

ARS MAGICA



Lion Rampant

Jonathan Tweet &
Mark Rein-Hagen

Dedicated to

C. G. Jung and Joseph Campbell,
who remind us of the importance of myth

Credits

Game Design Jonathan Tweet
& Development: Mark Rein•Hagen

Design

Contributions: Lisa Stevens

Cover Illustration: Doug Shuler

Chapter

Illustrations: Anne C. Martin

Interior James Garrison

Illustrations: Eric Hotz
Doug Shuler
David Zenz

Art Coordination: John Nephew

Cartography & Character Sheets: Michael Lach
Jonathan Tweet

Editing: Lisa Stevens
John Nephew
Nicole Lindroos
Joanna Bare

Lay-Out: Jonathan Tweet
Kirsten Swingle

Special Thanks to Lisa Stevens, Our Heroine

Thanks Also To: Darin "Woody" Eblom, Jayson Gralewicz, Steve Wright, Marty Dennis, Simon Robinson, Joel Wegner, Lisa Paulson, Derek Greco, Kevin Weiner, Kurt Hartwig, Josh Kronick, Bill Seurer, Stewart Wieck, John Porter, John & Diane Hagen, Kristin Hagen, David Knighton, Roser Trepas, Victor Raymond, Peter Hentges

Comments and questions
may be addressed to:
Lion Rampant
PO Box 621
Northfield, MN 55057

The magic we detail in this game is not real, but we
hope you can use it as a metaphor to help you explore
the very real mystery of the human experience.
-the Authors

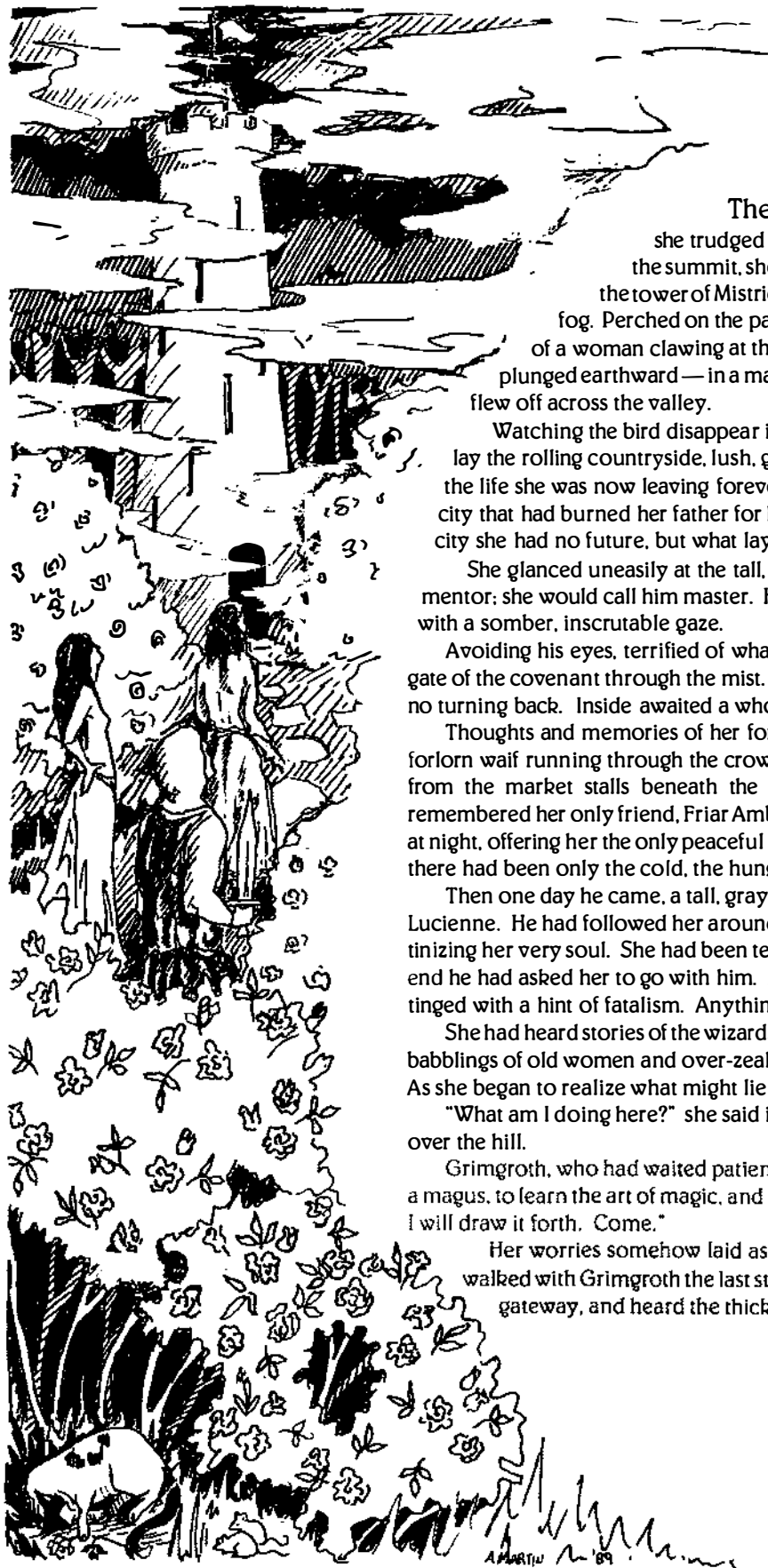
© 1989 by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•Hagen

All Rights Reserved. Reproduction of this book in any manner without consent from the publishers is prohibited. Players may reproduce the character sheets for personal use only.

Table of Contents

0 Introduction	5	5 Spells	75
The Medieval World	5	Spell Format	75
What's New?	6	Spell Descriptions	80
Mechanics	7		
Starting Out	9	6 Laboratory	101
1 Character	11	Basic Laboratory Activities	101
Types of Characters	11	Magic Creations	104
Creating the Character	12	Apprentices	108
The Character in Play	32	Familiars	109
		Arcane Experimentation	112
2 Abilities	37	7 Bestiary	115
Talents	40	Creating a Monster	115
Skills	42	Monster Descriptions	117
Knowledges	44		
3 Combat	47	8 Saga	129
Battles	47	The Order of Hermes	129
Effects of Combat	52	Medieval Society	131
Other Considerations	54	Saga Setting: the Mistridge Saga	133
4 Magic	61	9 Storytelling	147
The Magic Arts	61	Being a Player	147
Casting Spells	63	Being a Storyguide	149
<i>Certámen</i>	69	Stories	150
Supernatural Powers	71	Appendices	156





The wisps of mist swirled around Lucienne as she trudged the last few yards up the hill with the others. Nearing the summit, she stopped and looked up to see the goal of her journey, the tower of Mistridge Covenant thrusting heavenward through the gray fog. Perched on the parapet at the top of the tower was the ragged silhouette of a woman clawing at the air. A screech echoed over the hill as she suddenly plunged earthward — in a mad flurry of feathers, she turned into a large raven, then flew off across the valley.

Watching the bird disappear into the distance, Lucienne looked behind her. There lay the rolling countryside, lush, green, and fertile, home of the common folk, home of the life she was now leaving forever. Somewhere just beyond the horizon lay Foix, the city that had burned her father for heresy and left her mother dead in the gutter. In that city she had no future, but what lay before her now?

She glanced uneasily at the tall, gray-robed wizard beside her, Grimgroth, her future mentor; she would call him master. He had stopped beside her and was searching her face with a somber, inscrutable gaze.

Avoiding his eyes, terrified of what she might see, Lucienne peered forward, to see the gate of the covenant through the mist. Once she passed through that portal, there would be no turning back. Inside awaited a whole new world.

Thoughts and memories of her former life rushed through her mind. Of her years as a forlorn waif running through the crowded streets with a gang of urchins. Of stealing bread from the market stalls beneath the disapproving gaze of the looming cathedral. She remembered her only friend, Friar Ambrose, who would sometimes gather her into his robes at night, offering her the only peaceful sleep she ever enjoyed. After the death of her parents, there had been only the cold, the hunger, and the loneliness.

Then one day he came, a tall, gray shadow, whose stare tugged at feelings of awe within Lucienne. He had followed her around the city for days, watching everything she did, scrutinizing her very soul. She had been terrified, but there was no one she could turn to. In the end he had asked her to go with him. And she had gone, compelled by a nagging curiosity, tinged with a hint of fatalism. Anything would be better than the streets.

She had heard stories of the wizards and their damnable deeds. The tales were mainly the babblings of old women and over-zealous priests, but what if there was some truth in them? As she began to realize what might lie before her, a feeling of panic clutched her heart.

"What am I doing here?" she said in a whisper barely audible above the wind that raced over the hill.

Grimgroth, who had waited patiently for her, said gently, "You, Lucienne, are becoming a magus, to learn the art of magic, and to learn of yourself. You have the Gift within you, and I will draw it forth. Come."

Her worries somehow laid aside, and her heart filled with new courage, Lucienne walked with Grimgroth the last steps through the mist to the tower, entered through the gateway, and heard the thick, oaken doors shut behind her. A new life had begun.

A. MARTIN Nov '89

☉ Introduction ☉

W

While nobles wage their petty wars, friars preach to their forlorn flocks, and rogues scrounge for ill-gotten wealth; a mystical order of wizards dwells on the outskirts of civilization, dedicated to their arcane and esoteric pursuits. As legendary sages of great lore and unrivaled power, these sorcerers face the perils of a dark world that others dare not even dream of. Gathered together as the enigmatic Order of Hermes, these wizards struggle against internal intrigue and against persecution from those who do not care to understand their art and knowledge. Though magic pervades this medieval world, only these few gifted individuals, after years of apprenticeship, have mastered *ars magica*, the art of magic.

In *Ars Magica* you play the role of one such person: *You* are a

wizard. And not just a simple caster of spells and weaver of charms — you are a dedicated and educated practitioner of the magical arts. As a wizard, you stand in stark contrast to medieval society. While the rest of society is ignorant, largely illiterate, bound to a decadent hierarchy, and fearful of what lies beyond civilization, you are learned, creative, free from social constraints, and willing to dare the mysteries that surround you.

Though you study incessantly, occasionally you venture forth to gather magical ingredients for enchantments, to obtain new knowledge, and to assist those who warrant your aid. On these journeys, you are accompanied by friends and companions, and protected by mercenary guards. These perilous expeditions are the heart of *Ars Magica*, and letting you tell the stories of these journeys is the purpose of this book.

The Medieval World

Ars Magica is set in a mythical version of thirteenth century Europe. Though the rules can be modified for any fantasy world, they were designed to bring out the flavor of the Middle Ages and are perhaps best used to this end. This setting is not merely historical; it is meant to evoke a certain flavor, a certain grandeur.

The world in *Ars Magica* is the world the way the medieval folk looked at it: It is as magical as they imagined it to be. It is a mythical setting, and poetic justice is part of daily life. Even the common folk deal with the supernatural, but more infrequently than the wizards. Charms and saints' relics protect them from the evil eye, prayers hold at bay the invisible demons that stalk their villages at night, and ancient curses haunt them. Some leave food on boulders to appease the forest spirits, and then go to church to pray for forgiveness. The world is alive with magical significance.

The medieval person sees the world magically, not logically and scientifically. They see connections in the world that we do not believe exist. Intuitive, universal principles, rather than concepts of genes, germs or gestation are what guide the world. For instance, an inclination towards evil is inheritable, and the sins of parents can cause their children to be crippled. Likewise, filth causes disease because disease, like filth, is corruption. These concepts are not merely beliefs; in this game they are world truths.

The Church is the pinnacle of Creation; all that lies outside its Dominion is dangerous, unpredictable, and profane. The dangers modern people fear, such as accidents, crime, and perhaps wild animals, may be threatening, but they are also natural and mundane. It is the *unknown* which is feared the most, and magic is perhaps the most unknown force of all.

Accepting the medieval world-view is easier to do than it may sound. Just think back to your childhood (when you used to play make-believe) and remember the magical way you looked at the

world. It was a more interesting and entertaining place when arcane mysteries lurked all about you (yes, even under the bed), back before you had figured everything out. The medieval world is filled with the same kind of mystery and romance; you will find it a vivid backdrop for the adventures of your characters.

Magical Setting

Magic is everywhere; and its existence affects every detail of life — usually in the most subtle of ways. Magic is a mysterious and mercurial force, not a precise science that can easily be harnessed to the whims of mortals. It is the focal point of *Ars Magica*, so cultivating an appreciation of its mystery and possibility will greatly increase your enjoyment of the game.

Magic is the supernatural force, the invisible connections, that bind everything together. It is a way of thinking about the world that modern people no longer find useful. On one level, wizards are exploring these subtle connections to exploit them and gain power, much the way many scientists exploit scientific laws to develop new technology. The best wizards, however, are driven by a deeper need, the need to understand the universe, just as our best physicists today search for a unified field theory. As a wizard in *Ars Magica*, you may begin by learning better ways to put magic to use; but frequently, as wizards grow more powerful, more arcane matters will come to their attention, and curiosity overcomes ambition.

Magical pursuits will lead you beyond the safe boundaries of human society and knowledge. You will encounter enigmatic faeries in their deep forests, fierce griffins in barren wastelands, giants in their mountain fastnesses, and serpents that lurk in the dark depths of the ocean. Once you have passed out of human civilization, all manner of creatures, fair and foul, are to be found.