

Ars Magica

Sanctuary of Ice

The Greater Alps Tribunal

by Timothy Ferguson

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Greater Alpine covenants are models that some Hermetic magi view enviously. If peace is the measure of success, the Greater Alps is the most successful Hermetic tribunal. Since the formation of the first regional tribunals, these covenants, strung along the mountainous spine of Europe, have avoided pitched magical battles. Without the disruptions of war, the seven Alpine covenants have been able to focus on the development of not only the art, but also the culture of magic.

Saga Guide

Alpine Hermetic society is designed by powerful magi, for powerful magi, but sagas for just-gauntled magi are supported throughout this book. This section contains ideas that can be used to link new player characters into any of the covenants given in the later chapters. Each of the covenant chapters has an insert that contains ways of incorporating groups of young magi into that particular covenant. The geography chapter describes several places where a band of brave and cunning young magi could found a settlement.

Adding Covenants

This supplement assumes that there are seven publicly known covenants in the Alps, each of which can be made up of chapter houses. Chapter houses — “chapters” for short — are geographically separated settlements that are bound together in law, but negotiate their relationships much as independent covenants do in other Tribunals. If you want to use the Alpine culture, but want to leave it at the door of your covenant, use one of the blank covenants. If you want the space to design your own settlement, but want elder magi hovering in the background to generate stories, then design a chapter house.

Two of the seven official covenants haven’t been described in this book — they’ve been left for you to design. The number of chapters isn’t fixed. The regions of Carinthia and Savoy are particularly suitable for Hermetic settlement, but if you want a site that one of the current covenants occupies, then just move the sample covenant to somewhere with the same land type.

Close Family Ties

Some of the chapters in the Alps draw all of their members from a single Hermetic lineage. The Close Family Ties virtue could be applied to this situation, and gives the characters a reason to work together and a

cluster of supportive non-player characters with whom to interact. If you use this method, the 'family' will be an ongoing source of stories in the saga: magi trained by your parents' parents will ask for little favors, their filii will need to be extricated from difficult situations, and enemies of the senior members of the lineage may target their younger filii. This style of saga works best for those Houses whose members have a broad variety of talents.

The Patron Virtue

This virtue, when selected for a new magus, implies that he has the support of a powerful figure. In negotiation with your troupe, your character's patron can be defined as one of the leading magi described in the covenant chapters. The character's place in the Alps has been secured through nepotism. You have a place, but you need to work hard to earn the respect of your peers.

The Heir Virtue

The rulership of some chapters, or even one of the blank covenants, might be passed along a Hermetic line of descent. Characters with the Heir virtue might negotiate with the troupe so that they will, one day, have a free hand in the running of an Alpine chapter house. In this style of saga the player characters may live elsewhere until the heir comes into his inheritance, usually after the first story arc in the saga.

Older magi in the lineage can shamelessly manipulate heirs with threats to designate someone else. Many stories can be linked by demands that they prove their worth, learn how to govern their ancestral covenant, or ingratiate themselves with neighboring covenants. Ancestors can throw together unlikely groups of heirs and servants, then insist they stay together, giving a rationale for diverse player-character groups to cohere.





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