

Mortal Combat: Inspiring the Cunning Folk

(Cobwebbed Dragon)

For this article, I have been inspired by the Mortal Combat spellbook – not to write new spells for adventuring magicians, but to write about the weaker magics appropriate to the ritualistic practices of the Cunning Folk introduced in *The Elven Crystals*. Each of the rituals presented have come from the low-level spells of the Mortal Combat spellbook.

The Cunning Folk

The Cunning Folk are petty magicians that practise the Cunning Art. More common in the northern realms of Eworn and Glissom, Cunning Folk may be found anywhere traditional ways of life are still practised. They are not (yet) a player profession, so this article is deliberately rules light, focusing instead on the narrative potential of Cunning Folk in your games rather than the mechanical integration of their abilities into the *Dragon Warriors* RPG.

The Cunning Art

The Cunning Art is a branch of ritualistic magic adapted to simple protections, divinations, and utilitarian applications – it is not invoked through hurried incantations and gestures, like the dazzling spells of adventuring magicians (who must often call upon their powers in a hurry), but as chants and rituals. The magical effects of the Cunning Art last only as long as the ritual is being conducted, and the Cunning One is unable to perform any other action until it is complete.

Augury

Divines a simple horoscope to determine favourable times and omens. The ritual takes at least 20 minutes to perform and is often accompanied by a divinatory ritual, such as the casting of chicken bones or runes. The results of this ritual are almost always vague and open to broad lateral interpretation.

Aura of Danger

Analyses the aura of an object or place to determine if it is dangerous to the Cunning One. If present, it will also reveal the presence of good or evil intentions.

Aura rituals take at least 20 minutes to perform and cannot be used on the living. Typically, aura rituals are like those for Augury but may include additional elements like incense burning, especially when using aura rituals on places rather than items.

Aura of Magic

As Aura of Danger but determines specifically whether the item or place is enchanted (or otherwise subject to supernatural influences) and a rough indication of the strength of that enchantment.

Dowsing

The Cunning One must choose something for which to dowse, typically water, direction of north, magical taint, etc. The Cunning One may continue this ritual for as long as they wish, walking slowly in the direction they feel drawn until the ritual indicates they are within 6m of the source. This ritual cannot locate a living person or creature and will require a dowsing rod, pendulum, or similar item.

Produce Flame

Produces a small hovering flame (about the size of a candle flame and shedding the same amount of light) that will move with the Cunning One for as long as they maintain the chant.

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