



# INKSMITH

*“Look: I don’t get paid for boring stories. So drink this, grab a gun, and come with me – we’re gonna blow this thing wide open.”*

Ever since humans brought the printing press to Spire, the ability to control and channel the zeitgeist has never been easier. You know the occult power of pulp fiction, channel the magic of sensationalist journalism and wear narratives like a cloak; you ride the razor’s edge between truth and fiction. As a writer, you’re not bad. As a magician, you’re top-notch.

**RESISTANCES:** +2 Reputation, +1 Shadow

**REFRESH:** Do something reckless for the sake of a good story.

**SKILLS:** Compel, Investigate

**DOMAINS:** Low Society, Occult

## BONDS

- You have two individual-level NPC bonds, at least one of whom is in the criminal domain. They provide you with access to organisations and districts you’re interested in writing about.
- You have a bond with a fellow PC who you wrote and published a story about. What did it say, and are they really happy with it?

## EQUIPMENT

Either:

- Grackler pistol (D6, Brutal, One-Shot, Ranged)

Or:

- “Found” rapier (D6, Penetrating)

## CORE ABILITIES

**DO IT FOR THE STORY.** [Occult] *You have a way of getting people to act on their baser impulses.* Once per session, an NPC you’re talking to does precisely what they want to do at that moment in time, regardless of social mores, fear, obligations or politeness.

**NOSE FORTROUBLE.** *If you can find what’s out of place, you can find the story.* Once per scene, ask the GM what’s weird or out of place here.



# ADVANCES

## LOW

**TRUST ME.** *You've got an honest face. Almost a shame, really.* Gain the Deceive skill. When you convince someone to trust you against their better judgment, you gain them as a temporary bond.

**COMMON FEARS.** [Occult] *You tap into the zeitgeist of the community, becoming the embodiment of their worst fears.* Investigate+Occult to cast. Determine what most people are scared of round these parts, and channel it into yourself. When you embody that fear with your acts, clothing or speech, roll with mastery against the people of the district until the end of the current situation.

**LUCKY BREAK.** [Occult] *You have no qualms about getting in trouble in search of a story.* Once per situation, when the GM inflicts stress with a weapon against you but before they roll to see how much stress they would inflict, you can choose to ignore the stress. The attack misses you at the last second instead.

**EVERYONE'S BEST FRIEND.** *You'll degrade yourself in order to make contacts.* +1 Reputation. When you publish a glowing portrayal of someone you've recently spoken with, gain them as a temporary bond.

**BON VIVANT.** +2 Reputation. *Your hedonism knows no bounds.* You suffer no penalties to your actions based on inebriation, drug use or tiredness unless you're catatonic or unconscious; you've been through worse than this before. In addition, once per session, you can declare that you're carrying some sort of drug on your person (enough to share between a few people, although whether you'd want to is another matter.)

**MOVE IN THE RIGHT CIRCLES.** *You have a side line in writing society reports: coming-out balls, unbirthdays, blinding parties, that sort of thing.* Gain the High Society domain. Once per session, you can declare there's a party nearby and that you're invited. The GM gets to say whose party it is and what's strange about it.

**THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP.** [Occult] *This stuff just writes itself.* Once per session, you can declare something is present in the world if it would be there in a shlocky pulp fiction story. Of course there's a gun under the bar; of course there's a secret trapdoor under the altar; of course that knight's drunk on the job. It has to make narrative sense: if the GM or the group doesn't agree with it, the ability has no effect (but it can be used again this session).

**A MAN WITH A GUN.** [Occult] *When in doubt, have a man come through a door with a gun in his hand.* Roll Fight+Occult to cast this spell. If you succeed, a person with a gun (of any ancestry or gender – it doesn't have to be a man, that's just the name of the spell) enters the room you're currently standing in. You don't get to say who they are, whose side they're on or what they want, but you can guarantee that someone with a loaded gun will walk into the room as long as there's a reasonable entry point for them to walk through.

## MEDIUM

**FUDGE THE FACTS.** [Occult] *Live long enough and you realise that your past is just a series of malleable details.* Roll Fix+Occult to cast this spell. You may swap out one skill, one domain and one bond on you or another willing participant for different ones of your choosing (exchanged bonds must be of equal level). This effect lasts until the next dawn.

**STAR-CROSSED LOVERS.** [Occult] *You bring people together, whether they like it or not.* Roll Compel+Occult to cast this spell and pick two NPCs who are aware of one another to fall madly in love until the next dawn. When the spell wears off, they might strike up a lasting relationship if they're compatible; otherwise they'll return to normal, unable to work out why they felt so strongly.

**IN THE NICK OF TIME.** [Occult] *You summon a guardian angel: a friend, packing heat.* As A MAN WITH A GUN, but the person with the gun is on your side.

**NO LOVE LOST.** *Sometimes you just have to say goodbye.* +2 Mind. Once per session, when a bond suffers fallout, remove the bond to ignore the fallout.

**NAMELESS DREAD.** [Occult] *Some things are too horrific to describe, even for a person who writes horror stories for a living.* Roll Deceive+Compel to cast this spell on a target that you are speaking to. On a success, the target feels an indescribable dread at present events and wants to flee the scene; they will suffer D3 stress and become convinced that something strange is going on.

**KNOCKOUT PUNCH.** [Occult] *The heroes in pulp novels knock out people all the time, so there's no reason why you can't either.* Roll Deceive+Occult to cast this spell. You gain the Fight skill until the end of the current situation. The first time you strike a target with your bare fists, inflict (D6, Brutal) damage against them. If you reduce a target to 0 stress with your hands, they're always knocked out rather than dead, and they don't receive any lasting damage from being concussed.

**THIS ENDS TONIGHT.** [Occult] *Everything's been building towards this moment.* Roll Compel+Occult to cast this spell on yourself or a nearby target as part of an hour-long ritual involving black kafee, rotgut liquor and reams of notepaper. Until the next dawn, stress that the subject inflicts or receives is doubled.

## HIGH

**WORST NIGHTMARE.** [Occult] *You've read the stories; you know what society is scared of. You channel their fear into a physical form.* As COMMON FEARS, but instead of offering you the chance to roll with mastery, you write an article or short story about the subject and summon it into being until the next dawn. This can take many forms: a community of Morticians will be haunted by ghost-eating Charnelites; a Ministry cell is watched by faceless paladins; a superstitious Garden district workhouse sees the Beast of Vat A-67 wherever they look. The entities created by this spell are generic – they aren't real things and don't have identities. While they do physically exist, they won't act against people unless provoked.

**EMBEDDED.** [Occult] *You are the story, and you follow the story, part of it and apart from it at the same time.* Pick a target organisation that you are writing about and investigating, and roll Sneak+Occult to

cast this spell. Once per situation, when this organisation acts against you or when outside forces act against you believing you to be of this organisation, you can choose to ignore all stress inflicted from a single roll after the GM has rolled it. When you publish the piece, the spell ends. At the end of each session in which you do not publish the piece, mark D3 stress to Mind.

**NARRATIVE CONVENIENCE.** [Occult] *The hero never gets arrested – and if they do, they meant for it to happen.* Once per session, when you or an ally suffers Shadow, Reputation or Silver fallout, invert it: it becomes a boon, rather than a problem. The paladins raid your rivals' base, rather than yours; instead of selling your allegiance to a different organisation, you've got them unwittingly funding the Ministry; the police officer investigating you gets arrested on suspicion of the crimes that you carried out.





# SHADOW AGENT

*“The goddess took part of me, but she gave me so much more in return.”*

You underwent the same initiation ritual as the other ministers, but down in the dark, something snapped. When you surfaced, you weren't the same person you were when you started. The Hidden Mistress “blessed” you by taking away your sense of self, leaving you a perfect instrument of her desires: nameless, faceless, wearing morals and identities like a cloak to hide yourself from sight. Some in the Ministry see you as a sacred weapon of the Goddess and a valuable ally; others are scared of what you might become.

**RESISTANCES:** Shadow +2, Mind +1

**REFRESH:** Gain an advantage by posing as someone you're not.

**SKILLS:** Deceive, Investigate

**Your starting domains are dictated by your choice of covers.**

## BONDS

- You have one NPC bond from your former life before your initiation: a friend, relative, lover, etc. Choose their domain from the minor covers below.
- One of the other player characters was the first person to realise that the Goddess took part of your identity during the initiation ceremony. Who was it, and how did they react?

## EQUIPMENT

- Stiletto dagger (D3, Concealable, Piercing, Unreliable)
- Illegal crossbow (D6, Ranged, Reload)
- Minister's Sanctuary armour (Armour 1, Concealable)

## CORE ABILITIES

**COVER IDENTITIES.** You have access to cover identities which you can inhabit via the Rite of Many Faces (below). While anyone can pose as someone else, Shadow Agents have an unusual metaphysical link with their cover identities

granted by devotion to their goddess. Taking a cover will allow you access to an associated domain. While you possess that cover, you have the domain; if you lose the cover, the domain is also lost. Unlike regular advances, when you gain access through a cover to a domain that you already possess, you do not gain a knack in it; instead, you get permanent access to the domain even if your cover is lost. When you create your character, choose two minor covers. (The distinction between minor and major covers is only important during character creation.)

**THE RITE OF MANY FACES.** [Divine] Mark D3 stress to Mind and spend five minutes communing with Lombre to cast this spell and assume one of your cover identities. While you embody this identity, you simultaneously know you are and are not them (so you don't need to make Deceive checks to pass as them). You can end the spell at any time, returning to your self. No matter what cover you inhabit, you always have access to this spell.

**CREATE COVER.** [Divine] You study your targets down to the finest detail. You may mark D6 stress to an NPC bond you possess to create a cover identity associated with theirs. This process takes at least a few days of study, forging documents and sometimes casual conversation to work out the mannerisms needed to pass as someone in their profession. When you've spent this time and effort, pick an appropriate cover from the list below and add it to your available covers. The cover isn't a copy of their identity: it's a generic fake identity that uses elements of their personality to lend weight to it. If the bond is temporary, the cover is temporary as well – a thrown-together mess that'll hold up for a little while. When you remove the bond, remove access to the cover as well.

## COVERS

### MINOR

**GANGSTER.** Gain the Crime domain. Your cover identity is a member of a criminal organisation.

You have a set of suitable clothing, a mark of membership and a cheap, illegal pistol (D6, Ranged, Reload, Unreliable). Make a note of which organisation your cover is in.

**LEFT HAND OF GOD.** Gain the Religion domain. Your cover identity is a member of the clergy in a religious organisation within Spire, and you have the suitable vestments and accoutrements to pass as a priest. Make a note of which church your cover is part of.

**DROW OF THE PEOPLE.** Gain the Low Society domain. Your cover identity is connected with the poor and downtrodden of Spire. You have a work uniform (overalls and some protective gear) as well as a fairly legitimate part-time job you can use to earn an honest living.

**CITY GUARD.** Gain the Order domain. Your cover identity is a member of the City Guard: you have a uniform, a set of forged credentials and a cudgel (D3).

**TRADER.** Gain the Commerce domain. Your cover identity is a hustler in one of Spire's many marketplaces who does their best to buy low and sell high. You have a small collection of sundry goods (say what trade you specialise in) that you can sell once to remove D6 stress from Silver.

**CULTIST.** Gain the Occult domain. Your cover identity is a member of a forbidden sect of occultists within Spire – make a note of which one. You have your cult's signature sacrificial tool (D3) and a set of mystical-looking robes, as well as a few books exploring the dark arts.

## MAJOR

**ROYAL BLOOD.** Gain the High Society domain. Your cover identity is a member of a noble drow house – choose which. You have several sets of fine clothing and a handful of jewelry.

**EXECUTIVE.** Gain the Commerce domain. Your cover identity is a member of a large business within Spire. You have access to a faked icon of trade that will let you act as an agent on the business' behalf.

**SOLDIER.** Gain the Order domain. Your cover identity is an enlisted member of the Allied Defence

Force. You have a military uniform, fake credentials and a standard-issue combat knife (D3) but no immediate access to a rifle.

**RETROENGINEER.** Gain the Technology domain. Your cover identity is a human, living and working in Spire as a mechanist and engineer. You have the capacity to disguise yourself as a human – suitable clothes, some means of concealing your monochrome skin and long ears – and a bag of work tools.

**AELFIR.** Gain the High Society domain. Your cover identity is a masked aelfir. You have access to a "true" mask and a set of suitably elaborate and impractical clothes. You look, or can look, enough like an aelfir to pass as one for a while, but only while your mask and clothes stay on.

## ADVANCES

### LOW

**BETRAYAL.** *Eventually, everyone will turn on you. It's better to do it to them first.* +2 to Mind. When you betray someone's trust, roll with mastery.

**A SINGLE NIGHT'S GRACE.** [Divine] Mark D6 stress and beseech Lombre for aid to cast this spell. Choose a cover you do not possess: you now inhabit it until the next sunrise, and may not remove it beforehand for any reason.

**DISTANT.** *You start to blur the lines between yourself and your covers; pain and stress are muted, like music from a distant room.* Once per situation, when the GM asks you to mark stress to Blood or Mind and you are not inhabiting a cover identity, mark half the stress inflicted.

**IN THEIR SHADOW.** [Divine] *You siphon knowledge and ability from those around you.* +1 Shadow. Mark D3 stress to cast this spell on someone nearby. Drawing power through the shadow of the target, you copy one skill or domain that they possess (for NPCs, work with the GM to determine what sort of thing you can steal) and gain access to it until the end of the current situation.

**INSTRUMENT OF THE GODDESS.** [Divine] *Your mistress bestows upon you her holy weapon: a knife, shadow-black, barely visible.* Gain the Fight

skill. Once per session, summon the following weapon to your hand: (D3, Keen, Poison, One-Shot.) This weapon cannot be used to render targets unconscious. Reducing a target's resistance to 0 results in a quick and agonising death.

**LOMBRE'S EMBRACE.** [Divine] *You draw a cloak of secrecy around you and your cell.* Gain the Sneak skill and spend D3 stress to cast this spell on you and all nearby allies. The first time each of you mark stress to Shadow during the next situation, mark half the stress inflicted.

**GO LOUD.** *You can't maintain your cover any longer; you go out with all guns blazing, and Lombre blesses you with her dark power.* Destroy the cover which you are currently inhabiting (even if it was just BLOWN – see Cover Fallout below) to activate this ability. For the remainder of the situation, your attacks gain the Brutal tag and you roll with mastery when fighting people who bought into your cover.

## MEDIUM

**HARVEST.** [Divine] You pluck the existence out of a target along with their dying breath. Once per session, when you kill someone, generate a temporary cover based on their identity as though they were a bond: you cast CREATE COVER on them. Mark D6 stress when you cast this spell to permanently add their identity as a cover.

**THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY.** You can uncouple your self from your body, observing events that occur to you as though in third person. Activate this ability when you suffer fallout of any kind: increase the difficulty of all actions you take by 1, but ignore the effects of all Blood or Mind fallout on your character until the end of the situation. When the situation ends, you snap back into your body and feel the full force of your fallout.

**FOLIE À DEUX.** [Divine] Your conviction is so strong that it begins to infect others. Once per session when inhabiting a cover, an NPC of your choice that's present in the current situation will "recognise" you as your cover and owe you a favour – even if you've never met before (but you should have done, given your cover). For example, a quartermaster would recognise your soldier cover and a fashion designer would recognise your noble-born drow cover, but not vice versa.

**JACK OF SHADOWS.** [Divine] You tear knowledge from their minds and use it as a weapon against them. +1 Shadow. Mark D3 stress to cast this spell. It functions as IN THEIR SHADOW, but you remove the skill or domain from the target while you use it, ripping off their shadow and blending it into your own. When you act against them using the skill or domain you stole, you roll with mastery. (If you take it from another PC, they simply lose access to the skill or domain for the remainder of the situation.)

**THE RITE OF MANY MIRRORS.** [Divine] *You know the secret words that turn worlds on their head.* You may use Deceive in place of Compel and mark D6 stress to cast this spell on a target you can speak to. Until the end of the situation, the target thinks that something they once believed is no longer true, though they can't say exactly why. They will start looking for the reason.

**FALSE NAME.** *You had your true name surgically removed.* Gain the Resist skill and +1 Mind. When you are the target of occult magic and take stress, you mark half the stress inflicted (rounding up).

**FRACTURED MIRROR.** [Divine] *You unshackle your mind from its limits, reaching into alternate selves for power.* Gain a medium advance from any class. If it refers to a class-specific item or ability (such as the Carrion-Priest's hyena or the Bound's god-blade), you do not gain access to that item or ability.

**SACRIFICE.** *Lombre is kind, but she hungers, and will reward tribute.* You can "kill" a cover – removing access to it – by sacrificing it upon an altar to Our Hidden Mistress in a night-long ritual. When you do so, clear all your current stress and any fallout you suffered whilst inhabiting the cover. If it's unclear what fallout you suffered when you were inhabiting the cover, the fallout stays with you.

## HIGH

**RITE OF PERFECT SYMMETRY.** [Divine] As HARVEST, except: when you adopt the identity, you now look and act like the person you killed, right down to the smallest mannerisms. Their partner, children, and close friends couldn't tell the difference via anything but a thorough, deliberate examination.



**LOMBRE'S GRACE.** [Divine] You merge your mind with that of your Mistress, and your foresight becomes uncanny. Once per session, when you take fallout, ignore all negative effects of that fallout: rather than doing harm, the fallout was all part of your ongoing plan. When you use this sudden turnaround to surprise your enemies, roll with mastery until the end of the current situation.

**PERFECT COVER.** [Divine] Mark D6 stress to cast this spell. Split your self into two forms; you and a cover identity of your choosing. Until the next dawn, control both characters – your cover identity doesn't have access to your Shadow Agent abilities, but instead functions with everything you'd expect them to have given their identity. Use the bond rules when you act as the cover, treating your cover as a suitable bond and allocating stress appropriately. You may have as many instances of this spell active as you have covers. The forms exist until the next dawn.

**MIRRORS REFLECTING MIRRORS.** Remove all resistances from your character and add an additional cover: "Shadow Agent." This can increase your covers to five, technically increasing them over your maximum. Any stress taken is applied to your currently active cover, which is treated as a resistance with no additional resistance slots. You no longer differentiate between different types of stress (Blood, Silver, Shadow etc) and instead apply it all as "untyped" stress to your current cover. Fallout is rolled for as normal, treating the total stress allocated to your current cover as your character's total current stress. When you shift from one cover identity to another, you leave any fallout and stress allocated to that cover with them, and it will have no effect until you inhabit it again.

## COVER FALLOUT

Covers aren't perfect things. They have the capacity to backfire on the character, attracting unwanted attention – and, thanks to the mystical nature of the Shadow Agent's bond with Our Hidden Mistress, they can take on lives of their own too. At the GM's discretion, when you suffer fallout and it seems appropriate, they can draw from the list of results below.

## MINOR

**TROUBLE.** [Cover] You draw attention to your cover through your actions, leading to someone from the cover's domain poking their nose where it doesn't belong.

**STUCK:** [Cover] You cannot remove your current cover until the next sunrise.

**COMPROMISED:** [Cover] Your cover is compromised. Until the end of the next session, increase the difficulty of all tasks associated with that identity by 1.

## MODERATE

**BLOWN.** [Cover] You lose access to this cover identity.

**MISTAKEN IDENTITY.** [Cover] An NPC believes they've met your cover identity before, and you're forced to agree with them. Unfortunately, you quickly end up in a difficult situation because of the mistake.

## SEVERE

**EGO DEATH.** [Cover] Swap your base identity for a cover that you possess. The cover is now your base identity (as are any domains attached to it), and your base identity (i.e. all your Shadow Agent advances) becomes a cover that you must access with the Rites of Many Faces to use.

**UNWILLING AVATAR.** [Cover] An under-used or abused cover rebels against you and acts on its own initiative as an instrument of Lombre, taking control of your body at inopportune moments and trying to gain power over you. You can no longer inhabit this identity. At the beginning of every session, the GM will tell you what the cover did while you weren't aware. You can undo this fallout by hunting down and stopping your cover from acting against you, but that's the sort of thing that's going to require a great amount of experimental therapy and weaponised ritual. Or, maybe this is the will of Our Hidden Mistress, and you shouldn't try to stop it at all.