

# A Sleepless Malice

*But far worse than all such perils was the ever-approaching threat that beat upon them as they went: the dreadful menace of the Power that waited, brooding in deep thought and sleepless malice behind the dark veil about its Throne.*

*- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King*

Malice is a new Emotional Attribute, meant to represent the taint suffered by those who use the forbidden rituals drawing their power from the Demimonde - the shadowy realm between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

The formless spirits that dwell in the Demimonde harbour a deep resentment towards both the living and the dead. They hate the brightness that life brings, and envy the peace that comes with oblivion. Since they cannot hope to attain neither, forever they seek to bring ruin to both worlds, scheming and brooding in the shadows.

Foolish, reckless, or desperate mortals at times invoke these spirits, seduced by whispers of power and dreams of glory. Some of them even learn to channel the terrible darkness of the Demimonde through unspeakable rituals. But they're all eventually consumed by the sleepless Malice that permeate that realm.

**Dark Mark** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dt** \_\_\_\_\_ **5pts**

The accursed Dark Mark is the sign of those who have bargained for power with the spirits of the Demimonde.

This trait is required to open the Malice Emotional Attribute and to use The Evil Eye skill.

## Starting Malice

The Malice Emotional Attribute start at B0. To gain access to it, a character must have the Dark Mark trait. Increase the starting Malice exponent using the following list:

- +1 if the character has the Aura of Malevolence trait.
- +1 if the character has the Scheming trait.
- +1 if Will exponent is 4 or lower.
- +1 if the character ever betrayed someone to gain personal power.
- +1 if the character ever coveted a power not meant for him.
- +1 if the character sought forbidden knowledge in the Demimonde.
- +1 for each hateful relationship.
- 1 for each romantic relationship.

## Using Malice

Like Greed or Corruption, Malice can be used by the player to help his character's actions in play. It can only be invoked when the character is acting out of envy, resentment, rancor or sheer malice. If the majority of the group deems an act malicious enough to gain the attention of the dark spirits of the Demimonde, the character may invoke his Malice.

- For one Persona point, the character can substitute his Malice for any skill or stat in any test. Malice dice are open-ended, and this test count toward Malice advancement.
- For one Deed point, the character can add his Malice exponent to any skill or stat test. This count as a difficult test for Malice advancement.

## Malicious Help

Malice can always help The Evil Eye, or Forte tests made to resist Tax from The Evil Eye rituals. This grant 1D if the Malice exponent is 4 or lower or 2D if the exponent is 5 or higher, and grant Malice advancement as per normal help rules.

## Advancing Malice

Malice advances like a skill, but routine test always count for advancement, even if the Malice exponent is 5 or higher.

Tests for advancing Malice are also earned through actions in play. If the character meets any of the condition below, the player must mark down an advancement as if he just passed a test of the highest appropriate obstacle.

### **Obstacle 1**

Lying, cheating. Casting the Evil Eye.

### **Obstacle 2**

Causing physical harm to another person. Coveting another's power or prestige. *Failing* to perform an Evil Eye ritual. Having your Resources Taxed.

### **Obstacle 3**

Betraying an Instinct for envy or resentment. Failing to resist Tax. Claiming to be someone you are not. Sending someone else to do your "dirty work" for you.

**Obstacle 4**

Being wounded (Midi wound or worse). Betraying a Belief for envy or resentment. Using an opportunity to advance your political aims at the expense of a friend. Blackmailing someone. Losing an argument.

**Obstacle 5**

Murder, by any means. Manipulating the downfall of a rival in order to take his possessions or power. Losing an opportunity to advance your power or prestige.

**Obstacle 6**

Torture. Having someone else commit murder for you. Being blackmailed. Losing part of your power or prestige. Intentionally having someone else betraying an Instinct for your gain.

**Obstacle 7**

Being publicly humiliated. Losing part of your power or prestige to one of your rivals. Mentally controlling someone.

**Obstacle 8**

Being stripped of your rank and title. Having someone else betraying a Belief for your gain.

**Obstacle 9**

Having your friends lose everything for your gain.

**Obstacle 10**

Being the cause of your own downfall.

## **Unabated in Malice**

When the Malice exponent reaches 10, the character is claimed by the powers of the Demimonde. His body withers away in the span of a few minutes, while his soul becomes one of the faceless spirits that forever haunt that dark realm. The character is removed from play.

# The Evil Eye

Malicious characters learn how to channel their envy, scorn and resentment through twisted rituals collectively known as The Evil Eye. As their Malice grows, so do their ability to harm others with these loathsome incantations.

## The Evil Eye

## Perception

The Evil Eye is a new skill, used to cast all rituals presented below. Test the skill exponente against the specific ritual obstacle, then test for Tax, as if casting a sorcerous spell. If The Evil Eye test is failed, the ritual goes awry and its effects are inflicted on the caster, rather than on the intended victim. In this case, the GM can choose to apply the effects immediately, or to wait until the least convenient time for the character to have them take effect.

Even if The Evil Eye is a sorcerous skill, malicious characters can use it through the Beginner's Luck rule: they don't have to find a teacher to learn it. These rituals come almost naturally to them; they seem to instinctively know how to exploit their dark powers.

*Twisted Fetish*, Ob3: Craft a small fetish that impose an Ob1 penalty to all tests of a single skill or stat of the victim. The fetish must be close to the victim to work (treat it like a mage casting a spell with a Presence Origin) and the intended victim must be named when it's created. If the fetish is destroyed, the spell ends.

*Hex*, Ob4: Burn a doll fashioned in the guise of your victim to cause him great pain. If successful, this ritual inflicts damage with a Power equal to caster's Will exponent. Die of Fate to determine IMS. Requires something that was worn by your victim.

*Geas*, Ob victim's Will: This ritual implant a single command in the mind of the victim. If successful, the victim is compelled to carry out the command, to the best of his capabilities, either immediately, or when a specific situation (chosen when the ritual is performed) arises. The victim won't be aware that he's under the influence of this ritual, and won't remember anything that happens while carrying out the command. Requires a special talisman, signed in the victim's blood and burned in a black iron brazier.

*Dark Whispers*, Ob victim's Will: twists the victim's mind, either imposing him a new trait representing this sudden change of personality (lustful, chaste, paranoid, coward ...) or giving him a new Belief written by who performs the ritual. Requires a few drops of the victim's blood and the sacrifice of a sentient being.