

# Ride the Noble Steed

## Night Magnitude 8

### Performing the Ritual

Performing this ritual takes at least 2 minutes of roleplaying. This ritual targets two characters who must be present throughout.

### Effects

The next time the recipients of this ritual sleep, they will experience vivid dreams of what it was like to ride a horse. The two targets do not share a vision – each is distinct.

When they wake, they will experience a roleplaying effect: *you have experienced a vivid dream of what it was like to ride a horse. You are unable to fully describe the feeling, but are left with a persistent sense of wonder that lasts until next time you sleep.*

This ritual is not powerful enough to overcome curses which cause disturbed sleep such as *Dreamscape of the Endless Hunt*. In this case the target's dreams will include horse-like monsters and a sense of being chased, but will provide no roleplaying effect.

Likewise, if the target is unable to dream for whatever reason (such as the effects of *excommunication*, or being bonded to a *shackle of the unvirtuous*) the ritual has no effect.

### OOO note

This item is a ritual text.

Any character with the Night Ritual Lore skill can master this ritual. You must have a free slot or experience point to master a new ritual. After an appropriate period of roleplaying spent studying these pages, it should then be brought to a referee who will add the ritual to those you have mastered. Doing this does not 'use up' the ritual text.

This ritual cannot be learned by other means; it cannot be taught by a character who knows it unless the ritual is added to the body of Imperial Lore by the Conclave.

**Ribbon ID: 13866**



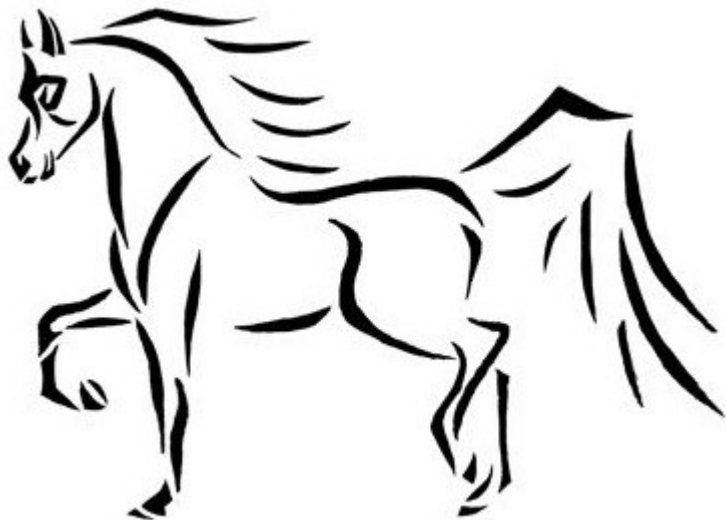
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## Ride the Noble Steed

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Ritual of the Realm of Night

Codified Spring 381YE at the Halls of Knowledge, under  
supervision by Provost Octavius of the  
Spire of the Auric Horizon



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## Developing the Ritual

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This ritual was developed at the Halls of Knowledge in Zenith under the direction of Octavius of the Spire of the Auric Horizon, Provost of the Halls of Knowledge. The initial work was undertaken by his fellow Urizen, Joseph of the Banner of the Phoenix.

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## Riding Dream Horses

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This ritual creates a visionary experience when the subjects sleep. It is almost impossible to be sure from whence the vision comes. The experience is certainly powerful, but it is difficult to say *how* the subjects know that what they are experiencing is a true thing. There are none alive who ever rode a horse, nor spoke to any who has. The modern Imperial understanding of what it meant to ride on the back of these noble beasts is shaped by tales and poems centuries old, laden with allegory and imagery of wind and fire.

Some theorists suggest that it is possible that the ritual taps into memories of people who actually lived – in a similar way to true liao or the peculiar meat drug of Sarcophan captures or reveals something that a member of an earlier generation has truly experienced.

More feasible, however, is that the ritual is shaped by the expectation of the recipient. The symbols and metaphors of horse riding are so prevalent in the Empire that the impression of riding with the wind across wide open plains is something that everyone can understand. The magic draws on this shared understanding and shapes a vision that is in turn shaped by the expectation of the recipient.

Experimentation indicated there are similarities between the dreams experienced; all include a sense of speed, and of exhilaration, and of wonder. Some details are very different however. One of the test subjects recounted a dream of flying through the night sky on a mighty winged steed. Another was able to describe the flowing, shimmering mane of their horse, and the trail of stars that flowed behind them as they ran over the plains of central Reikos. One Freeborn recipient spoke of riding a mighty warhorse in a battle against orcs, while a Highborn spoke of riding a swift steed beneath a night sky and the certain awareness that they were delivering an important message to .. someone.

Some recipients experienced a different horse each time they received the ritual, and others spoke of riding the same creature each time. These experiences tend to support the supposition that the vision is not based on a specific memory of events that actually happened.

Even though the ritual effects two individuals, the dream is not shared. They dream, as they live, alone.



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## The Lost Horses

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Horses were never populous. The Highborn fleet carried with them a great herd of the mighty beasts. These fabulous creatures were seen as living symbols of the concept of loyalty and nobility, dignity and strength. Mounted on their mighty warhorses, the Highborn were unbeaten in battle while swift messengers allowed distant settlements to remain in contact with one another and fostered a sense of community and unity. They were the emblem of the fiery spirit of adventure and strength that made the Highborn unconquerable – companions but never servants, allies but never subjects.

Such a great asset, however, commanded a tremendous price, and eventually the sacred bond of person and horse was corrupted by economics. A single gelded male when traded could sell for more than its weight in

gold and gems, a market that was hard for the corrupted Patrician Council to refuse. Several patrician families grew rich and powerful through trading horses, and through careful business practice and astute management of market forces created a near-monopoly on horse-trading within the kingdom.

Short-sighted self interest, and poor husbandry brought tragedy. Through over-selling and the concomitant over-gelding, the population of Highborn steeds dwindled and their vigour and fiery spirit diminished through in-breeding. The orcs, perhaps sensing that their much feared enemies were mortal after all, embarked on a vicious raiding campaign to murder as many horses as possible, which exacerbated an already growing problem.

All of this might have been overcome, however, but the horses themselves were wasting away. Once comrades-in-arms and brother warriors, their status had been reduced to that of military assets and livestock, too much for their proud spirits to bear. Even after the power of the patricians was broken the damage was done and all attempts to restore them were in vain. The last horses perished in the early years of the Empire, the last few broken relics and curiosities of a once magnificent species. History tells that they died of grief, their spirits destroyed by the exploitation of greedy men and women who should have protected them as a sacred charge.

The loss of the horses during the early years of the Empire was a huge loss to Highguard, and one from which the Highborn took many years to recover. To this day the phrase "horse-trading" remains a powerful insult. In honour of their lost steeds, and as reminder of the lesson learned, they preserve the image of the horse as a powerful symbol of nobility and pride, and a sobering reminder of the perils of taking blessings for granted.

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## The Pegasus

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One common image in these dreams that is somewhat unexpected is the image of a horse with wings that flies. There is absolutely no evidence that such creatures have ever existed. While there are suits of horse barding in Highguard with decorative wings attached that protected the legs of the rider from attackers on the ground.

The winged horse itself, however, is a creation of legend and mythology - while horses were swift, they did not fly and it is unlikely one would ever be able to fly in the manner the pegasus is depicted. Rather, the pegasus is a heraldic symbol of speed, grace, and pride - even beyond the characteristics associated with horses normally.

And yet ... they have turned up in roughly one-in-twelve of the visions experienced as a result of this ritual.



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## Performing the Ritual

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The ritual attunes two individuals so that they experience a powerful dream. The ritual ideally should include images of horses; recitation of poetry, and evocations of the loyal, swift spirit of the majestic beasts.

Ideally the ritual should be performed close to the point where the targets will retire for the night; in theory the more time passes between the ritual and the moment they sleep, the less powerful and vivid the vision will be.

The rune Feresh, the rune of Majesty, has a potent resonance; in theory the runes of Mystery and Revelation alike would also work well with this ritual. Surprisingly, astronomancers report that the Key resonates well with this ritual but the Stallion does not. Attempts to invoke the Stallion actually caused the ritual to fail completely. Dramaturgically, the Persona of the Witch worked well, and unsurprisingly the totemic magician finds horses, pegasus, and unicorns work well with the ritual.

