

Ars Magica

Antagonists



by Ferguson, Gronosky,
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Antagonists

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Richard Love thanks his grooving partner, Paula, and wishes that everybody would just get along without so much antagonism. What would be the harm in that?

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Ars Magica players participate in a thriving fan community by subscribing to email discussion lists (like the Berkeley list), compiling archives of game material (such as Project Redcap), maintaining fan-created web sites, and running demos through Atlas Games' Special Ops program. To learn more, visit www.atlas-games.com/ArM5. You can also participate in discussions of *Ars Magica* at the official Atlas Games forums located at forum.atlas-games.com.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Welcome to *Antagonists*. This supplement for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* contains ten characters who can take the role of antagonist in your saga.

The antagonist characters provoke conflict to which the magi of your saga must respond. Antagonists draw the magi of your saga into stories. Some of the antagonists might directly attack your covenant. Other antagonists create political turmoil that threaten your magi, your covenant, or even the entire Order of Hermes.

Each antagonist character is a recurring opponent whose influence will take several stories to resolve. Some antagonists will be active for a number of years or decades, so you might like to intersperse the antagonist's stories with other stories (or even the stories of another antagonist). However, you probably will not want to use all the antagonist characters from this book in a single saga. You could consider each antagonist to be a comprehensive example of a Covenant Hook, although the stories of some antagonists could involve many covenants. Of course, it is not a problem if your troupe does manage to satisfactorily resolve an antagonist's conflict with a single story.

Most of the details of the antagonist characters are intended to be initially obscure to the player characters. Thus, it is recommended — once you have chosen to introduce an antagonist character to your saga — that the troupe allocates a single player to be the story-guide for that antagonist's stories, with the other players refraining from reading the details. This strategy will also help to keep the motivations and actions of the antagonist consistent among stories. On the other hand, the antagonists are still usable even if the players are well-versed in the details. For example, if the player characters are over-

whelmed by an antagonist, the saga could continue with a new set of player characters responding to the devastation of the original covenant. You might also like to re-use an antagonist in an unconnected second saga; how might another group of characters respond?

The antagonists themselves have a variety of motivations. Some are supernatural creatures, other are mundane nobles and churchmen. Some antagonists are not really aware of the Order of Hermes, and their actions only incidentally impact upon the magi. Other antagonists are all too aware of the Order, and deliberately provoke the magi. The following summaries describe the basic idea of each antagonist and can be safely read by the whole troupe when discussing how the antagonists might be used in your saga.

Baron Geoffroi D'Arques

Baron Geoffroi D'Arques is a wealthy noble, initially concerned with little more than the success of his lands and providing for his family. But his interest in the supernatural is suddenly piqued, and he starts upon a journey that makes him by turns ally and enemy to the covenant. He starts to attract conjurers, charlatans, and all manner of hedge wizards to his court, eager to learn about magic and turn it to the betterment of his lands. Geoffroi's activities are rarely directed toward the covenant, but as he opens his court to others practiced in magic, the complications make themselves felt upon the covenant

and its resources. The gathering of hedge wizards and the baron's continued quest for more magic will make it impossible for the covenant to ignore him forever.

Baron Giraud Le Cornu

Baron Giraud Le Cornu holds a manor adjacent to the covenant's land. He looks on the magi with deep suspicion: they have men-at-arms and perhaps a castle, but they refuse to swear fealty to any noble. Their strange powers make them an object of fear. He sees their self-proclaimed autonomy as a rebellion against proper authority and a threat to the social order of Mythic Europe.

As an antagonist, the baron shows how the Order of Hermes doesn't really fit well into medieval society. He can steer the covenant toward a more stable relationship with mundane nobles, but at the cost of upsetting the Order's entrenched attitudes about mundane relations. He also shows how much trouble mundane intrigue can cause for a covenant.

Father Joseph of Napoli

Father Joseph is a papal legate sent on a mission to the Order of Hermes. He proposes that the Order of Hermes reinvent