#### Rune of the Beast

**Description**

This rune is a series of scars that ring the caster’s body. Each new spell circle brings another ring. Upon close examination, the scars can be seen to be tiny runic script. The words make up the ritual used by the caster to gain the spell circle.

**Purpose**

This rune is tied to the magic of demons and devils. It is used by mages that hunt or revere these beasts. The purpose of the rune is to give the caster demon-like abilities and bring him closer to demonkind. Hopefully, bringing the mage closer to his enemy gives him a greater understanding of that enemy and thus a better chance of success. Unfortunately, it also attracts those that desire to commune with demons for their own nefarious purposes.

**Rune Site**

This rune site can be found on a small island about 6 hours sail to the northwest of Ismoth. The island has some scattered wooded areas surrounding a set of jagged peaks. At the top of one of these peaks is a tiny cave. The cave holds a variety of physician’s equipment and a nasty looking cage. The cage is fitted with several tiny bladed wheels sitting at the end of articulated arms that extend into the cage. Beside the cage sits a granite altar.

**Binding and Raising**

A mage seeking the Rune of the Beast needs to sacrifice an enemy (either a demon, a demonologist, or a demon hunter), enter the cage, and speak the phrases that will start the cage on its gruesome work. The wheels spin and enter the cage, cutting the mage with the mystic symbols that make up the rune.

Starting the cage takes an act of will (and a WIL save vs. DL 10). Failure to start the device has no penalty. However, the would-be mage will have to wait at least a month before having the courage to try again. Once the process has begun, it cannot be stopped before the mage is marked. He will take 8d6 damage from the marking. If he survives, he has bound the rune.

Raising this rune requires that the mage undergo the same ritual marking as he did to originally gain the rune. He will take the same damage (8d6) as is done by the initial binding. No WIL roll is necessary.

**Practitioners**

Mages who bind the Rune of the Beast are either demon hunters, or cultists. There are currently ten mages with the rune in Bostonia. Of these, four are demon hunters and six are demonologists. These two groups make war with each other at every opportunity. When they are not busy elsewhere, they actively attempt to keep the rune site from falling under the control of the other group.

**Effects**

This rune twists the mage’s soul, bringing him closer to demonkind. This makes both hunter and cultist more prone to evil and violence. They see killing to be a tool in their war and human life cases to have meaning outside of the context of the individual’s use in the hunt. Beast Mages become kin to demons and thus, kin to the Deceiver himself. This gives the mage a +1 to all skill tests that involve lying or fooling someone (fast talk and persuade being two possibilities). Beast Mages become quick to anger and resort to violence and get a +1 INI. Finally, the gods write off practitioners of this rune. They cannot have any beneficial spells or effects cast on them by priests or priestesses. They can be turned by priests of Stratus and are affected by spells and other magical effects that affect demons.

**Skill**

The Beast Rune costs 7 points and is based on WIL/WIL/SPI.

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| **Name** | **DL** | **Cast** | **Rng** | **Dur** | **Mnt** | **Effects** |
| **First Circle** | | | | | | |
| Claws of the Beast | 8 | CS | S | 10r | Y | * You gain demonic claws, using your unarmed skill to attack * Claws do STR + 1d6+1 damage * Claws have Fast(2) * Claws are considered magical weapons with regard to who you can damage with them |
| Courage | 8 | VS | S | 10m | Y | * You get a +3 to all WIL saves and all saves vs. fear effects |
| Detect Demonic Magic | 10 | S | S | 5m | Y | * You feel the presence and strength of demonic taint within 10 hexes * Some of the most powerful demons are immune when in human form * Spells cast by demons or demonic runes, items forged by demonic hand, people under the magical influence of demons will be detected |
| Scales of the Beast | 10 | CS | S | 10r | N | * You grow scales, giving you 3 armor value or +1 to your current armor value, whichever is higher * You have a -1 initiative |
| Voice of the Beast | 10 | VS | S | ? | N | * Your voice grows deep and evil * You gain +3 to interrogate (or level 12, whichever is higher) * You may speak one command to a target and make an interrogate check vs. their willpower * If you succeed, they are cowed and will do as you command for 1d6 minutes |
| **Second Circle** | | | | | | |
| Aura Sword | 14 | VL | T | 1d | Y | * The targeted weapon can damage creatures that require magical weapons * Requires at least 3 hit points worth of blood to cast |
| Bone Mace | 13 | CS | S | 10r | Y | * Your hand forms into a spiked mace made of bone * This mace does STR + 1d8+1 damage and has the traits Concussion(2), Fast(1), Piercing(2), Skull Smasher |
| Quiet Sleep | 12 | L | T | 1d | N | * The target sleeps soundly and dreamlessly for the night * Any magic or powers that affect the target while he is sleeping or that alter his dreams are ineffective unless the caster can save (SPI 19) |
| Stench of the Beast | 13 | S | S | 10m | Y | * You take on the smell and aura of a demon * Animals avoid you, or act hostile towards you * People must make a save (WIL 13) to approach within 2 hexes of you * You can breathe on a target, stunning him for a single round (WIL 15), but this ends the spell |
| Visage of the Beast | 13 | CS | 8” | Inst | N | * Your face contorts into a demonic visage * The eight nearest people facing you must save (WIL 13) or be affected for 1d6 rounds * Affected targets will have a random reaction (roll 1d6)   + 1-2 – Target is subject to fear and must flee until he breaks line of sight   + 3 – Target is enraged and will attack the caster with a +2 to hit and damage, but a -4 to defense   + 4-5 – Target trembles in fear and cannot move or attack; he may only defend himself   + 6 – Target vomits and for one round cannot act and can only defend at base defense. For the remainder of the spell, he is impaired(1) |
| Wings of the Beast | 14 | S | S | 20m | Y | * You can fly at 8 hexes/round |
| **Third Circle** | | | | | | |
| Talons of the Beast | 17 | C | S | 10r | Y | * You grow powerful talons that do STR + 1d10 + 2 damage and have the trait Fast(2) |
| Tower of Courage | 16 | VS | S | 10m | Y | * All allies within 6 hexes gain +4 to all willpower and spirit saves * All allies are immune to fear effects |
| True Scales | 17 | C | S | 10r | Y | * You grow a scaly hide that provides 5 armor value or +2 to any locations with armor (whichever is higher) * All defenses and initiative are -1 |
| True Visage | 18 | S | 30” | Inst | N | * You force a creature to reveal its true nature if it is using magic or demonic powers to hide its identity (SPI 22) * You must use 1d6 hit points of fresh blood to power this spell |
| True Wings | 18 | C | S | 20m | Y | * You can fly 13 hexes/round |
| **Fourth Circle** | | | | | | |
| Banish | 24 | VL | T | 3d | N | * You enchant a weapon for 3 days * If this weapon strikes a demon, they are banished from this world for a year and a day (SPI 24) * You must invest a spell level to cast this spell |
| The Becoming | 24 | L | S | ? | N | * You turn into a powerful demon * You gain +5 STR, +5 TOU, +10 Hits, +2 Base Move, +2 Initiative * You gain 5 armor * Any of the transformation spells can be activated at will (wings, talons) * Any attack spell may be used instead of a normal attack * You regenerate 1 hit point each round * To return to normal you must cast a Return spell which is DL 10, but the DL increases by 2 each hour * The Return spell can only be attempted once each hour * If the Return spell is failed 3 times, you are permanently trapped in this form |
| Pure Blood | 24 | L | T | Inst | N | * Cures almost all normal poisons and magical poisons of demonic origin |
| Summon Spawn | 24 | S | 6” | 6h | Y | * 1d3 mid-level demon spawn appear (horned or enforcers) and must make a save (SPI 23) or serve you * If they save, they are not compelled to service and can act freely |