

~ APPROACHING DAWN: ~
THE WITCHING HOUR
Ken Shannon



RULE BOOK

THE APPROACHING DAWN: WITCHING HOUR

INTRODUCTION

Approaching Dawn: The Witching Hour (Witching Hour for short) is a co-operative “hand evolution” game for 3-6 players. Each of you plays a blood-bonded member of a Coven and at least one of you has used a little Black Magic over the last year. Now, each night **from Midnight till Dawn**, your personal Demons are physically manifesting, attempting to steal your Magic and souls. Combatting them helps and hurts your other Coven members due to your bond and if even one of you succumbs to their assault, the Coven is lost.

GAME OVERVIEW

A game of Witching Hour is called a Scene and is played over the course of 4-6 rounds, usually representing the Hours from midnight till dawn. Each Hour, all players draw 5 spell cards from their individual decks, and with limited ability to communicate, choose how they will use those cards and then simultaneously reveal their hands. Many spell cards have dual uses and can be played as either Black Magic ● or White Magic ○. Black Magic defeats the Enemies in front of the Witch who played it, but also hurts the player to their left and will likely cause more Enemies to attack that player. White Magic heals the Witch who played it and can be used to damage Enemies in front of OTHER players. Players can acquire new spells to make themselves more powerful and may often have Secrets, which change how they play. If they survive the Scene, the Coven wins, but if even one member has too much Corruption at the wrong time, or if there are no more spells in the spell bank (Pentagram), EVERYONE loses. Finally, every Scene introduces new rules, so each game will be different.

A Story Game: While the Witching Hour can be played as a typical board game, it is designed to be played as a story. Like a TV show or novel, the base game uses a series of Scenes to tell the story of the Coven over the course of a year, as they deal with the fallout of one or more of its members using Black Magic. While Scenes are designed to play sequentially, you can “quick play” any Scene you choose, as each offers a different experience. For example, All Hallows’ Eve is the most iconic, while Spring Revival is great if you want a shorter game.

WIN CONDITIONS

While each Scene can change the rules, the below rules are always in effect:

The Coven wins if all Coven members survive until dawn (i.e. the end of the 6th Hour/round).

The Coven loses if one of the following occurs:

- If even one Witch has 20 or more Corruption at the end of any Summon Demons phase or after Retribution at the end of the Final Hour. The amount of Corruption may be modified by Scenes.
- Every Locus on the Pentagram is empty.

THE MAIN RULE

Whenever a card tells you something different then these rules, the card takes precedence.





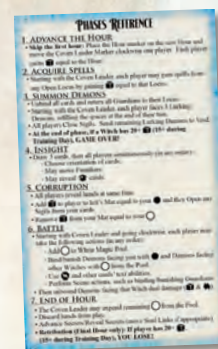
1 Board



8 Character Mats



6 Scene Cards



6 Reference Cards



1 Quickstart Guide



132 Incantation Cards
(Includes 8 Starter Spells per Witch)



12 Artifact Cards



12 Familiar Cards



8 Aurora and 8 Necro Cards



8 Lost Witches Cards



42 Demon Cards
(Includes 6 Starter Demons)



3 Overlord and 4 Hunter Demon Cards



8 Event Cards



18 Secret Cards



36 Sigil Disks



8 Soul Link Tokens



1 Clock Hand



18 Universal Marker/
+1 Card Tokens



1 Beacon of
Light Token



1 Necronomicon
Token



6 Large White Magic
Cubes (5 ○)



6 Large Corruption
Cubes (5 ◼)



15 Small White Magic
Cubes (1 ○)



42 Small Corruption
Cubes (1 ◼)



1 Coven Leader Token



12 +1/+2 White Magic and
12 +1/+2 Black Magic Tokens



1 Addie Seeing the
Good Token



3 Ward Demon Hunt
Tokens



12 Octagonal
Corruption Marker (10 ◼)

SPELL CARDS

There are 3 types of spells you can obtain from the Pentagram: Incantations, Familiars, and Artifacts.

Incantations: These are the most common type of spell and are put into your discard pile at the end of each Hour. They can often be played as either White or Black Magic. Players' starting decks are also comprised of Incantations.

Artifacts: Unlike Incantations, Artifacts have only one Magic type – Black or White. Once played, Artifacts remain in play for the remainder of the Scene. While in play (including the first time it's played) an Artifact's Black or White Magic and its Sigils are added to the other spells played from your hand.

Artifacts only count as being played, for Secrets and other effects, the turn they are played from your hand.

Familiars: Like Artifacts, Familiars stay in play and are not discarded at the end of each Hour. During the Insight phase, each Familiar can be moved once per Hour. Familiars generate Magic, Corruption, and open Sigils just like Artifacts, but they can also be sent to the Æther to bind Enemies during the Battle phase.

SPELL CARDS

INCANTATION CARD



1. Black Magic Background
2. White Magic Background
3. Magic Value
4. Card Name
5. Card Type
6. Cost and Locus or Starter Card Icon
7. Sigils to Open
8. Card Text
9. Gaia Magic (Yellow Border)
10. Starter Card (Blue Diamond)

FAMILIAR CARD

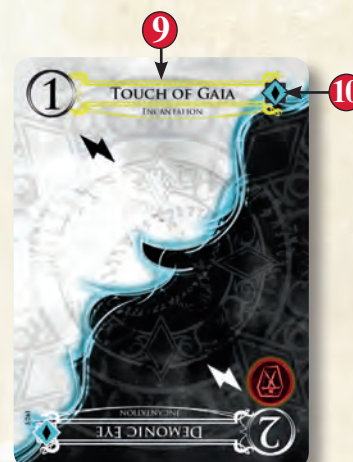


ARTIFACT CARD



"So, you've inherited the ability to cast Magic. Great, another den of mice to the slaughter. Well, as long as you feed me well, we will get along just fine. Who am I? Your guide, of course. We will become quite 'familiar' with each other as time goes on, I assure you. The name is Mr. Patterson, and, I want to get back to my nap! So, quickly, let me tell the story of some who came before you. Old pets --- er, friends --- of mine. Think of it as a lesson.

This story starts as all stories should: with food."



STARTER CARD ICONS

- ⦿ Addie
- ◆ Dianne
- ★ Lily
- ☾ Minora
- ♥ Nancy
- ♣ Paz
- 🔥 Shara
- ✦ Ward

ENEMY CARDS

These are the Enemies you most commonly fight. The Demon Deck is comprised of all the Enemy cards with a red background. Demons are summoned if you have enough Corruption for them to consume and the necessary open Sigils.

Note: Lashin is summoned as though he were a Demon during the Summon Demons phase, even though he is a Warlock.

When an Enemy is attacking it will face a specific Witch. The Enemy can then be bound to keep it from dealing damage this Hour or banished to be sent to the Void (discard). An Enemy's special abilities are also "turned off" when bound. Enemies typically deal damage by consuming Spells from the Pentagram and adding Corruption to players.

Depending on the Scene, you may face other non-Demon Enemies such as the Overlords or the Lost Witches. Also, Enemies acting as Locus Guardians are not considered to be attacking, they do not deal damage or use their special abilities.

ENEMY CARDS

1. Card Name
2. Card Type
3. Corruption Cost Needed to Summon
4. Magic Needed to Bind.
5. Magic Needed to Banish.
6. Damage: Cards Consumed
7. Damage: Corruption Given
8. Open Sigils Needed to Summon
9. Enemy Type Icon
10. Card Text
11. Overlord Background
12. Hunter Demon Background
13. Demon Deck Background
14. Demon with Global Effect



Starter Demon

Blue Corruption Cost
Grayed-Out Sigils
Grayed-Out Card Back



ENEMY TYPE ICONS

- Dark Fey
- Imp
- Hex
- Hunter
- Blood
- Animal
- Warlock
- Overlord
- Legendary

Man, this is stuff is great!" Jemma licked her chocolate cone like it was her first taste ever. Ping looked over at her: "You'd think you'd never eaten ice cream before!" A smile lit Ping's face as she downed a bit of her own cookies and cream.

"Well, it has been a month since I went on my diet," Jemma said ravenously. Her good friend and coven member, Ping, had no idea of the inner warmth which filled Jemma. Gaining all that power from the sun makes a girl hungry! A passing thought hit her: I hope Gaia isn't too upset.

"Another few scoops, please." Jemma smiled, not caring about the chocolate in her teeth, and feeling just a little too hot for comfort. "I'm glad night is coming soon," she thought.

SET-UP

New players use the Quickstart Guide and Scene 0: Training Day until you are comfortable enough to play the full game, which starts at Scene 1: All Hallows' Eve.

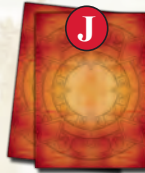
The following are the general Set-Up instructions.

- (A) **Board:** Lay out the board in the center of the table. Place Set-Up Elements (B) – (E) on the board. The **White Magic Pool**, **Void**, **Æther**, and 3 **Lurking Demon** spaces are empty at the start of the game.
- (B) **Scene:** Choose a Scene to play. Read the story aloud and follow any additional Set-Up instructions, including any use of the **Barrows**. Some scenes also have an easy or hard mode to modify game difficulty. If used, simply alter their listed effects during the game. Place the Scene on the Board with the Special Rules showing.
- (C) **Clock:** Place the Hour hand on the clock pointing towards 1:00.
- (D) **Spell Cards:** Form 6 facedown decks, 1 for each **Locus** on the **Pentagram**. Separate the spell cards by the numbers printed on the top right corner of the cards. These are the cost and Locus number for that card. Shuffle each stack separately, then use the *Cards per Locus chart (on next page)* to determine how many cards to place facedown on each Locus. Then, flip the top card of each deck face-up. Return the unused cards back to the box (without revealing them).

- (E) **Demon Deck:** Remove Events, Overlords, and Hunters. Then, shuffle all the remaining cards with a **red background** and **colored Demon card back** together and place them facedown on the Demon Deck space.
- (F) **White Magic:** Take the white cubes and make a pile near the White Magic Pool. These represent the White Magic that players generate. The small cubes are 1 ○ and the large cubes are 5 ○.
- (G) **Corruption:** Take the black cubes and octagons, and make a pile so everyone can reach them. These represent Corruption gained by effects and Enemies. The small cubes are 1 ■, large cubes are 5 ■, and octagons are 10 ■. All Corruption *not* on a Character Mat are called “the pool” or “in the pool.”
- (H) **Tokens:** Place the +1 Card/Universal Marker, +1/+2 White Magic, +1/+2 Black Magic, and Beacon of Light tokens near the Board. If a player chooses Addie or Ward, give them their tokens.
- (I) **Character Mats:** Each player chooses a Character to play. This can be done randomly, through a draft, or whatever method you choose. Each Mat is double sided. Bronze - once per game abilities and Gold - Hourly special abilities. Players may choose which side to play, although the Bronze side is recommended for new players. Place the selected Mat and Set-Up Elements (J) – (M) in each player's area.
- (J) **Starter Spell Decks:** Each player now takes the deck of eight Starter spells belonging to their Witch. These are denoted by the character symbol in the upper right of the spell cards and on the Character Mat. Shuffle your deck and place it facedown next to your Mat, but DO NOT draw any cards. Leave room in your play area for a discard pile.
- (K) **Sigil Disks:** Take 6 wooden disks and place them on your Character Mat so that they cover the right hand, colored Sigils.
- (L) **Starter Demons:** Shuffle the cards with a **grayed-out Demon card back** and deal one face-up in front of each Witch. Any grayed-out Sigils found on the Starter Demons will Open those same Sigils on your Mat. Move the corresponding disks to the left, revealing the colored Sigils, hence opening them up. Now look at the Corruption Cost ● in the upper right and place that many Corruption cubes onto your Mat. Each player will start with 2-4 Corruption.
- (M) **Reference Card:** Give one to each player.
- (N) Give the **Coven Leader Marker** to a random player. Each Hour (round), this marker will be passed clockwise to the next player, who then becomes both the first player for that Hour and the Coven Leader for game effects.
- (O) **Other Components & Cards:** Unless specified by the Scene Set-Up Instructions, return to the box.



D	PLAYERS	CARDS PER LOCUS					
	2-3	9	9	9	9	6	3
	4-5	12	12	12	12	8	4
	6	15	15	15	15	10	5
	LOCUS	1	2	3	4	5	6



GAME PLAY: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE PHASES OF AN HOUR

ADVANCE THE HOUR

Skip this step during the first Hour of the game.

Advance the hand on the clock by one Hour. Each Witch gains Corruption equal to the value of the new Hour. Move the **Coven Leader Marker** clockwise to the next player.

ACQUIRE SPELLS

During this phase, starting with the Coven Leader and moving clockwise, Witches acquire new spells to add to their arsenal against evil.

When it is their turn to acquire spells, a Witch may choose one or more of the available spell cards on the Pentagram's Locus and add it, facedown, to the **top** of their deck.

To be available for purchase, a spell card must be:

- The top card on the Locus
- Face-up
- Not covered by a Guardian (Soul Links, Demons, etc.)

- Players may do this as often as they wish, until there are no more spell cards available. However, after acquiring each spell, that Witch gains Corruption equal to the Locus number of the spell chosen!

Once the Witch is done acquiring spells, all facedown cards on the Pentagram are turned face-up and the turn passes to the next player. So players cannot buy two spells from the same Locus on their turn, since the 2nd spell would still be facedown.

*Note: outside of the Acquire Spells phase, **anytime** a Locus has its top spell facedown, turn it face-up.*

"Cassandra, do you feel that?" asked Wanda.

"I do," she replied, nervously.

"I think I should call Ashley." Wanda knew the other girls thought of her as a worrywart, but this time the feeling was... well... real.



"Do it," Cassandra said, her face turning red. "I'll call London. If something is wrong, we'll need her (cough) 'skills' with battling the darker arts." She was pretty sure she knew what was coming. She had been concerned since the day Ward and Nancy announced that it was "time for the Coven to survive on its own", somehow breaking their blood bonds and getting outta Dodge. It's never a good sign when your mentors decide to leave.





SUMMON DEMONS

During the Summon Demons phase, the Witches' Enemies attempt to manifest and attack.

There are several sub-phases in the Summon Demons phase.

- A. Unbind all bound Enemies.
- B. Return all Guardians to the top of their Locus.
- C. Demons attempt to manifest and attack each Witch in turn. Starting with the Coven Leader, follow these steps in order:
 1. Reveal 3 Demons and place them face-up on the Lurking Demon spaces.
 2. The Demon with the highest  attempts to attack the active Witch. If there is a tie for highest Corruption, the Demon with the most Sigils attacks. If there is still a tie, the active Witch may choose which Demon attacks first. For an attack to be successful, the Demon must have a  less than or equal to the amount of Corruption on the Witch. In addition, *all* of the Sigils on the Demon must be opened on the Witch.

3. If the attack is successful, remove Corruption equal to the Demon's  from the Witch and put them back in the pool. Then place the Demon in front of (facing) that Witch.
4. Go back to Step 2 and repeat with the next highest  Demon until all 3 Demons have attacked.
5. Once all 3 Demons have attacked, refill the Lurking Demons space back up to 3 Demons.
6. The Lurking Demons now attack the next Witch clockwise. Go back to Step 2.
7. After all Witches have been attacked, everyone closes their Sigils (placing the disks over the colored Sigils) and send any Demons remaining on the Lurking Demon spaces into the Void.
8. **Check to see if any Witch has too much Corruption.** If so, the game is over and the Coven has lost. If not, move on to the Insight phase.

If at any point the Demon Deck is empty, shuffle the Void to form a new Demon Deck, being sure to remove from the game any Starter Demons that accidentally found their way back in.

SUMMON DEMONS EXAMPLE



Nancy has 4  and the , , and  open.

(A) Kyil attempts to Summon first, but Nancy does not have enough Corruption.

(B) Browncoat tries second, but Nancy's  Sigil is Closed.

(C) E'Faz tries next and succeeds since Nancy has both the Corruption and Sigils Open.

(D) E'Faz's  is 1, so he consumes 1 of Nancy's 4  when he moves to her. E'Faz is now facing Nancy.

Kyil, Browncoat, and a newly revealed Demon remain to attack the next Witch this Hour.

London went for the shot, the arcs of her leap and the ball were in complete harmony as it kissed the backboard and dropped in for an easy 2 points.

“Girl, you can almost fly. You are Magic!” If only the other girls on the court really knew. But London never used Magic in competition.

Well, except that one time.

“I just train harder.” London’s words trailed off as Cassandra’s voice spoke in her mind. “London, stop moving for a moment and use the Sight,” her coven-mate instructed. “Do you see anything off?” Her words were serious, not the frivolous “Hey, let’s study a new spell” nonsense she usually used her telepathy for. And telling her to use her Magic openly? That was new.

“In a minute, I’m playin’ my game,” she responded in her head, noticing the others looking at her. “You ok?” one of them asked.

London replied quickly, “Yes, I...”

“Yes?! What do you see, London?!” Cassandra’s voice panicked.

“Not you, Cassandra... Hold on a second.” She picked up the rolling ball and tossed it to one of the players. “I just need to hit the lockers for a minute,” she said.


Stepping out of their sight, London opened her eyes. Her deep eyes. The ones that let her see the spaces between our reality and all others. It’s usually pretty awesome. This time it just turned a roach on the wall all glowy. It was definitely staring at her. When she stared back, it leapt at her, and she fired off a quick pyric spell burning it to a cinder.

“A roach just tried to make me its new home!” London screamed both inside and out.

This was worse than Cassandra thought. She would need to connect everyone’s minds and that would take time. “London, are you close to anyone? Get to them quickly. We are under attack!”

INSIGHT

During the Insight phase, Witches draw cards, arrange their hands and otherwise get ready for the coming Corruption and Battle phases. **Players may not discuss the cards in their hand** but they can talk in limited terms: “I can take care of this Demon”, “I don’t have a lot of White Magic”, etc.




Remember, aside from Insight effects , no cards are revealed or played during this phase and Witches are primarily arranging their hands to be revealed in the next phase.



During this phase:

1. Each player draws five cards unless changed by a previous effect.
2. Then, in any order, each player simultaneously chooses the orientation of cards in their hands, moves Familiars, and reveals Insight cards.

Choose Orientation: Spell cards that can be played as either Black or White Magic are oriented in this phase. Once the Insight phase ends, the cards cannot be flipped.

Move Familiars: Players may move Familiars in front of them to any other Witch. Each Familiar can be moved once per Insight phase.

Reveal Insight cards: During the Insight phase, players can play cards which have the  icon, with their effects taking place immediately. They are placed in front of the player and are set as White or Black Magic for the rest of that Hour. Although on the table, they will be considered part of that Witch’s hand when those cards are revealed in the next phase and will still give their Magic, Open Sigils, etc. Remember that  effects only work during the Insight phase. If a Witch chooses to not reveal an Insight card during this phase,  effects are lost for the remainder of the Hour.

If an  card expends a  card during the Insight phase, send the expended card immediately to the Æther. The expended card does not grant its Magic, Sigils, or use any of its game text unless it states “when expended”.

If this is your first game, use this advice as a guide: You are trying to get enough Black Magic to bind or banish the Demons in front of you. The White Magic you make will be used from the pool to defeat other Witches’ Demons, but not your own! At the same time, Black Magic hurts the Witch to your left and White Magic heals you.

INSIGHT EXAMPLE



(A) Played as Black Magic.

(B) Played as White Magic.

(C) Artifact and Familiar, both will remain in your play area and add their Magic and Sigils to all future hands. Note that Mr. Patterson can not be passed this turn, since he is not yet in play.

(D) Dianne has used the ability from Southern Kindness to bind G'Wind. This allows Lily to play Gaia's Cheer as White Magic.

(E) Lily passes Wil Trickster to Dianne on her left. Dianne will gain his White Magic this Hour.



The total value of this hand is 5 and 1 . It will Open the Sigils and add 5 to the player to the left while removing 1 from Lily.

CORRUPTION

During the Corruption phase, players reveal their hands (including cards already in play) and generate Magic based on the ● and ○ symbols in their spells' upper left corners. Unless specifically noted, card text on revealed spells has no effect during this phase.

Simultaneously, each player does the following:

1. Reveal your hand and place it next to (or touching) any ● cards played in the Insight phase, so they look like they are part of the hand just revealed.
2. Total the number of ● in the upper left corner of your revealed cards and add that amount of Corruption to the Witch to your left.
3. Call out all the Sigils on the revealed cards and open those Sigils on the Character Mat of the Witch to your left.
4. All players total the number of ○ in the upper left corner of their revealed cards and remove that amount of Corruption from themselves.

Layya was really enjoying this. Sure, using Magic to make some quick cash was not the best idea, but it had been working so far, the little black dress and purse she was buying certainly suited her.

"That will be \$650.38 please, Miss." The clerk was ever-so-friendly since she had become a regular in the boutique, but even he had his limits. "Ack! What is that crawling out of your hand bag?"

The sudden weight hanging from her shoulder was new. Usually the cash was in dollars, not coins. She must have done the Artifact enchantment wrong. "Well, let me see," were the only words she got out of her mouth before a broken-winged, chubby little brownie crawled out and peered up at her. It was chewing on her mascara brush. It spoke in words she should not comprehend... But somehow could.

"This tastes gross... Try it!"

CORRUPTION EXAMPLE



Continuing the hand example from the previous page,

(A) Lily generates 5 ●, so the player to her left, Dianne, adds 5 ■ to her Character Mat.

(B) Lily also Opens Dianne's ● ● ● Sigils.

(C) Lily generates 1 ○, so after receiving any Corruption from the player to her right, she removes 1 ■ from her Character Mat.

BATTLE

During the Battle phase, Witches use Black Magic ● to attack the Demons in front of them and add White Magic ○ to the Pool to assist other players. Text on spell cards is now active and players can openly discuss strategy.

Starting with the Coven Leader, players take turns clockwise around the table. During your turn, you may do the following in any order, as often as allowed by card specifics:

- Use Black Magic you've generated to bind or banish Enemies facing you.
- Activate effects or abilities generated by text on spell cards, including ♣ abilities.
- Add White Magic you've generated to the White Magic Pool.
- Use White Magic from the Pool to bind or banish Enemies facing **other** players.
- Move one of your Familiars to an Enemy facing you to bind it, then send that Familiar to the Æther.
- Use Magic to power specific Scene objectives.

After a player takes all chosen actions, unbound Enemies facing them deal damage.

- Starting with the lowest numbered Locus, discard a number of spells from the Pentagram equal to the attacking Demon's ♣ value.
- The active player gains Corruption equal to the Enemy's ♣ value.

This ends the active player's Battle phase and play proceeds to the next Witch clockwise. Any White Magic in the pool remains to be combined with the next player's Magic.

Imbued and Potential Cards

Not all spell cards are free to play. The most common cost to play cards in this set is ♣, called Potential. If a card effect has an Imbued symbol ♣ before it, you must pay for it by sending a Potential card ♣ to the Æther. However, during your turn, you still benefit from any effects or Magic a Potential card generates, so rather than send it to the Æther immediately, leave it in front of you and place a marker on it to remind you to do so at the end of the Hour.

Binding and Banishing

Binding an Enemy prevents it from doing damage or using its special abilities. Banishing it sends it to the Void. Enemies have bind ♣ and banish ♣ symbols on their cards. Those symbols will usually be white, black, or gray and have a numerical value. If the symbol is white, you must use White Magic to bind or banish it and if it is black, you must use Black Magic to do so. If the symbol is gray, you may use either type of Magic. In each case, you must spend enough Magic to fully meet the numerical value of the Enemy's bind or banish symbol.

Binding ♣: When you bind an Enemy, turn it sideways. It is "turned off" until unbound. It deals no damage and its special abilities have no effect.

Banish ♣: When you banish an Enemy, send it to the Void. (Starter Demons get removed from the game.)

*Beware an Enemy's **RED** bind or banish symbol, because that means they are immune to that effect!*

BATTLE EXAMPLE

The diagram illustrates a battle phase for a player named Lily. It shows a hand of cards, a Pentagram, a White Magic Pool, and a board with various game elements. Arrows and letters (A-E) indicate the sequence of actions:

- (A)** The starting value of this hand is 5 ● and 1 ○.
- (B)** Lily chooses not to use Blood Letting's ability, but does power Gaia's Cheer ♣ ability with the ♣ from Flicker. She places a marker on Flicker as a reminder to send it to the Æther at the end of the Hour. This increases the hand's value to 5 ● and 2 ○.
- (C)** Lily uses 2 ● to bind Slugda, turning him sideways, and 3 ● to banish G'Wind, sending her to the Void.
- (D)** Lily adds 2 ○ to the White Magic Pool, but decides not to use any White Magic to help other players.
- (E)** At the end of Lily's Battle phase, Fi unbound and unbanished, deals damage. Fi sends 1 card from the Pentagram to the Æther and gives 3 ♣ to Lily.

London made it up the steps just in time to see students fleeing study hall, rushing out the doors, fear propelling them. London hollered as loud as she could to be heard over them. "Ariel?! You up here?!"

A girl's anguished scream was the only response. Rushing to the class, she found red-haired Ariel, Spring totem out and ready, with 3 different Demonic entities splayed around her. An Imp, like a massive, fat pit bull frothed in a pile of its own goo, while a small toad, perhaps undead given the array of dissection pins piercing it, lay in parts, with its eyes still glowing red. The third was a roach, like London had just vanquished. She blurted out, "Roaches? Why roaches?!" before noticing what had Ariel's attention. Near the window stood a Demon. Unlike the 3 aberrations at the Witches' feet, this Demon came with a capital 'D'. It looked like it had jumped right out of the pages of one of their grimoires. Goat horns, red skin molting, covered in scars, and fingers ending in 3 inch claws, you could hardly tell it was female.

When it spoke, however, its voice was soft and seemingly sincere, almost musical. "Hello ladies. Might I have the pleasure of offering you a lovely new home where you can be free of the drudgery of having to think, breathe, and even live? Ugh. Why waste your time with all that? My idea's better." The window behind the Demon started to glow and swirl before spiraling out in a spiderlike webbing of black glaze. Classic portal.


Ariel's eyes glassed over and she started drifting toward the portal.

"No, no, girl!" London called. "This ain't happening to you!"

END OF THE HOUR

During the End of the Hour phase, do the following in any order.

- White Magic Pool:** The Coven Leader may expend any remaining White Magic or leave it in the Pool for the next Hour.
- Discard:** All players discard their hands to a face-up discard pile next to their deck. If a player's deck ever runs out of cards, shuffle the discard pile to become their new deck.
- Secrets:** These are hidden goals that players try to accomplish throughout the game. They are advanced by fulfilling the requirements listed in the Progression part of a Secret card. Once a player has advanced their Secret to the point dictated by the Resolution part of the card, they may reveal it and resolve its effects.

Advance: To advance a Secret you must take a Corruption from yourself (not from the common pool) and place it on top of your facedown Secret. If you don't have any  you can not progress your Secret. *Note: Some Scenes link your Secret to Locus Guardian. If so, move your Soul Link off the Locus and into the corresponding space for bound Guardians.*

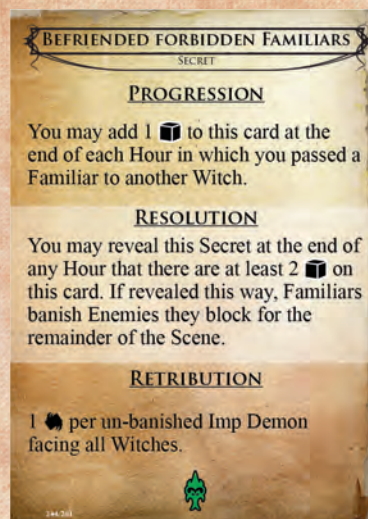
Resolve: If you can resolve your Secret, flip it over and resolve it. This can occur the same Hour you have progressed the Secret. Then permanently reveal your Secret and place its Corruption in the pool.

Retribution: Only during the Final Hour.


- Reveal all unresolved Secrets and deal their retribution effects.
- Then do the same for the Scene retribution effects, if any.
- Check one last time if any Witch has 20+ Corruption or if every Locus on the Pentagram is empty. If so, YOU ALL LOSE!

If this is not the Final Hour, proceed to the Advance the Hour phase.


SECRET CARDS



Progression:

This is what you must do each Hour to progress. If you achieve this, you take a  from from your Character Mat and place it on top of this card.

Resolution:

Once you achieve the listed number of  you may reveal the Secret and resolve this effect.

Retribution:

If by the end of the last hour you have not resolved your secret, reveal the secret and fulfill the retribution.



Easy



Medium



Hard

APPENDIX I: VARIANTS

Story Mode Variant:


If you play story mode, do not progress to the next Scene till you succeed on your current Scene. If you fail twice on a scene, play the 3rd time using the easy mode listed on the scene. If you succeed on the first try, play the next Scene on hard mode the first time, dropping the difficulty once each time you fail.


Verbal Variant:

In this variant, the players can speak and strategize during the Insight phase. They still cannot show their cards, but they can tell everyone how much White and/or Black Magic they plan to generate and how they plan to use it. Players can also discuss best ways to use the Magic generated by each player. This may slow the game down somewhat, so keep that in mind.

Shhh! It's a Secret:

You can change any Scene's difficulty by using or modifying Secrets.

Easy: Remove the  Secrets before shuffling and distribution.

Hard: Remove the  Secrets before shuffling and distribution.

Variety is the Spice:

Here is another way to modify any Scene's difficulty.

Easy: Remove the Legendary  Demons from the Demon Deck.

Hard: Reduce the number of spells in each Locus by 2.



Ashley held Mr. Patterson, while the furry cat purred and wagged its tail cheerfully. “No, no, sweetie. Only DOGS wag their tails when their happy. Kitties only wag if they are grumpy-wumpy.” Mr. Patterson stopped the tail wagging and flipped out his tongue instead. She sighed. “I think you took the wrong form, snook’ums.” Suddenly, her cell phone rang, scaring the cat from her lap. “So, you can levitate rats into your mouth but you’re freaked out by a phone ring?” Ashley smiled and answered the call. “What’s up Wanda? What do we need this time? Foil hats? Mustaches?” Ah, Wanda. So easy to get her goat.

“No, something is going on,” Wanda replied, ignoring the jab. “The others are being attacked. You need to help!” Ashley looked at the phone in disbelief, before a loud noise from the other end drew it back to her ear.

“Gah! Get it off my leg! Get it off my leg!” yelled a voice that she was sure was Wanda’s.

“Hold still young one,” boomed another voice, older, feminine with an obvious Magical tone. Was that Cassandra?

“Come on! You all pulling a joke on me?” Ashley chuckled. “You want me to ‘port over there for dinner or something?”

The only response was more screaming and Wanda could not fake that level of pain. Ashley’s face went pale when she heard someone howl, “Behind you, behind you!!!” and the phone went dead. Ashley turned to Mr. Patterson. “Welp. Suit up, little guy. It looks like it’s go time.” Ashley shook her head. “Not the first time I’ve seen a Coven start to crack at its own weakness, but kitty, it sure would be nice if it wasn’t MINE for a change!”

APPENDIX II: CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Mr. Patterson, your familiar and guide speaks, “So, now that you know what happened to the previous Coven, let’s get better acquainted, shall we? Allow me to see what I can deduce about each of you.”

Addie Klined. *Addie, I like you already! You allowed Magical familiars to use you as their pet even before joining the Coven! Your Magic is flush with working with my kin and kind and you seem able to block Demon’s abilities without even trying. I am impressed. Enough that I might just let you pet me. Oh, alright. Yes, you can be my new pet Witch. And if you and Lily are competing to see who can be sweeter? I’m sure the plants would pick her, but me? I’m with you!*

Dianne Urer. *You’re from a working-class family and either are a senior in high school or have just graduated. You have deep roots in the south and, despite that famed hospitality, you and Shara really seem to dislike each other. I can see you’re down on yourself because you work in a diner to make ends meet, but don’t be. Between you and me, you’re the only one of the younger Witches that knows what it’s like to be on your own. Plus, you’re a heckuva multi-tasker, able to deal with a lot of troubles and Demons at the same time as well as shift spells between you and your allies.*

Lily Abrahamsen. *You’re blessed with the power of Gaia, the goddess of natural Magic. Your spells and abilities seem tied to generating White Magic and helping others. I barely see any darkness in your soul. Your parents were teachers. You’ve never been mean to another being your whole life. Beautiful, a cheerleader, straight A’s. You appear to be near purr-fect, but, honestly, have you ever known hardship? I doubt that will last.*

Minora Alfhild. *You’re a gamer girl who would rather be on a console than deal with people (aside from Addie who’s been your best friend since soccer camp and you can kinda boss around). You have the social skills of a block of granite, and even Paz has more common sense than you, but you seem incapable of losing. You always find a way to hack your way through things. Seems you’re able to literally blow up Demons and use their power for your own spells! Sometimes you can even snatch spells back from the Æther, rebuilding them. It’s really quite brilliant! But don’t you know that cheating does not always work? And, you might want to step back from all that Black Magic. You’re going to get us all in trouble.*

Nancy Stitch. *A med student and surgeon-to-be, it seems your past is the darkest of all. I don’t know how you consume Corruption as well as you do, but you’re the best healer I’ve ever seen. You stand apart from the Coven; Blood bonded to it but not beholden like the others. You want me to be your what? And your adviser?! Well, are you going to leave this group when the going gets tough like last time? Bah. Don’t even try to talk to me. I trust rats more than you. If you get out of line, even a little, I might just have to tell them your big secret. I’m sure Ward would LOVE to hear all about it.*

Paz Guato. *Scholarly, mousy. Cliché nerd complete with glasses. You’re the only one who was happy about gaining powers from the get-go and you read constantly on how to better yourself... and the team. You study and respect the old ways. I’ve never seen a Wizard more capable of acquiring new and powerful spells. Or seem to know... almost... as much about artifacts as I do.*

Shara Brown. *I knew your sister, London. She went for the hoop and you chose lacrosse? Seriously? I see your power swirls, blending Black and White Magics together. You have some of the best attack abilities I have seen. You are the Alpha of your school and everyone wants to either be you or be with you. But that past of yours. Oh, my. Dark indeed. You will have a constant struggle between darkness and light as you lead this Coven for good or ill.*

Ward Cross. *A Demon hunter who worked with the church before being excommunicated. Who does that anymore? Are you even in the right century? Hands down, you are the best Demon killer of the bunch, so who can complain? Of course, you are woefully lacking in White Magic use, Grimmy McDarkerson. Seriously, go out in the sun, experience nature... Commune. And, jeez, you’re a sourpuss. Who pooped in your tray? Can’t you just kill the others and be done with it? No way! There’s a blood bond, remember? You’re here to assist them. Do as they say, no matter how much it irks you. And, it really does irk you, doesn’t it? I hope so. I do. Because it’s really hard to say who I dislike more: Nancy or you.*

Ping was sure something was wrong. Something wrong with Jemma, who was sweating like a pig, and something wrong with the Coven, as a whole. “Let’s call Cassandra,” she said, “and see what’s up.”

Jemma nodded. “I hope this is just a cold,” She mused, but looking down they could see her hands started to glow like they were lit up by LED lights.

“Yeah. That’s not a cold,” Ping said and stopped her common mind chant, instead using her Magic to hide Jemma’s glowing hands from the minds of those around them. Ping was sure she knew what was happening. Jemma was paying for Ping’s errors. Ping knew she’d have to atone for her actions soon, but right now Jemma needed Wanda’s care and quickly. “Screw calling,” she declared. “We’re ‘porting there.” They ducked down an alley. Channeling her power into some seeds, Ping surrounded a rusting doorway with Magical vines. It glowed green for a second or two when the women stepped into it. Moments later, the vines, Ping, and Jemma all vanished.

APPENDIX III: GLOSSARY

Æther: The Æther is a discard pile for spells lost to Demons or destroyed from a Witch's deck.

Banish: To a kill a Demon or other Enemy, sending it to the Void.

Bind: If you bind an Enemy, it is "turned off" until unbound. It deals no damage and its special game ability has no effect.

Black Magic: Generally, more powerful Magic used to bind and banish Enemies attacking you. Due to the blood bond between the Coven members, your Black Magic places its burden in the form of Corruption Markers on the player to your left. In addition, Black Magic can open up the Sigils of the player to your left, making it easier for more powerful Demons to enter the world and attack them.

Corruption Markers: These black cubes and octagons represent the darkening of your soul. You gain Corruption when the player to your right uses Black Magic, when Demons hit you, and when you gain spells from Pentagram Locus. If any Coven member ever has 20 (15 during Training Day) or more Corruption after the Summon Demons phase, everyone loses the game.

Dark Fey: Mean little nasty faeries who are hell bent on harming the Coven. The Dark Fey limit the use of your White Gaia's Magic. If even one Dark Fey is unbound in front of you during the Insight phase, you cannot play any Gaia's Magic spells (denoted by a yellow border around their text), instead you must play those cards as their Black Magic side. Dark Fey are considered Demons.

Demons: All of the Enemy cards, except for Lashin the Warlock and the Overlords.

Discard Pile: The place your discarded cards go. Gets shuffled to make your Witch's Spell Deck when there are no cards remaining in it.

Discard: To place in your discard pile.

Enemies: These are the adversaries you face. In the base game, there are a number of different types of Enemies, including Demons, Lost Witches, Overlords, and a Warlock.



Events: These special cards are used in some Scenes and have intense effects that alter the rules of the game.

Gaia's Magic: This kind of White Magic is often the most powerful for its cost, but is the most vulnerable to Demons. Dark Fey prevent you from playing Gaia's Magic, forcing you to play the Black Magic side of the card instead.


Greater Demons: What we would most classically consider Demons, these often large beings are so evil they still deal damage even when bound. There are two types: Greater Hex and Greater Blood.

Guardians: These are whatever is guarding a Locus. Witches cannot gain spells from a guarded Locus.

Hour: A round of play in Approaching Dawn: The Witching Hour. Each round represents an Hour of the night, usually from Midnight till Dawn (6 a.m.).

Imbued: Spell abilities with the  icon. These are powered by Potential  cards.

Imps: Anthropomorphic little gargoyle-like creatures. They like to tempt players and make spells cost more. For each unbound Imp in front of you, you gain an extra Corruption each time you gain a spell. They are considered Demons.

Legendary Demons : These Enemies have special abilities in addition to their normal abilities as an Imp, Dark Fey, etc.



Locus: These are facedown stacks of cards numbered 1 to 6 on the Pentagram. Each number denotes how much Corruption you acquire when gaining those spells. The higher the Locus, the more powerful the spell. The top spell of each Locus is always turned face-up at the start of each Witch's turn during the Acquire Spells phase.



Lost Witches: A group of special Enemies that was a previous Coven which were taken by the Demons. They are NOT considered Demons.

Overlords: Are the Demon's masters and are immune to any effect which says "Demon".

Possessed Animals: These previously cute little cats, rats, toads and other animals have been possessed by Demons. They have no special effect when they are in front of you, but often deal extra Corruption damage if they are left to harm you. They are considered Demons.

Potential Spells: These spells have the  icon. They are mostly Starter Spells and are destroyed (sent to the Æther) to fuel Imbued spells .

Scene Cards: These double-sized, double-sided cards explain the story and set-up instructions for you to play a single game.

Scene: Scenarios that lay out special rules for a game of Witching Hour. The Scenes link together to form a story, so as you play the game multiple times you can choose a different part of that story to play or try to go through them sequentially. The Scenes are designed to be played in the following order: 1) All Hallows' Eve, 2) Winter Book Club, 3) Spring Revival, 4) Rites of Summer, and 5) Halloween.


Secrets: These cards remind you what your Witch did wrong and how to fix it!

Sigils: These are the six glyphs on the side of your character sheet. You place a gray disk over the top of each of these colored symbols to denote they are "Closed". There are a variety of ways (most often when the Coven member to your right plays Black Magic) that these become "Open". When you "Open" a Sigil, move the disk to the left so that the colored glyph is visible. Many Enemies cannot materialize to attack unless their specific Sigils are open.

Soul Links: These link a Witch to other components, such as a Locus, and are used in specific Scenes.

Spells: Cards in your deck and on the Pentagram. They include Incantations, Artifacts, Familiars and the special Necro and Aurora spells used in some Scenes. When played from your hand, they represent the individual spells you were able to cast during the Hour (round).

Starter Demons: These little Demons give you Corruption and Open your Sigils. When defeated they are sent back to the box and removed from the game.

Universal Marker: These are used as a reminder that a Potential card  has been used and needs to be destroyed at the end of the Hour; that a once per game ability has been used; or anything else that needs reminding.

Void: The place Enemies go to die. Enemy/Demon discard pile.

Warlock: Although included in the Demon Deck, is not considered a Demon and is immune to most Demon based effects, making him very hard to defeat.

White Magic Pool: During the Battle phase, add the total of all your cards' White Magic to the Pool as white cubes. You remove these cubes to bind or banish Enemies for OTHER players.

White Magic: Magic that is generally harder to come by in terms of raw power. White Magic heals your Corruption on a point-for-point basis and is used to help others bind and banish their Demons. In some Scenes it can also fuel special actions.

Witch: Collectively encompassing Witches, Warlocks and Wizards of the Coven when not referring to a specific card. Each player takes on the role of a member of the Coven.

When Ping, Jemma and Ashley arrived at the lair, it was chaos. Demonic animals, imps, and fey. They surrounded and slashed at the Coven. Cassandra, an injured Wanda and an angry Mr. Patterson, who barked threats from atop his pet Ashley, pushed back against the attack as best they could.

Ping stopped supporting Jemma and rushed into the fray ordering, "Ashley! Help me summon a solar. That ought to help!"

The fight did not last long. The two veteran Witches banded together with their elder, Cassandra, and turned the tide, sending many of the various otherworldly visitors back to their homes. But it was a massive --- and quite surprising --- flash of sunlight that beamed out from Jemma which ended the onslaught.

Any jaws still in the room dropped.

"Ok. So," Jemma began, "I should probably let you all know, I might have kind of strayed a bit from Gaia this last year and fed from the sun a bit too much."

Cassandra's eyes narrowed at Jemma and a sheepish Ping, who quite obviously had something to do with all this.

"Ya think?" Layya stood in the doorway, her designer clothes in shreds.

Cassandra Looked at her previously stylish friend and tsk-tsk-tsk'ed, "I don't think Ping and Jemma are the only ones with a tale to tell. Right, Layya?"

Like Ping, Layya could only shrug, her face red. In their moment of exhaustion, the woman laughed and eyed their slimed and thoroughly gross home.

After a moment, Wanda looked around, tin foil hat still perched on her head, and asked "Hey, where're London and Ariel?"

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Cassandra took out a mirror and placed it in the center of the room. “Let’s see what our sisters are up to,” she said. “Hopefully they weathered the storm.” The Witches stood in a circle around the mirror which grew in size until it was the size of a plastic kiddie pool. The silver started to wake and shake and shimmer until a picture became clear.

On the other side, they could see Ariel’s paralyzed and tranced-out body being dragged into a portal by a huge hairy Demon. London furiously tugged at the Demon, struggling to keep her Coven sister on this plane of existence. Behind them, another Demon, a female, hung by her horns from the ceiling.

Jemma was frantic. “We have to get to her! Start the portal chant!”

But it was too late. On the brink of exhaustion, London let go of Ariel and, imbued with the most Magical energy she could summon, charged the Demon, forcing all three through the portal and into the beyond.

Ashley stopped her chant, the mirror’s vision faded. She looked around the room.

“Ladies, it’s been a pleasure,” she said dryly, “But you know the drill. It is all of us, or none of us. That is the pact; that is the curse.”

Ashley paled as she watched Cassandra turn. “If only Nancy and Ward had stayed, they could have helped. Now, we are all lost.”

Cassandra’s eyes turned black. She screamed like a banshee as she touched the mirror, opening a new portal. Gone on the inside, she stepped through to the other side.

The other members of the Coven might have stopped her, but they were thrashing, convulsing... changing. They grew horns and sprouted tendrils, fins, and claws. Their eyes all turned black and their souls went dark. And, each in turn entered the portal and were gone.

Ashley was the last to fall. She alone had the time and foresight to bestow a blessing on Mr. Patterson, and give him one last mission.


“Don’t you quit on us just yet, little buddy. Find others like us. Protect them... Save us...”

Mr. Patterson bounded away and rushed to his cat-door. He turned back just in time to see his pet Witch, gaze dark and empty from the infernal trance, jump through the portal.


REFERENCE

PHASES REFERENCE


1. ADVANCE THE HOUR

- **Skip the first hour:** Place the Hour marker on the new Hour and move the Coven Leader Marker clockwise one player. Each player gains  equal to the Hour.


2. ACQUIRE SPELLS

- Starting with the Coven Leader, each player may gain spells from any Open Locus by gaining  equal to that Locus.





3. SUMMON DEMONS

- Unbind all cards and return all Guardians to their Locus.
- Starting with the Coven Leader, each player faces 3 Lurking Demons, refilling the spaces at the end of their turn.
- All players Close Sigils. Send remaining Lurking Demons to Void.
- **At the end of phase, if a Witch has 20+  (15+ during Training Day), GAME OVER!**







4. INSIGHT

- Draw 5 cards, then all players simultaneously (in any order):
 - Choose orientation of cards.
 - May move Familiars.
 - May reveal  cards.



5. CORRUPTION

- All players reveal hands at same time.
- Add  to player to left's Mat equal to your  and they Open any Sigils from your cards.
- Remove  from your Mat equal to your .


















6. BATTLE

- Starting with Coven Leader and going clockwise, each player may take the following actions (in any order):
 - Add  to White Magic Pool.
 - Bind/banish Demons facing you with  and Demons facing other Witches with  from the Pool.
 - Use  and other cards' text abilities.
 - Perform Scene actions, such as binding/banishing Guardians.
- Then unbound Demons facing that Witch deal damage ( & .

7. END OF HOUR

- The Coven Leader may expend remaining  from the Pool.
- Discard hands from play.
- Advance Secrets/Reveal Secrets (move Soul Links if appropriate).
- **Retribution (Final Hour only): If player has 20+  (15+ during Training Day), YOU LOSE!**

ICON REFERENCE

- : Card which can be revealed during the Insight phase. Effects occur immediately.
- : Potential card which powers . Send to Æther (destroyed) at end of Hour when used this way.
- : Optional Imbued effect which destroys a  card to use, although you still receive that card's Magic and effects.
- : White Magic.
- : Black Magic.
- : Gray Magic (May use either Black or White Magic).
- : Easy Secret.
- : Medium Secret.
- : Hard Secret.
- : Enemies' Corruption Cost.
- : Bind Cost. Color denotes type of Magic that can be used.
- : Banish Cost. Color denotes type of Magic that can be used.
- : Cards consumed (discarded) from the Pentagram.
- : Corruption.
- : Legendary Demons.