Geas

Summary

A geas is a magical bond or compulsion laid upon an individual through the use of Words of Power. It serves to ensure that a person performs their service faithfully or adheres to specific rules. Geasa are a fundamental tool of Skyssian statecraft and heroic control, ranging from non-onerous promises of devotion to life-threatening involuntary bindings.

Description

Nature and Creation

Geasa are created when a practitioner of sufficient power (usually a Hero or an initiate of the mysteries) speaks specific words to bind another's will. In the Kingdom of Skyss, this is frequently used in a judicial capacity to bind captured pirates into the King's Service. A bound individual must follow all orders given by the King or appointed officers, often under penalty of death if the bond is resisted.

Protective Geasa

Not all geasa are punitive. Many are established as part of a reciprocal agreement for protection. For example, to gain the protection of a silver amulet, a bearer like Yngvild the Fierce must accept a geas to follow the teachings of a specific deity and pray to them first among the gods. These bonds are described as “not onerous” but are essential for the arcane link to function.

Involuntary Bonds and Resistance

A geas laid upon an unconscious person is significantly harder to resist than one laid upon a conscious subject. When conscious, a person can feel a “slippery guide” in their mind attempting to steer them and can choose to push back, though failing to do so makes subsequent resistance more difficult. A powerful, life-threatening geas (like those used by the renegade Rojden) can cause the victim to become physically cold and catatonic if they fight the compulsion.

Perception and Detection

While invisible to ordinary people, those with significant divine blood or specialised tools can perceive these bonds.

- **Heroic Sight:** High-level heroes can sometimes see the magical cords of a geas or sense their presence.

- **Sentient Tools:** Relics like the sword Jafnadr can identify the number and strength of geasa on a person.
- **Mechanical Detection:** Adepts like Eskil can create “geas detectors”, boxes or items that rattle or react when someone under a compulsion enters a room.

Resolution and Removal

Breaking an involuntary geas is notoriously difficult and usually requires one of three conditions to be met:

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1. The person who laid the bond (the geasor) chooses to relinquish their
hold.
2. The geasor dies, which automatically releases all those they have bound.
3. A high ritual involving a blood sacrifice and
[[:skyss:chars:divine_intervention|divine intervention]] is performed by
someone more powerful than the original geasor.
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Relationships

People

- Rojden: A master of compulsions who uses them to control his children and agents.
- Noren: A hero who nearly lost his life fighting an involuntary bond laid by a renegade.
- Eskil: A maker of enchanted items who specialises in creating geas detectors.

Places

- Estreham: The site of the Temple of Clewg where powerful rituals are used to resolve these bonds.
- Troll's Head: An inn that uses magical detectors to ensure no secretly bound individuals enter undetected.
- House of Justice: The administrative centre where geasa are legally applied to those in the King's Service.

Concepts

- Words of Power: The specific tier of magic used to initiate a binding.
- Rituals: The ceremonies required to break or alter high-level geasa.
- Amulets: Items that, once attuned, can provide partial immunity to involuntary geasa.

Skyss - Story Background	Characters	Skyss - Places	Pantheons of the World	Other Background

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