence that may change the course of history.
- Educate the future heads of the academy. It's a known fact that the school often takes promising young mages to ranks of great height and offer them positions within the academy to further increase their standing and understanding of the deeper mystical arts.

- Fund ex-students, alumni students, and promising students with exceptional magical skill and talent -- to further their spell research and increase the academy's understanding of magic.

Father, I know that you'll be extremely pleased to hear that 'building a dangerous magical army' isn't one of the school's goals.

That's all for now, I'll write my next letter to Galina as that little minx hasn't written her older sister in six months. Until then, I miss you and Mother.

Bree

STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

Dearest Sister,

I miss you, sister, and I thought I'd share a bit with you about how the school is set up and what guilds are available to mages once we graduate. Perhaps this time, you'll deign to send me a reply?

The school is split into five areas. There are four parts to the main school, with a fifth, detached, set of buildings where high mages and above are allowed; no one else can go there. I found this out when I was escorted away after following Quillion discretely one day. I was curious and besides, I fancy him.

There's the dormitory building where we sleep and it contains the mess hall, some practice rooms, and some lounging areas we're allowed to go, sit, read, and eat. There are rooms here to play games. The dormitories back onto the large, expansive gardens, where the statues are.

The lecture halls are huge places with loads of room for practical magic. There's an annex off here for the library, too, and this is where I found Shamara Kye when I was able to talk to her. She likes the smaller library when she's not at her big desk in the main great library.

The practice halls are separate from the lecture halls; they're spell shielded, and always have powerful mages on hand just in case something goes wrong. They'll also act as tutors when there's something a student doesn't quite understand. It's also where students can experiment, try out new magic, or come to watch some of the more powerful mages let off steam.

The faculty staff rooms are in their own building, and includes the Archmage's Office, along with the offices for the Three. I'm told there are even offices for the Head Mages, so I can't wait to get my own!

That's all for now but I'll write home soon. Have a care and don't snap up all the eligible boys before I get home.

THE MAGE GUILDS

Mother,

We had a big lecture the other day on the importance of mage cohesiveness and comradery. I think they're looking to the future, when some of us might be interested in joining a guild. They were speaking of the benefits of joining a guild, and they seem pretty good. Not only do you join a group of like-minded individuals, but you get paid for your work, a room, lots of support, and sometimes a lab where you can experiment, along with a personal library for your collection of spell books.

They also said that many of the guilds also provide way-stations in many of the cities, towns, and some villages across Shaintar. They're a place where you can rest if you need to, or get supplies if you are running low on some ingredient or other. It all sounds rather good to me, and I always did love the idea of belonging. I'm not sure which guild to choose, but I'm writing down what I know about the ones that were mentioned.

THE SILVER GUILD

I found out that the Silver Guild is made up of a lot of sorcerers who are devoted to expanding the understanding of the magic itself. They're dedicated to unlocking its secrets, and are some of the most practiced sorcerers when it comes to modifying spells.

THE BLUE WANDERERS

This is one of the few guilds I'm told that doesn't actually have a base of operations; you know how you've got mercenaries and sell-swords. Well, the Blue Wanderers are a collection of magic users, and alchemists who hire their services across Shaintar for causes; they're enemies of Darkness and Flame, which is how it should be.

SORCERERS OF THE SEVEN STARS

I could join this one for a very modest fee; it's my own school's guild which operates in a bunch of cities in Shaintar. It's got way-stations, and has a great reputation for providing mages to help shore up defenses where they're needed, especially in troubled times. Quillion is a member, and he's the one who told me about the guild.

THE SEEKERS OF THE EYE

I'm pretty convinced that Shamara Kye is a card-carrying member of this guild. It fits her perfectly; in fact I'm sure I saw their emblem somewhere in her private room when I got invited to a game of cards one night. Also, it's pretty romantic, the thought of her being an investigating mage of this guild, delving the into secrets of the past and hunting long forgotten relics in tombs deep under our noses.

That's all for now. There's much to think of and hopefully next time, I'll know if I want to join one of these guilds or not.

THE ELDRITCH ACADEMIES

Dear Uncle Jacob,

You asked me last time to list some of the other schools I could have chosen to go to rather than my favorite -- the School of Seven Stars.

DAWN ACADEMY

The Dawn Academy, I mentioned it before, it used to teach an old form of magic long gone. It would like to achieve its former status but now they teach about magical items, their history, and their creation. Because our world isn't one where you can find loads of magic items lying around, it sounds like a really interesting place.

ACADEMY OF SILVER

One of the most prestigious schools apparently, and in my opinion, it's pretty snobby as well. The students are all descended from some famous mage or another, and they don't take in wild talents like me. I'm so glad I went to the School of Seven Stars

-- honestly. I am amazed Marissa came here, she'd fit right in at the other school perfectly. I'm not sure what makes them so different though, they have a similar magical curriculum to here.

WHITE SONG ACADEMY

This school really likes to teach mages about how to use their powers to help people and they're quite famous in mage circles for being the nicest, most helpful, and obliging of our kind. We've had a few guest lecturers from here, and they all seem to be much older.

GALAEAN ACADEMY OF SORCERY

This one's based around Galea and it's a relatively new school established during the War of Flame. It teaches a combination of defensive and offensive magic, but focuses on powers that can effectively battle many dark creatures of the enemy. For such militant mages they're not at all belligerent or hostile, they're some of the nicest people I've met and I must admit I do have my eye on one of the young mages there.

MIND'S EYE ACADEMY

These are seekers of truth in all things, they're really accomplished in the Mind's Eye spell, Principles, and Application's which enhance their understanding of such things. They're also keepers of lore, and the first school to fund a program to explore the dangerous, ancient, and magical places of the past. Head Mage Bertram Jins spent some time telling me of his recent adventures in a tomb considered to be from the Age of Darkness.

ACADEMY OF MIGHT

I'm not at all fond of the students of this school, though many of them come through and become Guardian Mages here and elsewhere, I'm just not too sure of a school that's totally focused on combat above all else. They don't have time for the gentler pursuits and they seem a bit too hot-headed for me. When they visited us recently, there were magical duels which as you know, are forbidden by the academy law. I kept to my room a lot and only ventured out when I knew the other school was out blowing off steam elsewhere.



THE ARCANES LIBRARIES

Mother,

Books. Books and more books. It may be that Sorcerer's are more obsessed with words than magic. Ascended knows how many hours I have spent within the Academy Library, seeking tomes and uncovering the mysteries of Principles. I could, mother, spend a lifetime here and still have read but a part of the collected works. I hear from the Librarian, Shamara, that our Academy Library pales in comparison to the great libraries of the wider world! Though not Academies, they are places of great learning where mages can expand their knowledge of the eldritch world and gain insight into other styles of magic. Oh, to travel and see such places of ancient knowledge and lore. If I am able, I would witness these few, if no other.

ATHENAEUM OF ARADAR, GALEA

Rising from the cliffs overlooking the sea, the Athenaeum of Aradar is a legendary collection of works pertaining to various subjects, primarily magic. If rumors are true, one of Kaine's adherents first established the Athenaeum in the rented room of a friend. Since then, it has grown into an enormous complex, backed, they say, by the Crown.

Researchers at the Athenaeum gain a +2 bonus on Investigation skill check relating to Sorcery, and a +1 bonus to Investigation skill checks on Alchemy, The Way, Knowledge (Magic), Knowledge (Cosmology), and Knowledge (History).



FREELORD'S LIBRARY OF LANTHOR

Purported to be the largest public library in the heart of the largest city in Shaintar, the Freelord's Library contains copious volumes on nearly every subject imaginable, including Sorcery. Due to its age, there are original manuscripts within those aging stacks which can be found nowhere else.

Researchers at the Freelord's Library gain a +2 bonus on Investigation skill checks relating to nearly any subject the GM feels appropriate.

LIBRO EN HAZUL, NAZATIR

A visitor from the The Navaquilera "Sea Eagle" Mage guild once told me of the great library, or Libro, in Nazatir's capital of Hazul. She spoke of great, vaulted domes, white sea birds winging through tall spires, and the toll of ancient bells. Listening to her lilting voice I could almost smell the sea and hear the ring of bells in my mind.

Researchers at the Libro en Hazul gain a +2 bonus on Investigation skill checks relating to Boating and Knowledge (Navigation), and a +1 bonus to Investigation skill checks relating to Sorcery, Knowledge (Dark Creatures), Knowledge (Cosmology), and Knowledge (Engineering).

THE GRIZHNAK OLGOR & EVORAN QUE'KASAARS MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ECHER'NAUGHT

This library is still young, but growing rapidly. It was started by the Rangers of the city to help in operations, but quickly expanded as a public outreach for the local headquarters. As the two founders, Olgor and Que'kasaars, were Mages, the Library hosts a significant section focused on magic, as well as, sections on law, history, and politics.

Researchers at the Memorial Library gain a +2 bonus on Investigation skills checks relating to Knowledge (Grayson's Gray Rangers), Sorcery, and Knowledge (Olaran Law), and a +1 bonus to Investigation skill checks on Alchemy, Arcmancy, Channeling, The Way, Knowledge (Magic), Knowledge (Politics), and Knowledge (History).

One day mother, I will see them all!

SPECIAL ITEMS OF THE MAGES

The following items are examples of enchantments built to help a mage boost their abilities or knowledge.

ALAIN'S TOME OF ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING

The book is attributed to Alain, though is rather a collection of thoughts on magic by various authors over the centuries. Within the book, students will find excerpts and treatises on the most common Sorcery Principles. Sorcerer's who spend an hours studying the book will gain greater understanding of the fundamentals of their own powers. Once per day (25 hours), the character may choose a single Principle they know and roll a Smarts check after the prescribed hour of uninterrupted study. For each Power level requirement above Novice, add a cumulative -1 penalty (Seasoned -1, Heroic -3, etc..) to the Smarts test. On a simple success, the character gains a temporary +2 to Sorcery rolls for that Principle. With a raise, the bonus is +4. The effects last for about eight hours before fading rapidly (lose -2 to bonus per hour after the eighth hour).

Understandably, the book is banned to students studying at Academies as cheating.

Cost: 400; **Value:** -4; **Availability:** -6; **Weight:** 1

GUARDIAN MAGE'S STAFF

While most sorcerers avoid front-line combat, some mages specialize in combat abilities. For these brave souls, a specific combat staff was created.

Guardian Mage's Staff: An Ironwood staff imbued with properties valuable to any battle mage (Str+d6, Parry +2, Reach 1, 2 hands, 5 Essence, Magic Proficiency [*bolt, deflect, smite*])

Cost: 250; **Value:** -6; **Availability:** -6; **Weight:** 4



AETNAEUS' MEDALLION OF WARDING

This small, silver medallion is believed to have been first developed by a Mage from the Eternal Desert to ward against surprise magical attacks. Whenever the wearer is about to be the target of a magical surprise attack, they may make an immediate Sorcery check at -2 (See Danger Sense in the Savage Worlds core rules). This roll is at an additional -2 if the attacker is using a magic other than Sorcery. This roll may also be modified by other factors such as Conceal Arcana (GM discretion). If successful, the medallion will grow suddenly hot and the character is On Hold triggering the medallion's secondary effect which is an immediate Dispel (see pg. 129 for rules) attempt using Sorcery against the surprise attack. The medallion may only ward against a single surprise attack per day, but may attempt to detect at any time.

Cost: 500; **Value:** -6; **Availability:** -6; **Weight:** .25

PROSCRIBED PRINCIPLES

Usually written on a piece of parchment, or sometimes fabrics, these arcane Principles contain within them the underlying theories behind sorcerous magic. True Mages consider these crutches little more than cheats. However, they offer a versatility widely lauded by many. Each document allows for the one-time casting of a specific Sorcery power using the caster's Sorcery skill and consuming their essence, but works even if the character does not know the Power. The Skill check is modified by the level requirement of the power at a cumulative -1 penalty above Novice (Seasoned -1, Heroic -3, etc..). Furthermore, the Principle may gain no raise level effects regardless of the roll, requires an entire round to read (cannot be combined with Archmage Edge), and the Sorcery check gains no bonuses from items or gear (such as Wand of Focus), but can be modified by active powers and Edges (including Soul-Bonded item modifiers). Whether or not the casting was successful, the Proscribed Principle is consumed in a bright flash of purple, eldritch energy. To date, no one has managed to create High Magic versions. Note: pulling out one of these documents out of a pouch or pocket counts as an action.

Cost: 100; **Value:** -6; **Availability:** -2; **Weight:** n/a

WAND OF FOCUS

Originally created as spell foci to aid young sorcerers in mastering particular spells, focus wands have grown popular as an inexpensive magical aid. They are, however, just an aid. Anytime a Sorcerer rolls a 1 on the spellcasting Skill die, regardless of any Edges such as Mage, the Wand is destroyed.

Wand of Focus (+1 Sorcery*, Magic Proficiency [Power])

*Does not stack.

Cost: 200; **Value:** -4; **Availability:** -4; **Weight:** .25

WAND OF FOCUS, GREATER

More powerful versions of the training wands are produced. In addition to inherently more powerful effects, these wands also do not suffer the same risk of destruction as the less expensive variety, though are far rarer.

Wand of Focus, Greater (+2 Sorcery*, Magic Proficiency & Easy Magic [Power])

*Does not stack.

Cost: 500; **Value:** -6; **Availably:** -6; **Weight:** .25



POWER EDGES

Here are some new edges that a mage can take to refine their path along the mystical mysteries..

GUARDIAN MAGE

Requirements: Veteran, Mage, Smarts d10+, Knowledge (Magic) d10+, Sorcery d8+

While almost any magic wielder can use their powers offensively if necessary, Guardian Mages take eldritch combat to a new level. These battle masters rain down destruction upon their enemies while wreathing themselves in protective crackling energies. When a Mage with this Edge gets a Raise on an attack with the offensive Principles of *blast*, *bolt*, or *jet*, the Mage rolls a d8 damage instead of a d6. In addition, the Maintenance cost for the defensive Principles of *arcane shield*, *armor*, and *deflection* are reduced by -1. The character must know the Power for the benefits to apply.

INTENSE CONCENTRATION

Requirements: Novice, Sorcerer

Constant mental discipline and training allow some Sorcerer's to maintain control of their powers even when under assault. Sorcerer's with this Edge gain a +2 bonus on Sorcery and Smarts rolls vs Disruption from damage (pg. 119).

DEFENSE FROM THE BEYOND

Requirements: Background, Sorcerer

As ever more enemies seem to appear threatening the lands of Shaintar, some Sorcerers are able to tap into the unique energies of Shaintar's aether and tailor their Principles to counter enemy magic. Sorcerer's with this Edge gain +1 damage to spells (*blast*, *bolt*, *damage field*, etc...) vs Flame, Darkness, and Tempest. In addition, they also receive a +1 Toughness vs Flame, Darkness, and Tempest while maintaining *arcane shield*, *armor*, or *deflection*.

NEW MAGIC

Some new and interesting spells have been coming from the collaboration of students and masters learning and increasing their skill in the arts.

NEW PRINCIPLES

DETONATE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 4-8

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Magic Styles: Sorcery, Thaumaturgy

Detonate allows a mage to place a Triggered blast charge on an object or location. Once set, the spell can be triggered any time by the mage, or set to Detonate under specific circumstances. If not otherwise indicated, the spell automatically detonates at beginning of the mage's next turn. Any beings in Small Burst template range of the detonation will take 2d6 blast damage. If a mage is successfully disrupted before triggering the detonation, the spell fizzles. If the damage caused by the Detonate spell is greater than the Toughness of the object, the object is destroyed.

Clever mages may attempt to place detonate near where an enemy is about to move. In such cases, detonating the spell requires the mage to first declare the condition of Trigger and then to successfully Interrupt the enemy's action with an opposed roll of the mage's Smarts vs. the enemy Agility. Unlike smite, detonate can only be used to charge a single arrow, bolt, or missile, but once set, the projectile will do an additional 2d6 damage in a SBT, resolved separate from the initial weapon damage, upon impact and is considered "magic" for purposes of Weaknesses. Due to the need for constant contact during activation, it is impractical for a mage to detonate worn, held, or carried weapons, armor, or gear unless performing a Finishing Move (see the Savage Worlds rulebook). Detonate is considered a Heavy Weapon.

Additional Effects: For double the Power Points, detonate does 3d6 damage *or* the area increases to a Medium Burst Template.

TENDRIL

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 2

Range: Self

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Magic Styles: Sorcery, Thaumaturgy

Tendrils create whips of energy extending from the Sorcerer's hands. On a successful Sorcery roll, the Tendril is a Str+d6 magic weapon with Reach 2. With a Raise, the Tendril becomes a Str+d8 magic weapon. In combat, Tendrils are treated as Danataran Combat Whips (see *Legends Unleashed* pg. 37).

NEW APPLICATIONS

ASH'S BATTLE PREPAREDNESS

Requirements: *deflection, quickness*, Area (LBT), Linked

First mastered by the Elven Master, Ash, for 9 Essence the Battle Preparedness Principle combines and expands the *deflection* and *quickness* Powers, greatly augmenting an allies combat abilities.

EVORAN'S SIEGE JET

Requirements: *jet*, Area (SBT), Armor Piercing, Increased Range, Selective

Created in response to heavily fortified enemies, for +8 Essence a mage may unleash a long range jet capable of blowing through walls, or reducing enemy formations to smoking craters.



INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

"Brenna's report is quite thorough, with her letters; I am impressed with her ability to hide information in what might be considered rather banal text. I've taken the liberty of adding extra notes to the end of this compilation so my fellow Black Lanterns who skip to the end of such things may well discover possible threads we should investigate in the future.

Yours in confidence, Brother Adams." ~ **Morgan Adams, Seamstress.**

- Brenna notes that there have been several mages absent from her school of late, these are of senior rank, and she claims that she's overheard talk of a murder involving at least one of the students, and the Academy of Might. A non-lethal duel escalated and the spell protecting one of the students was breached. I recommend that we dispatch another group of agents to investigate at once.
- Brenna brought notice to the girl mentioned in the letters, Marissa. I find this talk of books on necromancy troubling. It should be investigated at once, the girl should be tracked to her home and the truth of the matter discovered. If she's an agent of Darkness, or has leanings that way -- we must know.

- One of our agents has gone missing, he was supposed to meet with Brenna and she was supposed to hand him evidence of Blood Steel trafficking in the area of the school. I fear he might have been waylaid by enemies, or those in league with our foes. Someone needs to go to the school and pose as Uncle Jacob. Be warned, once the role is assigned, it's yours for life and from that point on you will need to be convincing as her uncle. The school knows quite a lot about her family, we've built her cover over the years.
- A powerful magical artifact has been brought to the school to study; it's believed to be a relic from at least the Age of Darkness, perhaps before. Rumor has it that it might be one of the fabled Lost Tomes of Kaine, but I highly doubt this. Still, we made need to construct a cover story for more agents and send them to contact Brenna. I'm sure we can come up with an elaborate, but simple enough plan to execute that doesn't get our covers collectively blown. I still remember the Malakar job, which was not our finest hour.

