

Hermione

Epitome of Romance

There is a specter haunting Poughkeepsie.

At least, that's what the legends say. Supposedly, deep underneath the city, near the hypothetical center of the Bubble that keeps Poughkeepsie isolated from both the Symphony and the War, lives a Somber Lady. Although "is trapped" may be a better way of putting it: as the stories have it, she may not leave the Bubble, lest she be instantly destroyed by the Symphony as being utterly alien to it. Her name is reputedly Hermione, she supposedly comes from The World That Was, and she is the most powerful relic of a former reality that has since been taken over by our own.

Astoundingly, the legends are essentially true: Hermione is, indeed, a Superior-level entity who has survived the death of her original universe. But the legends are also incomplete: Hermione chose her lonely existence freely. She could even conceivably reverse the effects, but chooses not to. After all, the destruction of her universe and the creation of ours was Hermione's objective all along. While our universe is a good deal less epic and

Romantic than hers was, it's also not inevitably doomed, either.

Dissonance

The World That Was did not exactly have a mechanism in place to represent what happens when a celestial acts contrary to her Choir or Word; celestials simply could *not* contradict their inherent nature. What they had instead were *Strictures*: in Hermione's case, neither she nor her lost Servitors could ever shy away from doing The Necessary Good. Logic, practicality, sentiment: all wonderful things, but if they ever got in the way of doing what was **right** then they were jettisoned ruthlessly.

Our current universe exists because of that Stricture.

Servitor Attunements

The World That Was did not have angels, demons, Archangels, or Demon Princes; celestials were all Servitors of their Epitomes, and the Epitomes' great and only real enemy came from... Outside. Hermione *did* have corporeal, ethereal, and celestial servants, and her Attunements **do** work inside the Bubble. Trying to **use** them outside of the Bubble would likely be incredibly

dangerous to her servants, which is why Hermione has disabled their ability to even be able to try. Note that both human-ethereal and human-celestial crossbreeds can purchase the Attunement of both their supernatural parent, and their mundane one.

Corporeal

Human (and crossbreed) Servitors of Hermione are or become exquisitely lovely in form and feature; sometimes, offensively so. They begin play with a Charisma bonus equal to their Corporeal Forces. This bonus, if used, applies to both the reaction roll AND the check digit (including failed reaction rolls).

Ethereal (partially restricted)

On a successful skill roll, an ethereal serving Hermione knows a person's most extravagant aspiration after either perceiving something that the person's created (Artistry), or engaging that person in conversation (Detect Lies). This is not equivalent to determining a human's Destiny or Fate, but it does give a good read on somebody's ultimate motivations.

Celestial (partially restricted)

Celestials in service to Romance have the equivalent of a Role/3 for purposes of determining Disturbance (which

was a problem in The World That Was, and a much more dangerous one). This is largely academic in the Poughkeepsie Bubble, but it is probably the ‘safest’ Attunement for a Servitor of Romance to possess in the outside world.

Exemplar Attunements

Possession of one of these Attunements proclaimed its holder to be an Exemplar of her Epitome’s particular Word: which is to say, somebody who instinctively understood that Word, and could express it more powerfully than a regular Servitor. These Attunements are thus also very much like regular ***In Nomine’s*** Distinctions: a combination of powers and status. This is important, as high status for a Servitor of Romance means that Hermione is watching you *less* often: see below.

Note that humans and crossbreeds have full access to these Attunements.

Muse

An Exemplar with this Attunement adds her Celestial Forces to any attempt in her presence to create a work of art. This can include certain types of machinery.

Patron

Exemplars with this Attunement can, once per day, add their Ethereal Forces to any successful skill made done in their presence.

Candle

In the Time That Was, Exemplars with this Attunement were rare. The Exemplar can pool his current Body, Mind, and Soul Hits: while in that state, he will operate at full efficiency, no matter the amount of damage, until all of his pooled Hits are gone. And once those Hits are gone, so is the Exemplar.

Relations

Hermione has no allies or enemies among either the forces of Heaven or Hell, mostly because most celestials have never even heard of her. From her point of view, the entire dichotomy of 'angel' and 'demon' is entertainingly ridiculous: the Epitome of Romance faced an enemy that started at 'utter nihilism' and went much worse from there.

Rites

None: Essence was quite unknown in The World That Was. Her Servitors generated *Favor* twice per day instead. Favor can be used to fuel Songs and boost skill rolls, and does not generate Disturbance when used.

Chance of Invocation: 6

Modifiers: -1 for every Servitor Attunement beyond the first, and every Exemplar Attunement. Hermione's high-ranked Servitors are expected to do their work on their own.

The Word of Romance

The Word of Romance is about the grand gesture and the doing of deeds for the sheer look of the thing; headlong bravery and reckless exuberance were the hallmarks of Hermione's Word. Provided, of course, that it was all done in the name of the Necessary Good.

History

Once there was The World That Was. It was a world of great dreamers and epic endeavours. The colors were sharper, the senses were keener; the very air itself could invigorate. It had great and glorious Epitomes, holder of proud words taken from the lips of the Creator Himself, back when He took note of the deeds of Man, Ethereal, and Celestial. And the deeds that were done! To evoke one of the few poets worth the name in this new, reduced

world: *attack ships on fire, off the shoulder of Orion. C-beams glittering in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate.*

...And all those moments now lost in time, like tears in rain.

The problem was that Hermione and her fellow Epitomes were at war with an enemy that was neither implacable nor patient, for those are words that imply intent. Their enemy simply **was**, and when left unchecked, it destroyed everything. As her fellow-Epitomes perished, one by one, Hermione withdrew more and more of herself to her final redoubt, deep in the bowels of the earth.

From there, as the nothingness closed in, she and her Servitors worked feverishly to salvage something, anything, from the wreck. Her human and ethereal servants fell first in the final battle. Her celestial servants followed suit, soon enough. But they gave Hermione just enough time to twist and break reality in a way that would force nothingness to feed upon itself, and thus perish.

But in this new reality, nature abhors a vacuum; and so, when the dust cleared, Hermione was trapped in a Bubble-prison of her own devising. She has no idea what will happen if she leaves it. She has no idea whether she

can survive leaving it. More importantly, Hermione doesn't know what will happen to the new universe if she leaves the Bubble. This stays her hand: this new world may not be to Hermione's liking, but it is an improvement on oblivion.

And so she sits, deep below the surface of Poughkeepsie, and... waits? Hermione herself is unsure what she is waiting for. She expects that she will know, once she sees it.

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