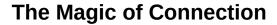
# **Ancestral Witch (v.1.0.)**

"Witching ain't like wizarding. Any bookworm can become a wizard with enough dull, pedantic persistence. But a witch ain't something you become. Witchcraft ain't something you do. Witchery is something you are."

—Hexen Jax, Grand Witch of the Lavender Hills

In some worlds, witches are not quite human. The gift (or curse) of witchcraft runs in families, stemming from an ancient supernatural ancestry. These witches inherit their powers through an innate magical sense of the connectedness of all things.

A child of any ancestry and any gender might manifest witch traits, typically showing signs of witchery between infancy and early adulthood. Depending on the culture into which they were born, ancestral witches may be specially trained to take up important roles in their community, or they may be shunned and forced to hide their powers from the fearful and ignorant.



A witch is born with an innate sense of how all

things—people, creatures, and plants, land, sea, and sky—are connected through the flow of magic. This grants them preternatural intuition and a knack for many skills. As a witch grows, this sense begins to grant them insight into how to manipulate the flow of magic to shape the world around them.

Many witches find that this awareness of connections makes it exhausting to be around large numbers of people. For this reason, they tend to live solitary lives far from large settlements. Some witches, however, find city life and all its complexities to be exhilerating. These urban witches thrive as the operators of small businesses, magical or otherwise.

Antimagic effects inhibit a witch's magical intuition, disrupting their powers. A witch caught in an *antimagic field* or similar effect will feel disorientated, having lost one of their primary ways of interacting with the world.

# The Good, the Bad & the Wicked

The innate sense of connection possessed by every ancestral witch is especially useful in helping others. Many witches take up professions based on solving problems in their communities, such as healer, veterinarian, artisan, advisor, or private detective, though most prefer to avoid positions of power for fear of abusing their station. Others take to the road as adventurers helping those in need far and wide.

There is a dark side to witchcraft, however. For just as an awareness of connections can enable aid, it can also facilitate harm. Some witches learn to take advantage of this power, becoming masters of hexes and curses. The use of this power is not necessarily evil—it can, for instance, enable the pursuit of justice—but many associate a witch's curse with wickedness.



The relationship between ancestral witches and hags is unclear. Some oral histories say that the earliest witches were the children of hags. Other traditions suggest that ancestral witches are themselves a kind of hag. The truth is lost to time.

# **Companions, Covens & Convocations**

Even the most solitary of witches craves some form of companionship. Nearly every witch has a familiar, typically a spirit in the form of a cat, snake, owl, crow, or toad. This creature becomes the witch's constant companion and closest friend.

Ancestral witches sometimes gather in groups called covens. Covens are usually groups of three, seven, nine, or thirteen. Covens allow witches operating in neighbouring regions to maintain ties with one another and to spread news of current events. By working together, a coven can also amplify the powers of its members.

More rarely, an especially large coven may gather for a brief time. Such groups are called convocations, and may have a number of witches equal to any prime number or multiple of nine. Convocations usually assemble only in response to some great threat to the world, or in celebration of a once-in-ageneration event, such as the alignment of the planets.



## **Variation Across Worlds**

Witches vary considerably across settings. It's up to you and your group to decide what witches are like in your game.

One area where witches show considerable variation is in how they age. In some worlds, witches are very long-lived, or even functionally immortal. The witches of Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials series live hundreds of years. In Deborah Harkness's All Souls Trilogy, witches age and die at roughly the same rate as humans. In European mythology, some witches, such as the Fates, are of indeterminate age, sometimes appearing young, sometimes appearing ancient.

Another aspect in which ancestral witches are diverse is in their moral and social outlook. In L. Frank Baum's Land of Oz, witchcraft is polarized, with kind witches tending towards good and wicked witches tending towards evil. (However, consider how Gregory Macguire's *Wicked* and the Broadway musical based on it complicate the ideas of good and evil in Oz.) In Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, by contrast, witches are usually neither particularly good nor evil, but have an independent streak that aligns them with chaos over law.

## **Witch Traits**

Witches gain the following ancestral traits.

### **Ability Score Increase**

Your Wisdom score increases by 2, and one other ability score of your choice increases by 1.

### Age

How witches age depends on the setting. Your starting age could be anywhere between 13 and 300.

### **Alignment**

In some worlds, witches may tend towards one alignment or another; in others, they have no such tendencies. A kind witch may be good; a wicked witch, evil; a hedge witch, neutral; a "hired broom" mercenary witch, chaotic; a vengeful witch of justice, lawful.

#### Size

A witch's height, weight, and build depends on their parentage, falling anywhere within the range for creatures of their non-witch ancestry. Your height may be anywhere between 3 and 7 feet. Your size is your choice of Small (3 to 4 ft.) or Medium (4 to 7 ft.).

## **Speed**

Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

#### **Darkvision**

A witch's senses are acute, even in darkness. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colour in darkness, only shades of gray.

## **Deep Connection**

Your power stems from your preternatural sense of the connectedness of all things. This can manifest in many different ways, depending on your specializations, skills, and talents. On your turn, you may choose one ability score other than Wisdom. For one minute, whenever you would add the modifier of your chosen ability score to a roll (such as an ability check or damage roll) or a static number (such as a DC or a class feature's resource or effect), you add your Wisdom modifier instead. If this effect is active and you are subject to an antimagic effect (such as the antimagic field or dispel magic spells), you must make a Wisdom saving throw; on a failed save, this effect ends. You may use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.



#### **Rustic Handiwork**

You gain proficiency in two artisan's tools of your choice.

#### Witch's Intuition

You gain proficiency in the Insight skill.

#### Witchcraft

You can use a common household object, such as a broom or a cooking pot, as a spellcasting focus. You know the *druidcraft* and *vicious mockery* cantrips. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *find familiar* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *levitate* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

### Languages

You can speak, read, and write Common and one other language of your choice.

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#### **About the Author**

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