

True Magic – Novel Synopsis

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Outline

People can use emotion-based magic (pathomancy; see appendix A), but fanatical followers of the gods detest it, plotting to erase it. As increasing restrictions are declared and Riven unlocks new magic, she and her best friend Vya help a resistance movement gather information to stop the fanatics. Riven struggles with her magic, while Vya struggles with what to do in this conflict. Right before a mission to stop the temples' plan, when Riven has started getting control of her powers and Vya has learned the full stakes of the conflict, Vya is captured and persuaded to switch sides. The resistance fails and pathomancy is erased. A generation later, however, children start exhibiting new, unknown magic.

Chapters

Prologue: "Might I Suggest . . ."

- **Atrus Leve**, High Priest of Temperance (H.P. Temperance; see appendix B), sends a proclamation to the other nine H.P.s. He reflects on how it will take a generation to properly train people to regulate emotion and not awaken pathomancy. A blue-and-green-eyed cloaked man enters his office, aware of his plan, and makes a suggestion.

Chapter 1: Raindrops and Restraint

- **Vya**: Vya attends Atrus's Da'Ten (Sunday; see appendix C) sermon; pathomancy is now prohibited on temple grounds. Heading home as it starts raining, Vya worries about the new prohibition and temple-pathomancer tensions.
- **Riven**: Walking alone in the rain and hating her water magic, Riven gets targeted by bullies. In a brief fight, she unlocks fire, lightning and air magic. They back down, and she heads home.
- **Vya**: Upon arriving home, she finds that Riven left again. Concerned, Vya chats briefly with her parents, worrying if temple guards might now become more emboldened against pathomancers.
- **Riven**: Riven sneaks through the city past temple guards, concealing her hydromantic-blue eyes.
- **Vya**: As Vya expresses worry about Riven's absence, Riven sneaks in. Vya catches and scolds her, but is glad she's safe.

Chapter 2: Uncovered Flame

- **Riven**: Walking to school the next day, Vya's still worrying about the prohibition's implications. Irritated, Riven manifests fire accidentally. During her last period pathomancy class, the teacher assesses Riven's new magics, recommending exercises to help her keep them under control.

Chapter 3: Temple Archives

- **Vya**: Riven makes slow progress with containing her magic. On Da'fi (Friday) while volunteering at the temple of Authenticity, Vya overhears priests arguing about "detonation" and considering Atrus's (unspecified) plan. Other initiates argue with her about pathomancy, and she researches "detonation" unfruitfully.

Chapter 4: The Lucky Bar

- **Riven**: Riven practices magic-emotion separation exercises, but struggles. Her dad and uncle, Atrus, visit to preach. Riven storms off, wandering the rooftops. Hours later, she spots and eavesdrops on a suspiciously-located meeting between Atrus and H.P. Prosperity about Atrus's (unspecified) plan. Vya finds her. They're spotted and chased by H.P. Prosperity's thugs but saved by another eavesdropper, who invites them to a meeting.

Chapter 5: What We Don't Know

- **Vya:** Vya and Riven attend the meeting, chatting with the eavesdropper, Gareth. It's agreed that the temples are planning something, and they plan to contact potentially-sympathetic priests of each temple to make inquiries. Vya volunteers for the temple of Authenticity, and Riven is convinced to use and deceive Atrus to handle the temple of Inspiration.

Chapter 6: High Priestess of Inspiration

- **Vya:** Vya talks to priests at the temple of Authenticity, with no success.
- **Riven:** Riven talks to Atrus about "joining" the temple of Inspiration. He introduces her to H.P. Inspiration, who's cold to him. Riven talks privately with her, but uncovers no new information.

Chapter 7: "The Plan Is . . ."

- **Vya:** While the resistance group reconsider how to get further information, Vya notices H.P.s Authenticity, Pleasure and Inspiration meeting at the temple of Authenticity. They request several books on pathomancy. Putting them back later, she notices that pages on emotion-magic entanglement were earmarked.
- **Riven:** That evening, they receive a home visit from a temple guard of Inspiration, who warns them to stay home tomorrow. They sneak out, and witness H.P. Inspiration outing Atrus's plan to erase pathomancy. H.P. Inspiration is arrested before she can reveal how, and Atrus outlaws pathomancy.

Chapter 8: The Path Ahead

- **Riven:** The resistance group – now calling themselves the "Inspired Heretics" – calls another meeting. Riven and Vya see many pathomancers and adherents of the deposed H.P.s protesting. At the meeting, a priest of Pleasure reveals Atrus has deposed H.P.s Pleasure and Authenticity. Those temples' priests have been recalled to select new H.P.s, with pathomancy to be erased on the imminent winter solstice. They organise training exercises – only one day's worth, due to time constraints – for a mission to uncover how Atrus will erase magic, with Gareth hand-picking Riven and Vya, amongst others.

Chapter 9: Team Training

- **Riven:** Riven and Vya join the others for the training in some old ruins, joining the diversion and espionage teams respectively. Riven develops better technique with her new magics.

Chapter 10: Infiltration

- **Riven:** The espionage team infiltrates the temple of Temperance, while the diversion team distracts temple guards, with Riven exhibiting more pathomantic control under pressure. A fight ensues, and Gareth abandons Riven to escape.
- **Vya:** The espionage team find notes on Atrus's plan in a high-ranking priest's office, but Vya sees Riven being taken to the dungeons. She and one other stay to free Riven; the others escape with the information.

Chapter 11: Detonation

- **Vya:** They covertly look for the warden priest's cell keys. Vya accidentally finds a report on pathomantic detonation amongst priests and the devout (see appendix A). Her companion finds the keys; they free Riven and escape.

Chapter 12: Debriefing

- **Vya:** On the way back to debriefing, Vya is still processing what she found out. Shocked and scared, she doesn't want to become like the repressed priests, and considers what might happen to Riven if Atrus is stopped and the fanatics get more militant.
- **Riven:** At the debriefing, Riven is furious with Gareth. The stolen notes reveal the ten H.P.s can together erase pathomancy. A plan is devised to raise protests and capture H.P.s to stop Atrus. Temple guards of Temperance – tipped off by a spy about the meeting time and location, but not the subject – attack the meeting.

Chapter 13: Preparations

- **Riven:** Vya is captured; Riven escapes. The escapees regroup at safe houses, then reconvene. Teams are organised, with Riven volunteering to help capture Atrus, hoping Vya will be there. The Inspired Heretics start organising protesters, and get into position.

Chapter 14: The Night Before

- **Vya:** Vya gets put in cell at the temple of Temperance. A priest of Authenticity is brought in to try to persuade those captured, and plays on her worry for Riven. Seemingly failing, he leaves.
- **Off screen:** Vya stops him, telling him the Inspired Heretics know Atrus's plan, and will try to stop them. She offers to help stop the Inspired Heretics, predicting that if there's an attack, Riven will want to help confront Atrus.

Chapter 15: Operation Heresy

- **Riven:** Protests around the temples are started, obstructing the new H.P.s Inspiration, Pleasure and Authenticity's paths to the temple of Temperance. Riven's team enters the temple and gets caught in a fight. Riven and Gareth manage to break away and get to Atrus, who's accompanied by Vya.

Chapter 16: Struck by Lightning

- **Vya:** Vya and Riven argue. Gareth tries to attack Vya to get to Atrus, but Riven blocks him. They continue talking, with Atrus taunting Riven. Riven tries to get past Vya to fight him, and Vya blocks her. They accidentally use magic (fire and ice respectively) against each other in desperation, and start fighting.
- **Atrus:** While they're distracted, Gareth attacks Atrus, who retreats.
- **Riven:** Riven tries to follow, but Vya blocks her.

Chapter 17: Solstice Sunset

- **Atrus:** Atrus and Gareth continue fighting, until Gareth is restrained.
- **Riven:** Riven and Vya continue to fight until their magic becomes weaker and weaker, before vanishing entirely. Riven collapses to the floor in despair.
- **Vya:** Vya collapses in relief that it's over.

Chapter 18: Green Eyes

- **Riven:** Riven is imprisoned with the other Inspired Heretics, who tell her that temple guards managed to get H.P.s Inspiration, Authenticity and Pleasure to the temple of Temperance to enact Atrus's plan, their powers vanished, and the guards swiftly rounded them up. Vya tries to apologise to Riven with no success; Riven wishes her eyes would flash blue again.

Epilogue: Solstice Dawn

- Decades later at the summer solstice festival, Truth observes Riven and Vya babysitting their grandchildren while the parents help set up the festival. He reflects on how they made up in the intervening years, and that Riven became a teacher while Vya became a healer priestess.

Riven's youngest grandchild demonstrates magic that breaks the rules of both pathomancy and divine magic. Truth smiles, glad that true magic has returned, and vanishes.

Characters

Major Characters

Riven Leve: average build, short brown hair, green eyes. Riven lives with her best friend Vya's family, and suffers from depression. She's indifferent towards the gods and is instead fascinated by magic, wanting to keep and develop hers. She often slips away alone, with practice making her very stealthy. Magic: water; gains fire, lightning and air.

Vya Feelks: tall, long blonde hair, blue eyes. She's Riven's best friend – and usually the only one who can catch her. She's devoted to Authenticity and doesn't want to stray from the temples, but doesn't want to have to suppress her magic or emotions for her faith either. She helps Atrus so that she and others – Riven especially – don't end up detonating (see appendix A) or suffering for their humanity. Magic: wood, metal; gains lightning, earth, ice.

Minor Characters

Garet: thin, pale blond hair. A ruthless, mission-comes-first spy for the Inspired Heretics. Magic: metal, earth, rust/corrosion.

Bairon and Petra Leve: avid worshippers of Temperance, Riven's parents are aides to H.P. Temperance, Bairon's brother Atrus, and are unyieldingly disapproving of pathomancy. Magic: drawn from Temperance.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pathomancy

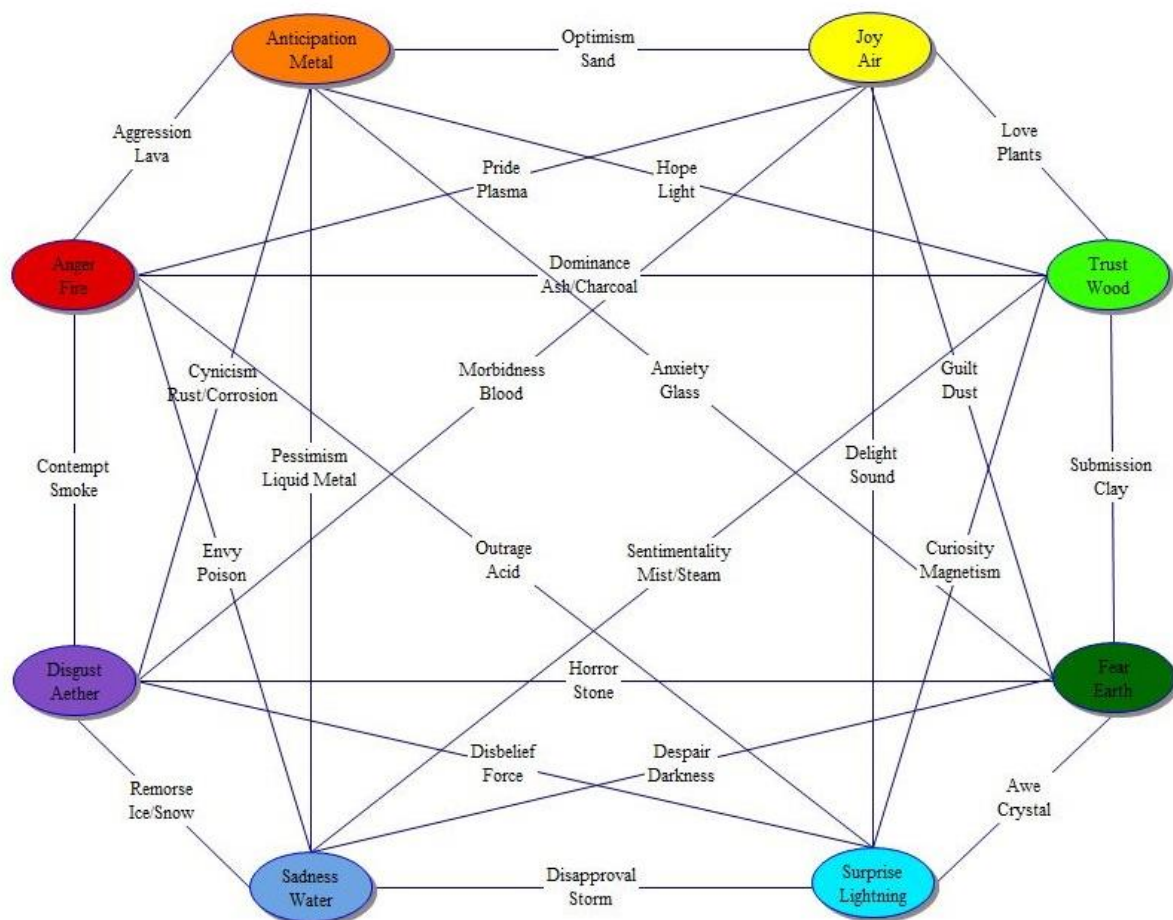


Figure 1: which emotions, magics and colours correspond to each other.

Pathomancy (patho-, from Ancient Greek *páthos* (any strong feeling, passion, emotion); -mancy, from Ancient Greek *manteía* ("divination")) is magic that allows people to manipulate different classical elements and substances according to their emotions (fig. 1). This magic follows six basic rules, first regarding unlocking elements:

- To gain access to an element, one must have experienced the corresponding emotion very strongly to awaken that magic.
- One can potentially unlock each primary (coloured) element corresponding with a basic emotion, provided they feel it strongly enough.
- One will only ever have one secondary (line) element that they can unlock.
 - Which secondary element that is remains fixed from birth, and will not change even if one feels another secondary emotion intensely enough to otherwise have unlocked its magic.

And then regarding using them:

- When one feels a particular emotion, they can manipulate the corresponding element or substance.
 - The more intensely one feels that emotion, the more powerful the magic they can unleash.

- Once the corresponding emotion dissipates and one ceases to use that magic for more than five seconds, they must wait until they experience that emotion again before they can continue.
 - If one's emotion diminishes but doesn't vanish, once the calibre of magic accessed falls (but not below the corresponding level of emotion), after five seconds, the user must wait for the emotion to become stronger to use that magic at its previous level.
 - If one was not using an emotion's magic and that emotion dissipates, there is no five-second grace period.
- When using an emotion's magic, one's eyes will always adopt the colour of that magic.
 - This can sometimes happen when feeling the emotion with sufficient strength, even if it's corresponding magic is not accessed.
 - For secondary emotions, eye colour can be a combination of the two primary emotions it connects to, or the aggregate of those colours.
 - For multiple emotions, eye colour will be a combination of the emotions' colours.

There are further rules concerning emotion-magic entanglement and the unnatural suppression of emotion and magic, culminating in pathomantic detonation:

- When emotion has to be suppressed to suppress magic, the two often entangle together, particularly if suppressed unwillingly.
- Whenever emotions corresponding to unlocked magics are suppressed or bottled up and one's emotions and magics are entangled, those magics get bottled up too.
 - The more tightly entangled the emotions and magics are entangled, or the stronger the suppressed emotion, the more rapidly the bottled-up magic accumulates.
- If someone eventually lashes out with the suppressed emotion, any bottled-up magic gets released as well, manifesting involuntarily as the conjuration of the appropriate element.
 - If someone has sufficient control and presence of mind, they can control and channel its release externally, or suppress the magic with greater effort.
 - If someone tries to suppress the magic but bungles it, the magic will manifest from the inside out. Sufficient severity will be lethal.
 - If someone has no control or lacks any presence of mind, the magic will manifest around them. Sufficient severity will be lethal, but the threshold is higher than that of internal manifestation.
- If someone starts to bottle up too much magic, it can start to leak and manifest involuntarily when more is bottled up, particularly if that person lacks magical control. If someone does bottle up too much magic to contain, it will manifest from the inside out. It will kill them, and anyone too close to them.

Appendix B: Gods

Name	God/Goddess	Domain	Colours
Temperance	God	Temperance, restraint, prudence	White and blue
Growth	Goddess	Growth, learning, personal development	Blue and black
Pleasure	God	Pleasure, hedonism, love, sex, violence	Black, red and pink
Authenticity	God	Authenticity, honesty, sincerity	Red, green and brown
Community	Goddess	Community, family, loyalty	Green and white
Prosperity	God	Wealth, money, prosperity, greed, luck	White, black and gold
Inspiration	Goddess	Art, creativity, inspiration, imagination	Blue, red and purple
Decay	Goddess	Death, decay	Black and green
Justice	Goddess	Law, order, fairness, justice	Red, white and pink
Truth	God	Truth, knowledge, science, history	Green, blue and aqua

Table 1: the gods and their domains. The gods can grant their acolytes access to different amounts of their powers, which can be used separate from pathomancy and follows its own rules.

Appendix C: Days of the Week

Day of the Week (English)	Day of the Week (Fictional)
Monday	Da'fir
Tuesday	Da'seon
Wednesday	Da'thi
Thursday	Da'fou
Friday	Da'fi
Saturday	Da'ma
Sunday	Da'ten

Table 2: the days of the week. Originally named First-day, Second-day, etc., with Saturday and Sunday being Magic's-day and Ten's-day, but over time they've been rearranged, contracted, and jumbled up.