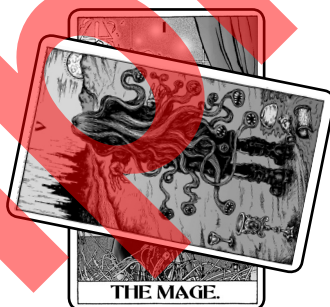
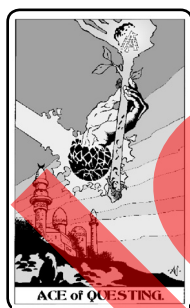


HORIZON

THE STRONGHOLD OF HOPE



In Unity, There is Strength

by Beth Fischl and Allen Varney,
with Ethan Skemp

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Due to mature themes and subject matter, reader discretion is advised.

Special Dedications

For Sam Chupp, who laid the foundation for **Horizon**.

Chris Hind, whose name fell through the cracks on **Mage Second Edition** (Ack! I'm sorry, Chris!).

And for the **Vampire: The Dark Ages** crew, especially Jen and Larry. The book rocks.



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Introduction

Number *every* star in springtime's sky, and there you count the children I betrayed. In ignorance, inert; in doubt, mercurial; in subversion and dissension, impotent: I could not save my heirs of 15 generations! And while I foundered, the enemy's mailed fist grew tight upon the world, and trapped my children in the circle of the sky.

But patiently, like a rock in the torrent, I endured. Worn away with waiting, I survived: flensed of fat, hard as bone.

Strength lies in wisdom. To face fear and survive it, that is wisdom. With wisdom grows unity, and unity makes strength.

Now warm air rises to a summery wind. Every hour brings report of voices raised in common will, and in these halls of endless torpid murmurs, a ringing call resounds. Unsleeping and expectant, my children hear — they rise and walk unfainting — they run and will not weary.

As one, they seek the line of earth and sky, the garrote of custom. They snap it like a filament and pass through.

Beyond, immensity: the Realm of Wish-in-wisdom, the Word made manifest. There, beyond, my children locate hope. They seek to birth the new.

By their will, so is it done.



Where do the Traditions gather? What magical world might evolve from the wills of an entire Council at war with reality? What might be the wonders, perils and intrigues of a land carved from creation's raw essence? Come with us to Horizon, and discover the answers.

Horizon: Stronghold of Hope is a sourcebook for **Mage** that describes the central Tradition Chantry, the meeting place of the Council itself. After five centuries of neglect, Horizon now draws new interest from a young and visionary generation of Council archmages. Can they bring unity to the feuding Traditions? Can Horizon enter its Summer phase of mature strength and return wonder to the world? The answers depend on the needs — and the deeds — of your chronicle.

Seasons of the Realm

Realms and Chantries mark their age in seasons, ranging from Spring to Winter. Spring Chantries are newly founded; fresh ideas and enthusiasm compensate for their inhabitants' lack of wisdom and resources. Having reached their peak power, Summer Chantries are strong, confident and very active — sometimes to the point of recklessness. By Autumn, a Chantry has stopped expanding and works to secure its gains; with accumulated wisdom and wealth, its masters wield great political clout. Winter Chantries are so lost in glorious memories and infighting that they fail to see their work collapsing about them. If a Winter Chantry has an influx of younger mages, it may be able to struggle through to a second, more prosperous Spring.

Horizon is a mega-Chantry in flux. From a hopeful beginning, it crashed down into Winter almost immediately, despite the power of its founders. Now, over 500 years after Horizon's creation, a new Spring has begun. Things are happening here; surely a mage, even an apprentice, can make a difference in this Realm....

How to Use this Book

Horizon has five chapters. The first, **Stations of the Realm**, recounts some momentous events in progress at the moment. This section consists of transcripts, made by a secret observer, of the Virtual Adept Dante's first visit to Horizon, accompanied by a Hollow One named Nile. Will their actions have some great significance in the long run, or is this simply "business as usual" for the Council? **Stations of the Realm** has the potential to be either one, or both, depending on the importance you decide to give these events in your chronicle.

This unusual tale leaves you several options: As a story, it illustrates the multilayered intrigues the archmagi call sport. Things are never what they seem to be, especially in the world of mages. Additionally, it suggests a jumping-off

point for new chronicles by showing the events that might unfold from a simple "quick trip" in. For extra fun, this section may be copied and read aloud by a troupe, with players taking different roles. This could foreshadow future stories involving your own troupe's characters, especially if they have some pre-existing ties to the wizards involved. Finally, **Stations of the Realm** could simply serve as an introduction to this complex, yet very human, world.

The other four chapters are best left only to Storytellers. **Chapter Two, History**, briefly recounts the long, sad story of Horizon's Fall, Winter and Spring seasons. **The Realm** describes Horizon's geography, inhabitants, defenses and politics. **Storytelling** suggests how to use **Horizon** in your chronicle. **Characters** offers a range of characters your players might meet in the Realm. An **Appendix** tells how to create characters of Adept or archmage rank.

Horizon: Stronghold of Hope marks a turning point in the Ascension War. The Traditions still can't deliver a knockout blow to the Technocracy's plans, but they're about to get off the mat and land a few hard punches. Moreover, it offers an Otherworldly setting created by the Ascension War yet removed from its front lines.

Theme

A good theme for Horizon-based chronicles is renewal. After five centuries of bad luck and neglect, the Chantry is at last ending its extended Spring and moving toward Summer. Horizon resembles a neglected model train left for years on a shelf. Now the owners (the Traditions) are taking it down, dusting it off and seeing how it runs.

In a way, the rebirth of Horizon represents the first hopeful legacy of World War II. Willworkers Awakened since that time are now achieving Master status, and their rise brings with it their new patterns of thinking. They've seen the results of the old practices; now they're willing to experiment. The mood of a Horizon chronicle should be guardedly optimistic, full of expectation and the promise of change. The setting encourages an atmosphere of portentous magnificence. As they comprehend Horizon's seemingly limitless power, mages should feel they walk in the hallowed halls of history itself, where every action can cause endless ripples throughout the Tapestry. "If a spider coughs in the upper reaches of the Council Chamber, it is said, every mage on Earth hears it."

The irony of Horizon's new lease on life is this: Although created by human hands, the Realm has taken on a life of its own. Despite the long decline of the Council itself, Horizon has prospered. It's as if the inhabitants made their own reality here while the Masters squabbled. The Realm is a biosphere that, after half a millennium, has grown into a world. It may be that, in an inverted Resonance effect, the prosperity of the Realm has shaped the demeanor of its so-called masters.