

Attain the Aether

Copyright 2026 by Mark Reach. All rights reserved. The right to reproduce purchased cards for non-commercial use is granted. Icons by Lorc.

1. Grimoire Construction

Spellbook (Main Deck): Must contain between 40 and 60 Pages (cards). You may include up to 4 copies of any unique Common Page, up to 2 copies of any Uncommon Page, and only 1 copy of each Rare Page.

Familiar: Your Grimoire must include exactly 1 Familiar. Familiars reside face up in the World Binding zone outside of your main Spellbook and do not count toward your 40 to 60 card deck limit.

Winning the Game: Reduce all opposing Witches' Influence to 0. If you are required to draw a Page and your Spellbook is empty, shuffle your Graveyard into your Spellbook and continue playing.

2. Game Setup & Zones

Determine the starting Witch randomly. Each Witch begins with 20 Influence. Place your chosen Familiar face up in your World Binding zone. Place your shuffled Spellbook in the library zone and draw an opening hand of 5 Pages. Place your physical Aether stones in your designated Aether Pool.

Tactical Redraw: Before the first turn begins, you may place any number of Pages from your hand on the bottom of your Spellbook, draw that many replacements, and shuffle your Spellbook. You may do this only once per game.

The World: The active battlefield where Loci, Poppets, Champions, and Elites reside.

World Binding Zone: The dedicated zone for your Familiar while it is not manifested in the World.

The Graveyard: The face up discard pile for expended Rites, Rituals, and perished entities. Tokens that perish cease to exist and do not enter the Graveyard.

3. Turn Structure

3.1 Start Phase

Ready: Ready all exhausted Pages under your control in the World. Unused Aether carries over between turns.

Focus Aether: Roll a d6 for your Familiar (while in the World Binding zone) and a separate d6 for each ready Locus of Power you control in the World that you choose to tap for energy. A roll of 1 yields no Aether. A roll of 2 to 5 yields 1 Aether. A roll of 6 is a Burst: you gain 1 Aether and immediately roll that specific die again. On a Witch's very first Focus roll of the game, reroll any result of 1 until a higher number appears. On any subsequent turn, if you roll a 1 on any Focus roll, you may choose to discard your hand and draw up to 5 new Pages.

Locus Resource Choice: A Locus of Power can produce Aether or activate its printed effect in a single turn, but not both.

Draw: Draw Pages from your Spellbook until you hold at least 5 cards in your hand.

3.2 Main Phase

The active Witch has Priority. You may cast Summoning spells, activate Loci, and cast Rituals or Enchantments. You may also declare Contests.

Binding Shock: Whenever an entity manifests in the World, its bound essence takes time to stabilize. Entities suffer from Binding Shock on the turn they enter the World. An entity suffering from Binding Shock cannot declare a Contest, and it cannot activate abilities requiring it to exhaust, unless its printed text explicitly states otherwise. Entities suffering from Binding Shock may still exhaust to Intercept incoming attacks on an opponent's turn.

3.3 End Phase

Resolve all "at the end of the turn" effects. Clear all marked combat damage from entities in the World. Binding Shock ends for all entities that entered the World during this turn. Unused Aether in your pool remains and carries over to the next round.

4. The Response Queue (Priority & Resolution)

When a Witch casts a Page, activates an ability, declares a Contest, or transitions between phases, Priority passes to the opposing Witch, opening a Response Window.

Casting Rites: The defending or non-active Witch may cast Rites (fast-speed reaction spells) or activate instant-speed exhaust abilities whenever they hold Priority.

The Queue (LIFO): Each response is placed on top of the Response Queue. Once both players pass Priority in succession without adding new spells, the Queue resolves from the most recent spell down to the oldest (Last In, First Out).

5. Ascension, Entity Types & Tokens

Card text is written explicitly on each Page without shorthand keyword symbols. Entities belong to distinct tiers of summoning:

Poppets & Loci of Power: Cast directly from your hand using Aether. Poppets act as physical vessels in the World. Whenever a Poppet perishes in combat or is sacrificed to an effect, its controller gains 1 temporary Aether until the end of that turn.

Token Entities: All Token Entities created by effects count as Poppets for the purposes of Ascension costs and the 1 Aether death refund. When a Token Entity perishes, its controller gains 1 temporary Aether until the end of that turn, and the token is removed from the game completely rather than being placed in the Graveyard.

Champions: Cast by sacrificing ready or exhausted Poppets (including Token Entities) under your control equal to the Champion's printed cost. Champion costs cannot be paid with Aether. Sacrificing a Poppet to Ascend a Champion forfeits the standard 1 Aether death refund.

Elite Entities: The apex of the World. Cast by sacrificing ready or exhausted Champions under your control equal to the printed Elite cost.

Familiars: Specialized Elite Entities that start in the World Binding zone. Their Sovereign Text triggers each round during your Start Phase. You may summon your Familiar into the World during your Main Phase by sacrificing Champions equal to its printed cost. While active in the World, its printed card text applies, but it no longer rolls for Aether. If a Familiar leaves the World, it returns to the World Binding zone instead of going to the Graveyard.

Spells & Enchantments: Rites (fast-speed), Rituals (standard-speed), and Enchantments (permanent static buffs or continuous effects).

6. Contests (Combat Resolution)

Contests are declared and resolved **sequentially, one attacking entity at a time**. The active Witch may declare multiple separate Contests during their Main Phase, provided they have eligible entities ready to attack.

Attack Declaration: To declare a Contest, exhaust one ready entity you control that does not suffer from Binding Shock. You must declare a valid target: either the opposing Witch's Influence directly or an exhausted enemy entity in the World. If an enemy entity possesses an ability requiring it to be targeted (such as Guardian), you must target that entity if able.

Response Window: The defending Witch receives Priority to cast Rites or activate abilities in response to the attack declaration.

Intercept Declaration: If the attack targeted the Witch or another entity, the defending Witch may exhaust any ready entity they control to Intercept the attack, becoming the new target of the Contest. Entities that entered the World this turn may Intercept freely because Binding Shock only restricts declaring attacks and activating exhaust abilities.

Damage Resolution:

Entity vs. Entity: Attacking and defending entities deal combat damage simultaneously equal to their printed Force. If marked damage equals or exceeds an entity's Durability, that entity perishes. Excess damage is lost unless the attacker possesses an ability dealing excess damage directly to the opponent's Influence (Malice).

Unintercepted Attacks: If an attack targeted at the opposing Witch is not intercepted, that Witch loses Influence equal to the attacking entity's Force.

Clear Damage: Surviving entities retain their marked damage until the End Phase.

7. Standardized Card Phrasing

All card text in *Attain the Aether* is fully articulated. Standard printed abilities follow these wordings:

Binding Shock Immunity: *"This entity does not suffer from Binding Shock."*

Trigger Timing: *"At the start of your turn...", "When this entity enters the World...", "When this entity attacks...", "Whenever an entity you control perishes..."*

Exhaust Abilities: Cards marked with *"Exhaust: [Effect]"* require turning the card sideways as an activation cost.

Locus Production Rule: Activated Loci carry the printed text: *"(Cannot produce Aether this turn if activated)."*

Blighted Counters: *"Damage dealt by this entity places that many Blighted counters on the target. Blighted counters bestow -1 Force and -1 Durability."*

Resurgence: *"When this entity perishes if it had no Blighted counters on it return it to the World with one Blighted counter."*