

Chapter 9: Inscription and Binding Contracts

The art of Inscription gives a character the ability to copy ritual formulas used by ritualists and production formulas and designs such as those used by Forge Mages and others. Practitioners of this art, called scribes, can create scrolls that can store battle spells for later use, and they can inscribe Warding Glyphs that protect buildings from many kinds of intruders. By studying the art of Binding Contracts, they can create contracts that join people in marriage, in cabals, in commerce, or in diplomacy. To do this, they must have magic of their own, or employ magical ink produced by Alchemy. As with other production skills, each level of Inscription gives the character one (1) production point that he can use in each production period.

Copying Ritual Formulas

A character can create a copy of a ritual formula by spending 1 PP per 5 bones or portion thereof required to complete the ritual. The cost in Material Units is 1 MU for every 10 bones or portion thereof required to complete the ritual. Dueling rituals are very simple to copy, at a cost of 1 PP and 1 MU. The scribe must have an original of the spell on hand in order to make a copy.

Copying Production Formulas and Designs

A character can create a copy of a production formula or design by spending 1 PP for every 2 PP of the formula he wishes to copy. Forge Magic formulas use their 3-event production point cost for these purposes. The cost in Material Units is 1 MU for formulas of 5 PP or fewer and 2 MU for formulas of 6 to 10 PP. The scribe must have an original of the formula on hand in order to make a copy.

Creating Spell Scrolls

To create a spell scroll, a character must have a production formula for the effect she wishes to inscribe, and a source of power suitable to that effect. Each Realm of Celestial Ways is a source of power for scrolls of the same Realm (see Chapter 11: Magic of the Celestials). Each mystery cult acts as a source for at least one Realm and one Form, as listed in the cult's writeup (see Chapter 12: Magic of the Humans). Ritualism is a universal source for Inscription (see Chapter 15: Ritualism). When lacking the Realm or Form they want to use in a scroll, scribes may use Inscribe Ink. Each vial of Inscribe Ink grants access to one Realm and two Forms, according to the mystical material used to make the ink.

A spell scroll is a piece of paper or other writeable medium of at least 46 square inches in area. The standard form is half a standard piece of paper, or 5.5 inches by 8.5 inches. Players should have separate scroll props for different combinations of Source and Effect, but multiple copies of the same Source and Effect do not require separate props. Upon creating the scroll, the player receives a tag from Production that represents one or more charges on the scroll.

Copying Legal Documents and Manuscripts

Inscription is not required for a player to make a physical copy of a mundane (i.e. no game effect) document. Inscription is required only if the Plot Committee needs to provide a phys-rep for the copy (formulas, rituals, legal documents, documents that represent rules mechanics, et al). Such texts may be subject to further in-character requirements or limitations.

Legal Documents require 1 PP and 1 MU to copy up to 10 pages; these are documents rendered in "Scribe Hand" (Copperplate Gothic), such as writs, guild certificates, and the like. It is not possible to forge signatures on such documents reliably. These may also be subject to further in-play requirements or limitations.

Any full manuscript requires the Book Binding formula. A book of up to 10 pages costs 3 PP, and 1 more PP per 10 pages or portion thereof. MU costs may vary based on how elaborate the project is, but begin at 1 MU per 10 pages (plus the binding) for a stripped, no-frills copy of a book. The presence of a formula in a manuscript increases the copying cost by the normal value of the formula in question. This does not replace a page for purposes of page count, and is a flat add to the cost.

Manuscripts, unlike other Inscription projects, may be tied off and worked on over multiple production periods, though copying any single formula as part of a manuscript must be completed within a single production period. Tying off an enchantment costs 1 PP that does not contribute to the enchantment itself. Scribes may treat multiple production periods within the same event or set of BGAs as a lump sum for purposes of completing manuscripts.

If a functional ritual, production formula, or the like is written into a manuscript, copying it is treated as a separate project and uses the normal rules for those items.

Copying a manuscript of a book does not guarantee a physical copy of the book to be given to the PC, but is best used for copies that will be going places offscreen, such as copying a text for the benefit of a library. Prices charged by scribes may reflect additional labor or market costs.

Using Spell Scrolls

To use a spell scroll, a character must have a magical tie to the Realm or Form of the scroll, or must have enough levels of Inscription to make the scroll. Here again, ritualism acts as a tie to all Realms and Forms. Each effect has a listed prerequisite for the strength of the tie that is necessary: Circles of Celestial Ways, Mysteries of Totemic magic, or bones of ritualism. A character must also have enough light to read the scroll; dim light is sufficient, but complete darkness is not. The tagline to use a spell scroll is "Activate (Source) (Effect)," and spell scrolls interact with Disadvantages and other areas of the rules as if their effects come from Ritualism. Spell scroll universally use gray packets.

Warding Glyphs

Warding Glyphs are created to hedge out creatures according to type, unleashing magic on creatures of that type if they pass through the warded door. A Warding Glyph guards only one door, and a door may

not have more than one Warding Glyph, unless the Forge Magic enchantment of the Second Glyph has been placed on the door. As a baseline, all Warding Glyphs strike each individual of the named type with an Ice Arrow to the torso when any part of that individual passes through the door; this effect can be absorbed on torso armor, Shielded, Warded or Resisted, but cannot be Countered or Dodged. Handheld weapons other than claws, and projectile weapons of all kinds, are not a part of the wielder's body. The Ice Arrow effect can be modified to a wide range of different effects, for an added cost in PP and MU. A scribe must possess the formula for the type of creature he wishes to ward away, but does not need a separate formula to modify effects. Additional effects not included in the chart below may be possible, but would require a researched production formula. A single charge of a Warding Glyph has a duration of three (3) days; certain rare circumstances can cause a Warding Glyph to possess multiple charges. The phys-rep for a Warding Glyph is a piece of paper 8.5 inches by 11 inches, bearing the symbol specified in the production formula. The Glyph is activated by affixing the piece of paper above a doorway. Activating a Warding Glyph requires at least one level of the Inscription Talent. As with other types of home defenses, Warding Glyphs must be noted in the cabin notes, including the effect that strikes the specified creatures.

Binding Contracts

Binding Contracts are a way to reward adherence to one's contractual obligations, as well as punish the breach of obligations. Four structures of binding contracts exist: the marriage contract, binding two people and ensuring fidelity; the cabal contract, binding a group of three to nine people into a cabal for various purposes; the commerce contract, in which parties agree to an exchange of goods, services, or value; and diplomatic contracts, binding people in various oaths of loyalty, fealty, peace, or alliance. It takes greater skill and effort on the part of the scribe to include stronger benefits, stronger punishments, greater duration, and escape clauses that avoid the penalties of breaching the contract. Binding Contracts do not require production formulas of any kind.

A character may purchase the first level of Binding Contracts when he has learned Inscription 3. He may buy additional levels of Binding Contracts at Inscription 5, 7, 9, and 10.

Book of Formulas

Characters starting with levels of Inscription begin play with three (3) formulas, plus one (1) formula for every level of Inscription past the first, and a book binding. The character may only choose formulas of requiring Inscription levels equal to or lower than her starting level of Inscription. She may purchase additional starting Inscription formulas with her starting money, paying a monetary value equal to the MU cost of completing the formula. She may not purchase more than five (5) additional formulas in this manner. The phys-rep for a book of formulas should accommodate sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper.

Spell Scroll Descriptions

The list of effects available within Inscription is below. See the Chapter 17: Effect List for details on most of these effects. Inscription Level indicates the level of Inscription required to inscribe that effect; this is not always equal to the Production Point cost. The values for Bones indicate the number of bones that

the ritualist must be able to draw at his maximum capacity in order to cast the spell from the scroll. The values for Celestial Circle indicate the Circle required to use the scroll, assuming the character is aligned with the appropriate Realms. The values for Totemic Mystery indicate the Mysteries that the character must have achieved within a mystery cult in order to use the scroll. The list of Sources for each effect are the Realms and Forms that may be attached to that effect. For example, it is possible to create a scroll of Heal Minor Wounds from Light, Fire, or Flesh, but not Aether, Earth, Dust, and so on.

Effect	Inscription Level	PP	MU	Bones	Celestial Circle	Totemic Mystery	Sources
Dart	1	1	2	5	1	1	Light, Fire, Storm, Shadow, Ice
Arrow	3	3	3	10	2	3	Light, Fire, Storm, Shadow, Ice
Slow	1	1	1	5	1	1	Ice, Dust
Pin Foot	2	2	2	10	2	3	Ice, Fluid, Earth
Bands	3	3	2	10	2	3	Ice
Weaken	2	2	2	5	1	1	Flesh, Earth, Dust
Disease	3	2	3	5	1	1	Shadow, Flesh, Fluid
Drop	2	1	2	5	1	1	Storm, Dust
Fling	4	3	3	10	2	3	Storm
Engulf	3	3	3	10	2	3	Fire, Aether
Break	3	3	3	5	1	1	Storm, Aether
Mental Befuddle	1	1	2	5	1	1	Shadow, Aether
Mental Pain	2	2	2	5	1	1	Storm, Flesh
Mental Fear	4	4	4	10	2	3	Light, Shadow, Storm
Stun	4	4	4	15	3	5	Storm, Earth
Mental Enrage	4	4	4	10	2	3	Storm
Meld	4	4	5	15	3	5	Shadow, Earth
Strength	2	2	2	5	1	1	Light, Fire, Earth
Accelerate Healing	2	2	1	5	1	1	Light, Fire, Flesh

Heal Minor Wounds	3	3	2	10	2	3	Light, Fire, Flesh
Heal Wound	6	5	3	15	3	5	Light, Fire, Flesh
Name Weapon	8	8	10	15	3	5	Any
Name Armor	8	8	10	15	3	5	Any
Name Shield	8	8	10	15	3	5	Any
Sigil of Inspiration	6	6	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	Any
Sigil of Spell Storing	7	7	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	Any
Sigil of Sanctification	5	5	5	--	1	--	Any
Book Binding	1	1	1	--	--	--	--

Inscriptions of Naming

The Name Weapon, Name Armor, and Name Shield scrolls give the target object a name. Naming a weapon, shield, or suit of armor might occur before or after its involvement in a great deed. Nothing without a name and at least one great deed will endure through the ages or hold unusual resonance with Forge Magic. Inscriptions of Naming must still have an associated Source, so a weapon might be named with Fire or Dust or Shadow. There is no way to know what deeds might be accounted truly great, or what the outcome might be.

Sigil of Inspiration

When this scroll is activated, the person using it receives two (2) Production Points, of any Production skill, to be used immediately. These Production Points do not allow the character to make anything she would otherwise be unable to make; for example, a character with Brewing 1 could not make a brew that required 3 PP to create. They do, however, add to her production capacity for the day. These 2 PP are doubled if the character uses a lab appropriate to the skill. A Sigil of Inspiration has no effect on a character without at least one (1) level of a Production skill, but otherwise any character can use a Sigil of Inspiration. A character may use as many Sigils of Inscription in a day as she likes. Though the Sigil is designated with a magical source, the source has no bearing on the effects of the Sigil.

Sigil of Spell Storing

This scroll targets a character, and requires that its Sigil be drawn on the back of that character's hand or on a glove. The sigil must be at least 1" x 1" in size, and it must be visible in order to activate a spell out of it; if on a glove, it must be worn. With Celestial Ways, ritualism, or Totemic magic, a spellcaster can imbue a spell into that sigil. The bearer of the sigil can cast the spell out of the sigil once. This activation does not require an incant. Imbued Battle spells of Celestial Ways and Totemic magic use the Magic

tagline for this casting (“Magic Fire Arrow”), while imbued Battle spells of ritualism use the Activate tagline for this casting (“Activate Fire Arrow”). Enchantment spells require a minute of casting time, but otherwise use Magic or Activate, as described. A character may wear up to two Sigils of Spell Storing at a time. A sigil may hold only one spell at a time, but a caster may invest a new spell into it once the first is used. The sigil fades at dusk, and any spell it is currently holding is lost. Though the Sigil is designated with a magical source, the source has no bearing on the effects of the Sigil.

Sigil of Sanctification

The Sigil of Sanctification targets an area, typically a building. If used on something other than a building, the boundaries of the sanctification must be clearly marked (with chalk, stones, rope, rope lights, or the like), and the sanctification inevitably fails if this area is much larger than the size of a lodge.

Sanctification allows Primarchs to enter the world briefly, typically for the purpose of teaching Celestial Ways. There is no absolute guarantee that a Primarch will enter the world when an area is suitably sanctified, but celestials will typically know the times that would be most appropriate to sanctify an area.

This Sigil must be dedicated to a magical source, and that source is certain to have an effect on the Primarch. Dedication to the Forms is possible, but not recommended.

Book Binding

Scribes can create book bindings that hold ritual formulas, production formulas, and designs, and can receive any protective effect that can target an item, such as a Shield against Destruction. Effects that would destroy the book and everything in it, such as Disintegrate effects, are stopped by this Shield against Destruction or other effect, and anything inside the book is not destroyed. No skill is required to add or remove formulas or designs from a book binding.

A character holding a bound book and wishes to do so may Break each formula or design in the book, one at a time or all of them together, and should mark them Broken. Broken formulas are still subject to Mend effects. With access to open flame or similarly destructive effects, a character may apply a Destroy effect to each formula or design in the book, and should mark them Destroyed. Please do not actually damage a player’s book or formulas.

As they are tagged items, individual formulas or designs may also be protected with Shields against Destruction and similar effects. These protectives take effect if no protection remains on the book binding itself.

If stored loose rather than in a book binding, the same rules for Breaking or Destroying formulas and designs apply.

Warding Glyph Descriptions

The list of creature types that can be warded away with Warding Glyphs is listed below. Inscription Level is the level of Inscription required to create a Warding Glyph against that creature that uses the Ice

Arrow effect. Variant effects are possible, but some of them increase the Inscription Level necessary as well as the PP and MU costs.

Type	Inscription Level	Production Cost	Material Unit Cost
Shadow Creatures	7	5	6
Trolls	6	3	4
Ghuls	6	3	4
Homunculi	7	4	6
Natural Animals	5	2	3
Spirits	8	4	6

Variant Effects

A scribe may create a Warding Glyph that uses one of the following effects in place of Ice Arrow. Consult the Effect List for details on each of these effects. The numbers in this table are added directly to the numbers in Warding Glyph Descriptions, and are treated as a single production item.

Templates	Inscription Level	Production Cost	Material Unit Cost
Light Arrow	0	1	1
Ice Pin Foot	0	1	1
Ice Bands	1	1	1
Ice Silence	1	1	2
Shadow Disease	1	2	2
Shadow Befuddle	0	1	1
Shadow Fear	2	2	2
Light Awaken	0	1	1
Storm Fear	2	2	3
Storm Arrow	0	0	1
Storm Pain	1	1	1
Shadow Magic Mouth*	0	0	1

Magic Mouth

As it is not part of the standard Effect List, Magic Mouth is described here. When a Warding Glyph with this effect is triggered, a marshal present reads aloud up to fifteen words, decided on by the scribe as the Warding Glyph was created. The Magic Mouth is unique in that it can be set to trigger on all who pass, not just creatures of one type. This application requires Inscription 8 and costs 6 PP and 7 MU.

Binding Contracts

Scribes can create contracts to bind individuals to their promises, rewarding them as long as they adhere to those promises and punishing them if they violate them. Such contracts must have requirements that are clear in terms of both the obligations and the conditions under which those obligations have been violated; a marshal can reject a contract if it does not meet these requirements.

Please understand that modern-day contract law is out of place in the world of Dust to Dust, to say nothing of the fact that none of the staff members (as of this writing) have a law degree.

Benefits of a Contract

Some types of contracts yield benefits to their signatories as long as the terms of the contract are honored. A contract that includes benefits must include at least one more PP worth of penalties upon violation than the cumulative PP value of all benefits. All signatories receive the same benefits, just as all signatories suffer the same penalties. Any Advantages conferred as a benefit of a contract are temporary, and do not satisfy prerequisites of any kind. Benefits fade instantly upon violation of the contract's terms. For purposes of Magic Sense, a character receiving a benefit from a contract is under the effects of an Enchantment (Other). If the benefit granted by the contract is an Advantage, the general effect of the magic is "other."

Penalties for Violation of a Contract

All contracts inflict some measure of penalty upon signatories who violate the terms of the contract; this is the sense in which the contract is said to be binding. For no added investment of the scribe's PP, the contract inflicts an Arcane Disease effect upon the violating character, once per day. More severe effects or the assignment of Disadvantages are possible with the investment of additional effort. These penalties continue through the duration established in the contract; in the case of Permanent contracts, the penalties continue indefinitely, or until the other parties of the contract carry out any escape clause that may have been included. For purposes of Magic Sense, a character suffering from the penalty for violating a contract has an active Battle (Other) effect. If the penalty inflicted by the contract is a Disadvantage, the general effect of the magic is "other."

Escape Clauses

Scribes can add escape clauses into contracts for one additional PP and two additional MU. An escape clause establishes the conditions under which one or all signatories are no longer constrained by the terms of the contract, and will no longer enjoy its benefits or potential penalties. An escape clause can be as simple or complicated as necessary without increasing its cost past 1 PP.

Unless specified as such in an escape clause, the temporary death of one or all signatories does not end a contract. Permanent death normally ends the contract, though contracts that include more than two signatories may continue until only one signatory remains.

Contracts of Marriage

Oresund and Akathia are the cultures most likely to use a Binding Contract of marriage. At the other extreme, such contracts are almost entirely unknown in the Principalities of Verdien, where the Redwood Throne asserts authority over the marriage ceremony. Contracts of Marriage have a base duration of Permanent, rather than needing to pay additional PP for an extended duration. Escape clauses are possible, but uncommon. Certain contract benefits are available only to contracts of marriage. A character may not be a signatory in more than one contract of marriage at a time.

Contracts of Cabals

Trust is a rare commodity among ritualists, and Binding Contracts of cabals are one way to balance that. Common requirements include keeping the cabal's secrets from all who do not belong to the cabal. Cabal contracts can include up to nine (9) signatories, as well as recognizing up to nine (9) homunculi as the property of the cabal. While homunculi included in this manner cannot suffer penalties for breach of the contract, they also cannot enjoy the benefits of the contract. Cabals regard this partial inclusion as a benefit, because they can speak about the cabal's secrets in front of their homunculi without breaching the cabal's security. Note that homunculi can also be signatories in their own right, though this is not common. Cabals of fewer than nine signatories can leave lines blank for future members, though those new members typically must be vetted by all prior signatories. Almost all cabal contracts include escape clauses, allowing the cabal's roster to change over the years if necessary. A character may not be a signatory in more than one cabal contract at a time.

Contracts of Commerce

Binding Contracts of commerce are by far the most common form of contract. They specify the exchange of goods, services, or currency within a fixed time period. Such contracts cannot offer benefits for adherence to the contract's terms beyond the stated payment, but severe penalties for violating the contract's terms are common. Contracts of commerce never have more than two signatories. A character may be a signatory in any number of non-conflicting contracts of commerce at a time, but signing two overtly conflicting contracts results in the character suffering the penalties of both.

Contracts of Diplomacy

Binding Contracts of diplomacy are commonly used in all countries for official political agreements, oaths of fealty, and the like. Contracts of diplomacy are the only way in which a contract can bind those who are not signatories, and even the unborn, as monarchs and nobles sign contracts for themselves and all of their line; this is typically understood to apply only to direct patrilineal descent, save for Gaunt, where it applies to matrilineal descent. Contracts of diplomacy can include anywhere from two to dozens of signatories, and have a base duration of one (1) year rather than three (3) months. Contracts between countries typically do not carry benefits, while contracts of fealty typically do. A character may be a signatory in any number of non-conflicting contracts of diplomacy at a time, though determining whether a conflict has occurred can be a complicated matter, particularly with contracts handling fealty.

Contract Type	Base PP Cost	Base MU Cost	Base Duration
Marriage	3	6	Permanent
Cabal	1	3	3 months
Commerce	1	3	3 months
Diplomacy	3	9	1 year

Modification	Binding Contracts Level	Added PP Cost	Added MU Cost	Notes
Benefit: Increased Stamina	2	2	4	
Benefit: Light Sleeper	1	1	2	
Benefit: Pain Resistance	2	2	4	
Benefit: Rapid Healing	4	4	8	
Benefit: Resist Disease	1	2	4	
Benefit: Strong Will	2	3	6	
Benefit: Self-only Effects include other signatory	4	4	8	Marriage contracts only
Benefit: Totem-only Effects include other signatories	4	5	10	Cabal contracts only
Benefit: Shield against Disease 1/day	1	1	2	
Benefit: Shield against Poison 1/day	2	2	4	
Benefit: Shield against Afflict 1/day	3	3	6	
Benefit: Shield against Death 1/day	4	4	8	
Benefit: Shield against Disintegrate 1/day	5	5	10	
Penalty: Arcane Disease 1/day	1	0	0	
Penalty: Arcane Grim Poison 1/day	1	1	2	
Penalty: Arcane Afflict 1/day	2	2	4	
Penalty: Arcane Death Poison 1/day	3	4	8	
Penalty: Arcane Disintegrate 1/day	4	5	10	
Penalty: Frail	2	2	4	
Penalty: Illiterate	1	2	4	

Penalty: Intolerance	2	2	4	
Penalty: Intolerance, Severe	5	5	10	
Penalty: Lamé	1	1	2	
Penalty: Monstrous 2	1	2	4	
Penalty: Mute	5	5	10	
Penalty: Weak Spirit 1	1	1	2	
Penalty: Weak Spirit 2	3	2	4	
Penalty: Weak Spirit 3	5	3	6	
Duration: 6 months	1	1	2	
Duration: 1 year	2	2	4	
Duration: 5 years	3	3	6	
Duration: Permanent	4	4	8	
Escape Clause	1	1	2	