

Écate-Goddess of the White Moon, Night, and Witchcraft

Description: Écate is the Goddess of the White Moon and daughter of the Earth Mother. She is also the patron goddess of the night, bitter truths, vengeance, dark knowledge, and witchcraft. Many theologians consider Écate as nothing more than an aspect of the Earth Mother, albeit a dark version. Her worshippers – from the wandering Strigany to scheming witches – consider Écate as a goddess in her own right. Not all followers of Écate revere her in the same way as few give equal weight to her various facets.

According to legend, Écate was born from the grief of her mother when the Earth Mother's first sons (Taal and Ulric) along with their sons (Manann and Mórr, respectively) overthrew her consort, Oermath the Sun God, in the aftermath of the Gods' War on Chaos. Not certain how her other divine children would react to their new sibling, the Earth Mother placed Écate in the celestial sky to watch over her. Écate observed from her vantage point the disrespectful manner in which her divine siblings usurped the various powers of the Mother Goddess, thereby weakening her. It is also believed by some that it was Écate and not some unnamed demoness who took the form of Rhya to seduce Ulric and begat Kháine.

Soon after, Écate revealed herself to the Young Gods (as the other divine children of the Earth Mother and their offspring are called by followers of the Old Faith and Écate) and announced that she would oppose their plots at every turn. Offended by her lack of respect, the Young Gods set upon the wilful goddess and entombed her within Mannslieb. But Écate had prepared a gate through which she could pass into the world unseen whenever the light of the White Moon shone its brightest in the night sky. It is during the phase of the full moon when Écate is said to work her mischief.

Some of the more ardent followers of Écate are the Strigany. Though they travel the roads of the Empire in brightly coloured wagons, these wanderers are very secretive about their religious beliefs, even to the point of referring to their Druidic Priests (always female) as "Grandmother" ["Petru" in the Strigany tongue]. The cult of Écate is very protective of her people and considers outsiders as lesser persons of whom the Strigany can take advantage. They tend to be outwardly friendly and very emotional folk, quick to laughter and anger. Socially, the Strigany are quite different from Imperials and other Old Worlders and are seen by some as immoral. Some Imperials, especially young men lusting after the exotic Strigany women, become enamoured with the lifestyle of the nomadic folk and run away from home to join them. Some are accepted into the clan, but a number find themselves sacrificed to Écate far from home and alone when the Goddess demands their blood.

Écate has sometimes been identified as the mysterious Nehekharan moon goddess who took pity on the original vampires of Lahmia, providing them with shelter when other gods cursed them and men hunted them. According to scholars of the vampire prophecies, it was under Écate's dark veil that the vampires fled to safety in the Old World after their kingdom of Lahmia was destroyed.

Alignment: Neutral (some tilt towards Evil)

Symbol: The cult of Écate prefers its initiates and priests to avoid standing out in a crowd. The clergy dress as their followers when undertaking daily activities. During ceremonies, initiates and priests wear robes of a colour that emphasizes the aspect of Écate being celebrated. Clergy focussing on the revenge and domination aspects of Écate wear black, while those stressing dark knowledge and power for its own sake wear white. Initiates and priests celebrating Écate as the goddess of the white moon or night wear black robes with white highlights (in the form of Mannslieb and stars) and trim.

The symbols worn by followers of Écate are personal and idiosyncratic. These can take the form of Mannslieb and stars as well as a cauldron (the mystical source of dark magic), the latter of which is used by witches and those seeking dark knowledge. Tokens in the form of scythes or sickles are worn whenever justice or vengeance is to be meted out. Some followers prefer to wear other symbols in the shape of black cats, snakes, or jackdaws.

Areas of Worship: The cult of Écate is worshipped by the nomadic Strigany peoples throughout the Old World and various remote places in the Old World such as several kingdoms in the land of the Border Princes. She is also revered by a number of scattered secret cults and individuals, such as cultists of the Great Necromancer Nagash, who believe their master's apotheosis was arranged through a secret bargain with Écate. The worship of Écate is generally considered undesirable by many authorities – evil by a few. It is considered worse than the cult of Ranald given its association with the Strigany and other less savoury followers and is generally outlawed or persecuted in much of the Old World.

Temples and Shrines: There are no temples or shrines erected to the worship of Écate. Her worship is pursued in secret, sometimes at locations that are associated with the worship of the Old Faith, such as stone circles and old burial sites (barrows). There is no formal hierarchy in the cult, but Druidic priests are acknowledged as such and shown respect and deference

Groups of witches and warlocks who worship Écate may meet in a coven for mutual support, protection, and sharing of knowledge and craft. Ideally, the number of members in a coven would be thirteen, but any number will do. Each coven has its own rules; some are dominated by one or two powerful leaders whereas others are communities of more-or-less equals. Some covens may have regular meetings for worship and practice of dark knowledge and sorcery while other covens gather irregularly if at all.

Friends and Enemies: The cult of Écate sometimes makes common cause with followers of Kháine, though disdainful and wary of their madness. The cult might even enter temporary and guarded alliances with Slaaneshi cultists if it serves their purpose. Otherwise, the cult of Écate is hostile towards the worshippers of other Chaos Powers and maintains a bitter hostility towards the cults of the other divine descendants of the Earth Mother. The cult of Écate is respectful of the Old Faith, even though they believe the Druidic priests all too easily acquiesce to the power of the other official cults. The cult of Écate is unconcerned with the cults of Dwarves, Elves, and Halflings.

Holy Days: In common with the Old Faith, the cult of Écate observes four holy days: Mondstille Winter Solstice, Mitterfruhl Spring Equinox, Sonnstill Summer Solstice, and Mittherbst Autumn

Equinox. In addition, the worshipers of Écate (particularly witches and seekers of forbidden knowledge) celebrate both Hexensnacht and Geheimnisnacht. Where communal worship of Écate takes place – such as among the Strigany – a Druidic priest leads a procession around the settlement or campsite invoking Écate's protection against the evil that is abroad during both "witching night" and "night of mystery." Followers of Écate also hold as holy the nights when Mannslied is full.

Saints: The cult of Écate does not honour saints.

Cult Requirements: Followers of Écate like the Strigany are generally born into the cult. Those seeking vengeance or searching for legends and ancient tomes to gain knowledge of the dark mystic secrets come into the worship of Écate hoping to gain her favour for their endeavours

Priestly orders, including monks: None

Sponsored fighting orders- Templars: None

Strictures: Initiates and priests of Écate must abide by the following:

- Always serve and protect your kin and people with whatever means are at your disposal.
- Always honour the Old Ways that preserve you and your people.
- Never shun the Darkness.
- Be careful with whom you place your trust.

The following additional strictures are for those seeking dark knowledge:

- Knowledge is power. Do not allow others to deny you the knowledge they seek for their own ends.
- The thing you fear is not necessarily evil. It may simply be dangerous, and you must overcome it by any means possible.
- In order to gain power, you must take risk. Be bloody, bold, and resolute.
- Always remember that all beings seek gratification, wealth, and power. Those who claim otherwise are fools or liars.

Spell Use: Priests of Écate may use any Druidic spell and the following Battle spells:

1st Level: Cure Light Wounds, Detect Magic, Dispirit, Steal Mind

2nd Level: Cause Pain, Mental Duel, Mystic Mist, Steal Magical Power

3rd Level: Cause Fear, Cause Instability, Cloak of Darkness, Dispel Magic

4th Level: Cure Serious Wound, Drain Magic, Strength of Mind

In addition, priests of the Écate may use the following spells:

Penetrate the Veil of Darkness

Spell Level: First

Magic Points: 3

Range: Personal

Duration: 3D10 minutes

Ingredients: The eyes of an owl or rat

The priest can use this prayer to gain the *Night Vision* skill for 2D10 minutes. If the priest already has the skill, then the range of the vision is doubled to 60 yards.

Scourge Enemy

Spell Level: Second

Magic Points: 6

Range: 6 yards

Duration: Instantaneously

Ingredients: A wood figurine

Through this spell, the priest can deliver intense pain upon a victim within range. The victim is allowed a **Toughness** test to reduce the effects of the spell. If successful, the victim is only staggered by the intense shock for the following round (-20 to **WS**, **BS**, and all skill tests). If failed, the victim suffers 1D3 **Wounds** irrespective of Toughness and armour as well as being staggered with the penalties described above. This spell does not cause any permanent injury.

Power of the White Moon (adapted from Druidic spell "Drawing down the Moon" from the **Restless Dead**, page 96)

Spell Level: Fourth

Magic Points: 12

Range: 96 yards

Duration: 1 turn

Ingredients: Two moonstones (value 10GC each)

If moonlight is present, the priest brings down a form of moon madness upon a single creature or group within range. The target creature(s) are bathed by the glowing moonlight which weakens their resolve (**WP**-10) and quickly drives them insane. The prayer causes affected creatures to suffer a modifier of -1 to both **S** and **T** and, as they are experiencing hallucinations, -20 to **WS** and **BS**. Affected wizards and priests must first pass a **WP**-10 test in order to cast a spell or prayer. At the end of the prayer, the affected characters must make a **Magic** test or gain 1D4 **Insanity Points**. Demons and Undead are affected differently, suffering from one automatic **S4** hit per round.

Skills: In addition to the skills normally available to Initiates and Priests, those who worship Écate may choose two extra skills per level at normal experience points costs: Charm, Charm Animal, Concealment Rural, Divination-Augury, Divination-Astrology, Divination-Dream Interpretation, Divination-Scapulomancy, Divination-Scrying, Divination-Tea Leaf Reading, Flee!, Herb Lore, Luck, Prepare Poison, Silent Move Rural, Sixth Sense.

Trials: Trials set by Écate usually take the form of acts of vengeance where the priest is expected to make a transgressor pay for their crime. Such a transgressor is often a high ranking official or noble as these influential individuals usually find someone less fortunate to take the fall for their crimes. Transgressors such as these make this kind of trial all the more dangerous.

In some cases, a trial may require the offender to recover a tome or scroll of dark knowledge from the temples of the sanctioned state or rival organisations such as the magic colleges and guilds.

Blessings: Skills favoured by Écate include Charm, Charm Animal, Concealment Rural, Divination, Flee!, Luck, Palm Object, Pick Pocket, Silent Move Rural, Sixth Sense. Favoured tests are Hide, Listen, and Observe. Other blessings might include temporary increases to Dexterity, Intelligence, and Fellowship.