

Ars Magica

Dies Irae

A Book of Wrathful Days



by Lawford,
McFarland, Ryan &
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Mark Lawford lives in Eastbourne on England's sunny south coast where he is working on his first novel and continues to feed his newfound love of strength sports. Mark is also currently co-editor of Sub Rosa, the Ars Magic fan magazine. He'd like to dedicate his work on this book to David Chart, without whom Mark would never have sent in that first open call submission. It's been a great run and Mark has had the chance to do just about everything he wanted with the game.

Ben McFarland lives in the wilds of Upstate New York, where he continues to venture into mysterious regiones in search of adventure with the priceless support of his wonderful wife, Mandy, his family, and the excellent advice of his steadfast friend, James. He sincerely wishes to thank David Chart, Mark Lawford, Erik Dahl, and James Parks for their excellent friendship, trust, and encouragement. To them and the other authors of the line, it's truly been a pleasure to work with you on this incarnation of Ars Magica. *Ordo Hermae vitae*.

Matt Ryan wrote for Ars Magica for just over a decade, starting in 2004 with *Living Lore* and ending in 2016 with *Dies Irae*. He contributed to almost two score supplements, either as author or cartographer. He had many joys and a few disappointments writing for the game – such is life – and is proud to have participated in creating such a wonderful role-playing game. He hopes players enjoy it and his contributions for many years to come. He thanks his family, KC and Aug, for the many hours they let him spend in his study writing and drawing.

Mark Shirley lives in the no man's land between Stonehenge and Loch Leglean where he works as a zoologist and biomathematician. He would like to apologize to any fans of Norse Mythology for any *jamais vu* caused by using Viktor Rydberg's writings for source material. If you find the mythological details familiar yet not quite right, that is why! Mark considers that working on *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* has been a privilege, not least because of the remarkable and talented people with whom he has worked and would like to thank them all for their encouragement and collaboration.



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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 *Dies Irae* — the Day of Wrath — the culminating story for your *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* saga. Within are four chapters, each setting out a story of the destruction of Mythic Europe as your player characters know it. Yet in the darkness is a thin ray of light; each chapter also offers a variety of means for the magi to stop the catastrophe and save the world, or at least survive in the aftermath.

The title, *Dies Irae*, is derived from the medieval Latin hymn, "Dies Irae," composed sometime during the 13th century and sung most often at funerals during the Requiem Mass, the Mass for the dead. Nineteen stanzas long, the first warrants repeating:

*Dies irae! Dies illa
Solvat saeculum in favilla:
Teste David cum Sibylla.
(The day of wrath, and in that day
The world in ashes pass away
As David and the Sibyl say.)*

Most troupes will only use one of the following four chapters; pick the one that best suits your troupe's style of play. Nothing prevents you from using more than one chapter, and if your players' characters are especially good at saving the world, they may like to do so more than once. While that may be overly dramatic for many troupes, it is well within the bounds of legitimate role-playing. Indeed, some of the chapters work well as a set, if that is what you want.

Why destroy the world? Everything has a cycle, and just as covenants are measured in seasons, growing from Spring to Summer, to Autumn, and eventually to Winter, so too do sagas age and mature. Winter brings the death of things, but Spring sprouts life. Perhaps your saga has run its course and your troupe is looking for a fitting end before beginning anew. If your player characters are exceptionally powerful, as many magi can be, perhaps you need a world-ending chal-

lenge to separate the wheat from chaff, to see which characters are truly powerful enough to withstand such an apocalyptic threat. Perhaps you simply want an epic story to guide your players through, and there are none more epic than the following four.

The following four apocalypses are intended to combine with your current saga and close it. The early stages of each should seamlessly mesh with ordinary events, blending with any current story arcs you are running. As the years progress, the apocalypse moves to center stage, overriding the magi's current concerns due to its cataclysmic importance. Each of the four apocalypses covers many in-game years, and will take sessions of play to resolve. More than a straightforward series of interlinked adventures, such as we presented in the *ArM5* supplement *Thrice-Told Tales*, each of the following four chapters is an extended campaign, designed to include your current stories before dashing the magi's hopes and dreams against rocks of impending doom.

The End of Time

The limit of the Lunar Sphere has been a prize for Hermetic researchers since the founding of the Order. Breaking that limit could open up new forms of magic, whole new worlds even. Or it could, in the wrong hands, bring about the Apocalypse and the end of time itself. A doomsday cult within the Order is working to bring about just such an end.

No simple grab for power, the threat comes from the last place the Order would think to look. Driven by an unshakable belief, this cult at the heart of the Order is nearing the end of its plan. As that end draws nigh, signs and portents start to appear to those who recognize them; the rise of the

four horsemen, the rising of the beast from the sea, stars falling from the sky.

Can the magi recognize these signs, identify the cultists, and can they convince a skeptical Order that those they once called friends will submit the Earth to conquest, war, famine, and death. Can they prevent the end of time?

Fimbulwinter

Before the great battle of Ragnarok, before the battle of the Jotnar and the Aesir, the eddas tell of a terrible, unnatural season, a time of three winters without summer where starvation, death, and war rule the land: the Fimbulwinter. And now someone has found a way to bring this winter to Mythic Europe.

Things start slowly, as the plotters seek out the places of power and allies they need to carry out their plans, and as the magi seek out vis and write their books, they may not realize that winter is coming. If the enemies are not stopped, however, they summon Aspects of Primeval Winter from the Magic Realm to blanket the land in unending snow, bringing war, famine, and despair.

The Great Pestilence

Plagues are notorious horrors of Mythic Europe, striking without warning and stemming from no known cause. The Order of Hermes generally ignores such calamities, its magic more than equal to protecting its members from such pandemics. Magi sit

safely and smugly in their ivy-clad towers, waiting out plagues as if they were nothing more than a passing rainstorm.

Until their vis mysterious rots away, their magical animals and creature allies grow sick and die, and the land encompassed by their Magic aura emits noxious vapors that poison the surrounding countryside. All this with no advance notice, no known origin, and with no end in sight. Dubbed "The Great Pestilence," this fearsome blight overwhelms the Magic Realm, eating it away one Form at a time, and slowly rendering its magic inert and useless. As the magi lose power, the Great Pestilence continues to spread. Mankind falters, stricken by wave after wave of various poisons generated from every Magic aura and regio across Mythic Europe.

Can the magi discern what is happening and survive long enough to stop it, or will they too suffer the ravages of the Great Pestilence?

The Twilight of the Gods

Millenia ago, the Magic titans and the Faerie gods clashed in a cosmic battle called the Titanomachy. The titans lost, and were imprisoned in the Magic Realm; their powers tempered by the chains that bound them. Now someone plots to fulfill the prophecy that will bring about a second war with the gods: a war which the titans are fated to win. As the metaphorical chains binding the titans are loosened one by one, the approaching apocalypse is presaged by wars, armies of giants, invasion by monsters, the swallowing of the moon, and the return of the pagan dead. Unless the plan can be thwarted, mankind will be caught in between the warring powers.

Should they fail, the new world that emerges from the chaos of the war between Magic and Faerie is one ruled by magic. Far from being a magician's idyll, magi will discover that magical power can no longer be freely acquired; the titans are back in control and they jealously guard magic and closely regulate its flow. The world has become a dangerous place where monsters roam free and magic warps the edifices of man.



Daimons and Aspects

Daimons are featured in more than one chapter in this book, so some general notes are offered here.

Daimons are spirits that embody the elements of creation. They dwell in the Magic Realm, but interact with the mundane world by a creating a spirit called an Aspect. Aspects are normally in constant mental contact with their Daimon, and are Arcane Connections to them. Creating an Aspect does not cost the Daimon any Might points, and it can have any number of Aspects active at any one time. The Daimon knows what all its Aspects are thinking and doing, although it does not necessarily share this information with other active Aspects. An Aspect has its own Might Score, although its Might pool does not replenish; instead when it is exhausted of Might points it is recreated by its Daimon. Destroying an Aspect has few consequences for the Daimon; the As-

pect can be restored instantly, although it cannot return to the same location where it was destroyed or dismissed until a day has passed. An Aspect also cannot appear within several miles of another Aspect of the same Daimon, or where one has been in the last day. Powerful Daimons have several Aspect types, each with a unique identity and name, personality, and powers. They can also manifest multiple copies of the same Aspect simultaneously. More information about Daimons can be found on page 102 of *Realms of Power: Magic*.

Destroying an Aspect is the same as destroying any supernatural creature, but destroying a Daimon is much harder; *Perdo Vim* directed through an Aspect does not work. Even in the Titanomachy, the Daimons were not destroyed, merely imprisoned.