

Accord Universal Appendix: Universal Familiar Guide

In the World of Darkness, there are many types of supernatural creatures that deal with the esoteric world. Many of these beings have close ties with spirits, ghosts, and demons. Some few have begun to form closer partnerships with these entities, drawing to them “familiar spirits,” who act as aides, guides, and scouts. Mechanically, these beings are typically represented by a familiar merit, whatever their origin. While many of these merits have similar mechanics, they are by no means consistent. The first section of this document details the familiar merit and associated mechanics. The second section of this document details Totems. *As they are NPCs, none of these entities add to the Base RQ of the PC or VSS. They are, however, considered Believers.*

Familiars

In the world of Accord, the familiar system has been streamlined and simplified. While the origins of the three types of familiars are distinct (Infernal, spiritual, and ghostly), the mechanics have been broken down and universalized. In general, consider all familiar or companion style merits (including unconventional ones such as Ghost Ally from *Second Sight*) to have been replaced by the following mechanics. Ultimately, refer to this document when the Accord Addenda states it.

All normal familiars are “Twilight Familiars” and are **4-dot merits, costing 8 XP**. Improved familiars are detailed below.

Step 1: Choose Origin

The first step in Familiar creation is to choose the origin of the familiar. This is partially based on your character type and associated mechanics. Ultimately, there is one golden rule to determine whether a PC has access to a familiar: ***The character must have a method of detection and interaction with the entity type, based on template or magical type.*** This is only superseded by source material in specific instances, such as listed prerequisites in material (example: Prometheans MUST have Ephemeral Flesh or Thaumaturges MUST have certain magic merits, etc.). Whether a PC has appropriate justification for a Familiar is determined by the VST utilizing the examples below, the one exception being Familiars of Infernal origins, which have restricted access. **Mages with spells to grant familiars may only do so to characters who fit the requirements of gaining a familiar.** An important note: a PC may only have one Familiar per type they have access to unless otherwise noted (a Purified may have both a spirit and ghost familiar, etc). A character may ONLY ever have at most two familiars.

The only restrictions to familiar types are Infernal, which are:

- Lucifuge (may not have Spirit familiars)
- Possessed
- Apostles of the Dark One with Dragon’s Tongue at 2 dots ([supersedes spirit familiar option if taken](#))

Step 2: Basic Familiar Creation Template

Attributes: Familiars use Power, Finesse, and Resistance as attributes. All familiars begin with 4/4/3 in each category as appropriate (however you distribute them).

Willpower: A familiar’s Willpower rating is equal to its Power + Resistance.

Essence and Rank: All **standard** familiars have a max of 10 Essence. All familiars are Rank 1 entities. Familiars may not spend more than 2 essence a turn.

Initiative: A familiar’s initiative rating is equal to its Finesse + Resistance.

Defense: A familiar's Defense trait is equal to the highest of its Power or Finesse.

Acting Speed: A familiar's Acting Speed is equal to its "species factor" (same as its earthly counterpart)

Running Speed: A familiar's Running Speed rating is equal to its Power + Finesse + "species factor" (same as its earthly counterpart). If the entity has no easy counterpart, the species factor is "4".

Size: All familiars are Size 5 or lower (equivalent to its earthly counterpart).

Corpus: A Twilight familiar's 'health' is represented by its Corpus, which is equal to Resistance + Size.

Influence: A familiar receives two dots of Influence. A spirit familiar may only have two different categories of Influence (so starting with Influence x2 or two Influence x1). To increase the influence ratings, the players must use numina slots or purchase more with totem points via the "Greater Influence" numen from *Book of Spirits* pg. 142. The spirit's influence must be related (snakes and poison, wind and speed, strength and stone, etc.). The spirit is capped at 2 levels of each Influence, despite being low rank. For a demon, one of these Influence dots must be assigned to its primary Vice. Ghosts receive no dots of Influence.

Virtue and Vice: Familiars have no morality, but Infernal and ghostly familiars have a Virtue and Vice that dictates their behavior. One of the demon's Influence dots must be assigned to their Vice, as noted above. The effects of Virtue and Vice are switched for Demons. A spiritual familiar does not have a Virtue or a Vice.

Numina: A spiritual familiar receives two numina, chosen from the spiritual numina list. An infernal familiar receives two numina, chosen from the demonic list. A ghost familiar receives four numina from the ghostly list. Familiars may not take the Claim, Rapture, Spirit Minions, Threshold numina or any other numina that has a permanent change upon another character. They may take Greater Influence, if they qualify, despite their rank. For a full accounting of numina, see the [MES nWoD Numina list](#).

Ban: Spirits and demons have bans, or weaknesses of behavior they must do or avoid. Sometimes a ban manifests as a weakness to an object or place, but it cannot be a weakness that the demon or spirit already has naturally. Often the ban is directly tied to the familiar's type or influences. Ghosts do not have bans but often also have anchors. For more on bans, see *Book of Spirits* pg. 91-93. For more on anchors, see *Mind's Eye Theater* pg. 334.

Step 3: Universal Aspects

Manifestation: All familiars can manifest like ghosts (MET pg. 335-336). They can choose to be ephemeral and use their influences or numina per the rules for manifesting, or choose to become tangible. When a Infernal or spiritual familiar manifests to be fully tangible in this way, they gain the Innocuous numina (MET: Awakening pg. 424) if they take on an animalistic form most appropriate to their nature. They can forgo the animal form, but then they will not gain the numina. This is not the same as the Materialize numina (*Book of Spirits* pg. 143), which allows a spirit to instantly cross the Gauntlet per the numina's writeup.

Flow of Power: The bond between master and familiar allows the master to convert the entity's essence into supernatural fuel. The familiar's master must be able to utilize essence for this to occur, or be able to convert essence into their fuel type (such as a mage). If a character has two familiars, then the second does not allow access to their fuel. The character can only take up to half of the familiar's fuel and it does not count under the fuel storage limitations. This fuel taken does not

add to the character's pool or any other storage method, it must be used 'in the moment' and is restricted by 'fuel spent per turn' restrictions.

Flow of Information: A master may, at any time, see through the eyes of their familiar. This is an Instant Action, during which they are unaware of their own surroundings. They may glean sensory information in the familiar's presence, using them as a spy.

Distance: The familiar may roam as far away from its master as it wishes, but must always return as its master is its anchor in the world. Ghost familiars still have other anchors, but even if those are destroyed the master has become a new one. This does not allow a familiar to travel outside the VSS the PC is present in.

Communication: A master and familiar inherently understand each other, and speak through verbal cues and inherent sympathetic empathy/telepathy. This does not allow the master to understand supernatural languages (spirit tongue, first tongue, underworld languages, or other human languages) unless they have that capability normally.

Potent Familiars: The merit of this name from *Tome of the Watchtowers* is not sanctioned. XP may not be spent to improve familiars.

Additional Familiars: The merit of this name from *Tome of the Watchtowers* is **not sanctioned**. Characters are limited to one familiar of each type they qualify for. Some templates have special, Improved Familiar types, which are detailed below.

Drawbacks

The Familiar Bond is a powerful one, not entered into lightly. By providing you with their services, they, in turn, expect to be treated well and protected. Therefore, no matter what Morality your PC has, the following Sins are added to the chart. In addition, if a Morality test triggered by violating one of these is failed, the subsequent Degeneration check is automatically lost.

- 9: Being rude or ungrateful to your familiar
- 7: Being verbally or physically abusive to your familiar
- 6: Sending your Familiar into harm's way when you do not share the danger
- 4: Allowing your Familiar to be killed
- 2: Killing your Familiar
- 1: Torturing your Familiar

Improved Familiars

Some templates have a deeper connection to ephemeral creatures than others. Whether through ties to the Supernal or the Underworld, they have the option to take on an "Improved Familiar," a 5-dot simple merit. **These entities are Rank 2 and thus have an essence pool of 15 maximum.**

Supernal Companion (Awakened)

Sometimes, when a mage's soul returns from the Supernal, it has forged a connection with a being from those realms. It takes time for this bond to manifest itself, only after the mage has achieved significant power and a connection to their native supernal realm. This is either both Path Ruling Arcana at 4 dots or one at 4, one at 2, and Gnosis 4. This entity is built as a spirit familiar, but is a creature reflecting the Supernal realm from which the mage Awakened (angels for Aether, Fae-like for Arcadia, etc.) **For all mechanical purposes and interactions, it is treated as a spirit, not a supernal creature (it can be affected by Spirit Arcana, may not take Supernal numina, etc.).** They receive one extra numina and one extra attribute dot (so 5/4/3 or 4/4/4 spread). Additionally, the Mage receives a +3 to scrutinizing with their Path arcana sights. This familiar replaces one of the mage's other familiar slots

(example: a mage with Death can have a Supernal Companion and a ghost familiar, but cannot take a spirit familiar if he gained Spirit. The reverse is true of a Spirit mage who gets Death.).

Psychopomp Companion (Sin-Eater)

Within the Underworld, there are creatures that defy expectation. Their origins unknown; they are like ghosts but different. Ghostly animals, psychopomps are found throughout the Underworld, but are not easily tamed. Perhaps they are a reflection of the world above, or simply the ghosts of dead animals. Regardless, Sin-Eaters sometimes draw the attention of these beings, gaining favor or even aid. With a particularly high Psyche (4), Death-touched (4), and Occult (effective 5) with a specialty in Underworld, a Sin-Eater might forge a familiar bond with a psychopomp. When manifested they are like strange animals, typically black or pale in color with reddish eyes. They are built as ghost familiars, they receive one extra numina and one extra attribute dot (so 5/4/3 or 4/4/4 spreads). Psychopomp Companions also add a +3 to rolls to navigate and travel through the Underworld, **as well as having access to the Underworld Gate numen (this takes a numina slot, and has the same time limits as the Threshold numen)**. This does not remove the Sin-Eater's ability to have a normal ghostly familiar.

Imp Companion (Possessed)

Demons of sufficient Infernal Rank to possess a human for a stable length of time often draw the attention of lesser demons wishing to serve them. Sometimes, however, they garner the attention of a more powerful Imp. A Possessed of **Infernal Rank 4** and a Infernal familiar, can forge this bond, expanding the powers of their Infernal minion. When manifested, the imp looks like any variation of a small demon. Built as Infernal familiars, they receive one extra numina and one extra attribute dot (so 5/4/3 or 4/4/4 spreads). The imp also allows the Possessed to make a Wits+Empathy+Primary Vice versus the target's Composure + Subterfuge to attempt to determine the target's Vice. The imp companion replaces the demon familiar slot for the Possessed.

Totemic Companion (Purified)

As half-spirit creatures, the Purified forge relationships with denizens of the shadow that go beyond a simple familiar bond. Investing some of their own power into the spirits they meet, the Purified creates almost a true friend. While still low ranking, as long as a Purified has Chi 4 and a familiar they can infuse that familiar with power, upgrading it to a Totemic Companion. Built as a spiritual familiar, they receive one extra numina and one extra attribute dot (so 5/4/3 or 4/4/4 spreads). The Totemic companion also adds +1 to the Purified's effective spirit rank, to a maximum of Rank 5 **and +2 to navigating the Shadow**. The Totemic companion replaces the spirit familiar slot for Purified.

Totems

Many supernatural types in the World of Darkness can also forge bonds as a group to empower a single spirit. First introduced in *Werewolf the Forsaken*, other supernatural entities have since been able to add to pooled spirit guardians. For the purpose of the Accord, these supernatural types have learned how to blend their talents to work together. Often, to prevent the spread of Belief, a werewolf or changing breed must work alone, apart from their fellows that can add to a Totem to provide spiritual support. Suddenly realizing there were other creature types within the Accord that could help, multi-type packs began to form. The following creature types can participate in a Totem bond: Forsaken werewolves, Pure werewolves, Changing Breeds (**no aspect is required**), Purified, and members of the Dead Wolves bloodline. Such a pack requires at least 3 player characters. It is not possible for any character to have a personal totem, even Purified.

The Totem merit, for the purpose of our chronicle, is always a 1-5 dot simple merit that costs 3 xp

per individual dot. Pure werewolves, due to their natural bonds with totems, always add +1 dot (to a max of 6 dots). This extra point does not count against the maximum number of totem points. Dead Wolves add their level of the Sublunario discipline to the pack totem pool instead of purchasing the merit dots. The cap on dots spent on a totem is 30 total points.

Building a Totem

A totem is built mechanically identical to a spiritual familiar, with the following upgrades. The totem/pack does not benefit from the “Flow of Power” benefit (see Essence pool via Totem benefits).

Attributes, Rank, and Essence.

The spread of attributes for a totem are automatically 6/5/4. The entity counts as a Rank 3 spirit.

The cap on attributes for a totem is 7 dots (if purchased with totem points at level x2 in cost). The spirit has 20 essence.

Influence

The totem receives three points of influence. A totem may only have two different categories of Influence (so starting with Influence x3 or Influence x2 + Influence x1). To increase the influence ratings, the players must use numina slots or purchase more with totem points via the “Greater Influence” numina from *Book of Spirits* pg. 142. The spirit’s influence must be related (snakes and poison, wind and speed, strength and stone, etc.). The spirit is capped at 3 levels of each Influence.

Numina

The spirit receives four numina. More may be purchased with totem points (3 totem points per numina). A totem may not take Claim, Rapture, or Spirit Minions.

Totem Bonuses

Totem points may be spent on totem bonuses as per *Werewolf the Forsaken*, pg. 190-191. While Purified and Dead Wolves can contribute to “Gifts” as a totem bonus, only Werewolves and Changing Breeds may utilize these gifts. They may do this even if they do not have the “Spirit Gifts” aspect and it does not increase their RQ. The Gifts granted may not be Auspice, Lodge or Pure only gifts, though Changing Breeds may not access gifts that are not available to them otherwise (see the Accord Changing Breeds document).

Bans

A pack must have a ban commensurate with the amount of Totem points spent on the Totem, per *Werewolf the Forsaken*, pg. 191-193. The pack cannot gain a price break on totems if they take a higher ban. The spread of ban severity is changed to:

- 1-6 Totem Points: Severity 1
- 7-11 Totem Points: Severity 2
- 12-17 Totem Points: Severity 3
- 18-24 Totem Points: Severity 4
- 25+ Totem Points: Severity 5