Crucible

Serpent's Tongue Update 1

The Serpent's Song

"Ezow baz'ribonit len."

Tyler stared down at the wooden chest, trying to decide what exactly it was. Two feet to a side, and just as deep, the old hardwood crawled with runes and arcane designs that he felt he remembered, but when he focused on it it slipped away like morning mist. He knew his Grandfather had it for a very, very long time, but hadn't ever thought about it until a stifling afternoon in May. He swore he heard the thing singing to him, calling his mortal name. Originally he cast it off as the heat making his mind play tricks on him. As the moon rose, and the heat died away to the cool of night the singing continued and he found the courage to see the source of it.

In the attic, he was almost overcome by the volume of the strange language, repeating over and over like a crazed psychopath.

"Ezow baz'ribonit len." The siren's song called out again as he ran his hand over the six-toothed wheel that sat where the lock would go. It felt smooth and cold despite the heat in the attic, and at the same time comfortable, familiar. He knew he'd had this before, but when? It was an old chest, stacked under yearbooks and musty scrapbooks in the attic all these years, but maybe, just maybe.

Tyler touched a finger to the center of the wheel. THe feeling of a needle pricking into his flesh made him jump back, landing on his butt as runes lit up on the chest, beams of light shooting forth like angels proclaiming the dawn. Without warning the chest's top exploded open, and Tyler found his mind assaulted by memories of a thousand lifetimes, powers he couldn't fathom, and riches beyond his wildest dreams.

In the same instant, it was over. He couldn't recall what he'd seen, or what had happened, just that it was. Sitting up, he dared to peer inside the old chest at the tattered parchment squares, about the size of a postcard, scattered over a scuffed leather tome. The same runes on the outside of the chest adorned these in aged brown ink, and seemed to whisper their names to him. The Siren's hissing voice sang once more to him.

"Bring me home."

Introduction

Welcome to the first Serpent's Tongue Update: Crucible. Over the past six months, the team at UnBound Games gathered player feedback to create a series of story-driven updates to refine and improve the Serpent's Tongue experience. This update includes clarifications and errata to the Requires X to cast and Sustain mechanic, new game terms, and a number of card errata and clarification for popular cards.

Experienced gamers may notice the unusual format of these updates. This is on intention, as we feel it is in the best interest of our players to understand the reasoning behind some changes. The most current rules text of any card is available at http://www.becomeamagi.com/arcanum/card.

Bold text indicates changes to rules or card text that impacts game play.

Italic text indicates commentary from the UnBound Games staff.

Regular text indicates clarification of a rule or gameplay change.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to thank our Kickstarter Backers, fans, and magi worldwide for their support and patience through a tumultuous first year. We understand how frustrating it is to be waiting on rewards and rules updates, and want to assure each and every one of our supporters that we are working around the clock to make Serpent's Tongue and UnBound Games the best they can possibly be. We would not be around if not for your support!

Turn Order & Phases - Requirements

The requirement Active <object> to Sustain is now only checked once during the Maintenance Phase at the same time as sustain costs are paid. This means that if you lose something required for a sustain cost, the spell with the requirement won't be discarded until the Maintenence Phase.

This change is the first in a series of changes to clean up the timing of several effects in the game, most importantly for Bio mages the interaction of Cellular Augmentation as a base spell with other spells that depend on it. This is a major buff that opens up new options for Bio magi.

New Game Terms

This update includes three new game terms that will be used in rules discussions and on future cards. Players are encouraged to become familiar with them, and use them when discussing the rules.

Internal Zones - The Defense, Curse, Manifesting, and Enhancement zones are now considered "internal" zones. Likewise, the Attack Zone is considered an External Zone.

Innate Abilities - These are the default abilities of a Magi. Effects that limit Actions (Enraged, Phased, Pacified, Petrified, etc.) do not restrict these abilities. One can always perform them. They currently include Meditation, Spec Upgrades, Will Exchanges, Dismissing Spells, and Shifting Focus.

Dismiss - Dismiss is a new player action. To Dismiss, a player voluntarily discards a spell they control as a free action. Some cards and rules instruct a player to Dismiss, even when they normally would not want to. Commonly, players will Dismiss when they have more than four cards in the Enhancement zone.

Incantation Errata

Atomic Strike, Fluency 4

Increase the resonance cost of this card to -10, up from -9. Remove all four ritual tiers from the Incantation. *This is one of the few cards that slipped through the cracks in terms of power; its Internal Resonance (The UnBound Games internal balancing system) was far too high. The increase in Resonance and the spell's Ritual Tiershas corrected this oversight while maintaining the power of the Incantation.*

Coalesce Meteors, Fluency 4

The Ritual Paths now properly indicate Discord 1.

Critical Implosion, Fluency 3

Change the Requirements text from "Requires: Implode Creation targeting one of Caster's Creations" to "Requires: Offensive Implode Creation targeting one of Caster's Creations."

This change solves the very terrifying "Defensive Implode Creation" codex that cropped up in some regions. Critical Implosion is intended to be a purely responsive card for Quantum/Matter codex.

Curse of Cain, Fluency 2, Fluency 3

Add the Karmic Aspect to the Fluency 2 and 3 versions of the spell.

This change corrects an oversight from the original printing of the incantations.

Damage caused by cards like Curse of Cain and Cursed Mirror do not infinitely chain. They may only activate once during the resolution of an effect.

Deception, Fluency 2, Fluency 3

Now specifies "activates" an offensive ability.
A subtle change which now allows Magi to sustain active spells and effects even while cloaked.

Enemy Within, Fluency 2, Fluency 3

The ritual path steps 2 and 3 now both properly indicate "Discord 1".
This is a misprint on the original cards, now fixed for convenience.

Fight or Flight, Fluency 4

Add "Does not apply to innate abilities" to the end of this card's first ability.

The new definition of Innate abilities interacted strangely with the Enraged and Pacify broadcasts; This change clarifies that these effects can't take away the Magi's innate abilities.

Flame Eternae, Fluency 4

Add "Upgrade: Caster may pay 2 Harmony each time they are disrupted to maintain Focus on Flame Eternae." to this Incantation.

The original printing of this card was missing this upgrade. Players are advised to weigh the cost of ritualizing the spell against using this ability.

Focus Chi, Fluency 2

Change this card's Upgrade text to "Upgrade: Once per round, caster may pay 1 Will to ward +1 damage from any effect."

This is a clarification of the effect's timing, and a restriction of once per round whereas it was an unlimited effect before.

God's Dice, Fluency 3, Fluency 4

In order to affect a target, God's Dice must successfully impact on the roller. This means that the spell must pass the target's defenses.

Leprosy, Fluency 2

Move the Area ritualization from tier 1 to tier 3.

Life Leech, All fluencies

Change the first ability to read "Each time bearer deals Bio Dmg to one or more targets, bearer gains 1 Essence. This effect is not triggered by Siphons."

This change clarifies when the ability triggers due to Bio Damage and that the effect can only trigger once per event no matter how many targets are affected.

Mage Flight, Fluency 4

Change the first ability to read "As a Response, bearer may evade Matter, Forces, or Quantum.

The original printing of this card only allowed the mage to evade Forces spells, unlike the Fluency 2. Both fluencies now evade the same spheres.

Mark of Cain, Fluency 3

Reduce the Harmony cost of this Incantation from -3 to -2.

Meddle, Fluency 2

When changing a target of a spell with Meddle, normal targeting rules still apply. Target validity is checked after Meddle resolves. This means that Enhancements cannot target Magi opposing the caster, etc.

Planar Transformation, Fluency 3

Change the Resonance cost of this Incantation from -1 to +1.

Presence of Bekira, Fluency 3

Add "Once per round" to the beginning of the first ability's text.

Psychic Nexus, Fluency 3

Change the Duration 3 aspect to Curse Duration 3.

This change is to give the spell proper Curse behavior like other Mind-Hack cards.

Puppeteer, Fluency 2

Change the Duration X aspect to Duration P.

Quantum Impossibility, Fluency 3

The spell targeted by Quantum Impossibility does not Impact or Activate when this effect resolves.

Rage, Fluency 2

Change this card's text to: "Bearer's Spells and Activated Abilities must be offensive. This does not apply to other types of Actions."

Like Fight or Flight, Rage had some unusual interactions with the new Innate abilities. As above, Enraged does not prevent a Magi from using thier Innate abilities.

Rift Stretching, Fluency 2, Fluency 3

Change this Card's text to read "Once per round, the combined Rift satisfies a 'Discard Rift' requirement simply by being active."

Sanctum Sanctorum, Fluency 4

Add "Shield Quantum" to the broadcast bar. Remove "bearer may cast offensive Quantum Spells" from the ability text.

The ability for Sanctum Sanctorum Fluency 4 to cast quantum spells caused numerous game exploits, and thus is corrected by the ability changing to disallow casting. To keep the Incantation's power level consistent, however, the incantation now protects the bearer from Quantum instead.

Stalling Tactics, Fluency 3

Change the card's first ability to read "After combined spell activates, place combined spell in its caster's manifesting zone."

This clarifies the timing of Stalling Tactic's ability, and prevents the combined spell from activating. Remember that a spell with the Disrupt empowerment discards all manifesting spells if it impacts.

Synapse Swap, Fluency 2

The transfer caused by this spell is unblockable.

Terrify, Fluency 2

As above, the Pacified broadcast does not prevent a magi from using their innate abilities.

Threnody, Fluency 3

Change the Upgrade text to read: "Upgrade: Cast as a Free Action Response and reduce Resonance cost by 5 if an allied Magi has been incapacitated this round."

This rewording avoids the complicated interactions of free-action upgrades and the new Action Stones system.

Tryst's Time Dilation, Fluency 3

Phased spells have no effect, cannot be used by other spells, nor targeted. They lose no duration. Note that Tryst's Time Dilation only affects Offensive spells cast by your opponent.

Volcano, Fluency 3

Ritual tier 3 should read "Discord 1". The sustain requirement should read "Active Solid, Liquid, Gas, & Volatile Components to cast & sustain."