

The Dissolution

Dark Magic adapts to its surroundings. It also is subject to the inexorable tide of history. The potent rituals and quiet terrors of one generation of sorcerers become mere horror stories for the next generation, and a figure of fun for the generation after that. That's one reason why nobody actually bothers suppressing old grimoires and codexes: all of their power and malice have long since been drained away, like a corpse drained of blood and allowed to dessicate in the sun.

A more modern era requires more modern evils. Ours is a decentralized and decentered time, and our Dark Magic reflects that. There is no One True Path to arcane malignancy, and not even a set of competing philosophies. Instead, each sorcerer is profoundly alone in his workings, working out an individualized route to corruption, damnation -- and power. They form no circles, or at least not ones made up of equals. Every sorcerer's hand is against every other's, and it is difficult for them to call even temporary truces.

There are those who consider this a horrible improvement, after one considers the industrialized esoteric abattoirs of the Twentieth Century. Other, wiser arcanists are well aware that this paradigm will be short-lived. Eventually

somebody will come up with a new Dark Magic path; one that will reward even a twisted sort of cooperation. When that happens, the world will groan again under the terrible scourge of heedless power and malignant will.

Fortunately, that day can be at least delayed a bit. Which is why the Dissolution exists. We are there to stop those inclined to evil magic from working together, even if they might be collectively less vile than those working alone. They'll not be less vile for long! Of this, we are sure. We are *absolutely* sure.

And with absolute certainty comes a certain... license. When you *know* that your actions serve the greater good, you can allow yourself flexibility in your methods. Those methods may not always be entirely clean, to be sure, but what is, in this fallen world of ours?

Besides, you must always remember, when doing the tasks the Dissolution gives you: things can be worse. Things will be worse, if you do nothing. Or if you let a selfish pity stay your hand.

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